



# Parent | Student Handbook

## 2024—2025

Our Lady of Sorrows  
Catholic School

1946—2024

A Tradition of Excellence  
Centered on Jesus Christ  
for 78 years



1100 Gumwood Ave  
McAllen, TX 78501  
[www.olssnet.org](http://www.olssnet.org)



## Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School

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McAllen, TX 78501

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Welcome to Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School! In choosing OLSS, you have demonstrated a commitment to the values and philosophy of a quality Catholic education.

The Parent/Student Handbook reflects the policies of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School for the 2024-2025 school year. It is a resource for students and parents that outlines important details in regards to academics, discipline, and student life.

Please read this document carefully and sign the attached agreement at the end of this handbook. This agreement states that you and your child/children understand and intend to abide by the policies and procedures of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School during the 2024-2025 school year.

The priests, administrators, faculty, and staff of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School look forward to working in partnership with you to promote academic excellence and spiritual development in the context of the teachings of the Catholic Church. Let us continually pray together that God, who has begun this good work in us, may carry it through to completion.

*What greater work is there  
than training the mind  
and forming the habits  
of the young?  
- St. John Chrysostom*

Dr. Israel Martinez, Principal

Father Joe Hernandez, Parish Administrator



# OUR LADY OF SORROWS CATHOLIC SCHOOL



## MISSION STATEMENT

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School's mission is to embrace Catholic faith, respect diversity, promote community, provide a quality education for all, and prepare us for a lifetime of service centered on Jesus Christ.

## VISION STATEMENT

We catechize the community of Our Lady of Sorrows to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ through a Catholic education to ultimately share in God's everlasting happiness in heaven.

## GOALS

- ♦ To empower each community member to become a living example of Jesus Christ through prayer and worship, scripture, and the authentic teachings of the Catholic Church.
- ♦ To provide a caring, loving environment built on trust, justice and peace where each individual is valued.
- ♦ To foster a partnership based on mutual respect and understanding among the civic community, church, school and home.
- ♦ To develop life skills that will encourage each community member to become a mature, responsible, and caring citizen of the world.
- ♦ To increase each person's level of awareness, sense of responsibility and respect for global ecology.
- ♦ To challenge each person to develop an open, inquiring mind that allows an appreciation and acceptance of each person's.

uniqueness as a precious child of God.

- ♦ To provide a balanced teaching environment that ensures educational excellence while nurturing each person's creativity, spontaneity, emotional stability and self-worth.
- ♦ To create a safe and pleasant learning environment.
- ♦ To provide opportunities for each person's total physical development and good health.
- ♦ Our hope is that each member of our school community will be sent forth to love and serve God and neighbor in imitation of Jesus Christ.

## PHILOSOPHY

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School prepares students spiritually, intellectually, physically, and socially to meet the challenges of the 21st century. With Christian values as the cornerstone, OLSS provides a learning environment that builds self-directed learners, collaborative workers, and community contributors.

OLSS parents, students, & faculty work in partnership to provide a strong Catholic community as the platform from which all learning takes place. This community recognizes the importance of all its members as teachers and models of Catholic education. OLSS develops students to take their places in society with strong Catholic values.

OLSS students pursue academic excellence within their individual potential and are guided to make decisions grounded in their Catholic faith. Guided by the above philosophy, OLSS supports and follows the Vatican Council Declaration on Christian Education:

*Catholic schools are no less zealous than other schools in the promotion of culture and in the human formation of young people. It is, however, the special function of Catholic Schools to develop in the school community an atmosphere animated by the spirit of liberty and charity based on the Gospel. It enables young people, while developing their own personality, to grow at the same time in the new life which has been given to them at baptism.*

## II Vatican Council Declaration on Christian Education, Section 8







## OUR LADY OF SORROWS CATHOLIC SCHOOL



### ACCREDITATION

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School is fully accredited by the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Education Department (TCCB ED) in conjunction with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Diocese of Brownsville.

The last full TCCED state accreditation visit was held in April 2022. Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School received an excellent rating in all seven domains and was accredited without reservation.

The quality of the education offered at OLSS is enriched through membership in the Texas Catholic Conference (TCCED), the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA), and the United States Catholic Conference (USCC).

### SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

#### Pastor

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School is an integral part of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church. The chief executive officer of the school is the Pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church. The pastor is responsible to the Bishop and has the final authority in school matters.

#### Principal

The Principal is the Chief Administrator of

OLS School, and is appointed by and answers directly to the pastor. The principal administers policies set by the Diocesan Catholic Schools Office and the accrediting agencies.

The Principal, in partnership with the Diocesan Superintendent, works with the School Advisory Council and all other Councils to achieve the Mission of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School. The Principal has final responsibility for the educational and religious programs of the school, long-range planning, as well as all aspects of the school's general operation, financial management and institutional advancement. The Principal has primary responsibility for articulating the mission of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School to the public.

#### Assistant Principal

The Assistant Principal assists the Principal in the day-to-day operations of the school, which may include curriculum and instruction, technology, scheduling, discipline, and plant and facilities operations.

#### Faculty

The faculty is responsible for the academic instruction of the students, the evaluation and grading of scholastic achievement, and the classroom management under the guidance of the school administration, in accordance with the requirements of accrediting agencies, the

### GENERAL HOURS INFORMATION | SCHOOL BUSINESS HOURS

The school business office, which includes the Bookkeeper & Registrar, is responsible for student applications, registration, student transcripts, tuition and other fee collections. It is located in the main entry of the school lobby.

**Business office hours are 7:15 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. during the school year.**



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Diocesan Catholic Schools Office, and the policies of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School.

program assists in sponsoring a major fall and spring fundraiser, social events, and programs throughout the year.

### Councils

The **OLS School Advisory Council** is an appointed advisory body to the Pastor and Principal for operating the facilities of OLSS. Its duties are to help develop local school policies, provide long range planning, oversee the school budget, and promote the merits of Catholic Education. The OLS School Advisory Council **is not** a board, as in traditional schools, and only supports the pastor and principal in their decision making.

The **OLSS Parents and Educators Networking in the Spirit (PENS)** program provides a vehicle for communication and support among parents, teachers, and students. The PENS



### GENERAL HOURS INFORMATION | DAILY SCHOOL HOURS

7:10—7:45 am	Supervision Available
7:40 am	First Bell Rings: Students Prepare for Prayer & Morning Assembly
<b>7:45 am</b>	<b>Second Bell Rings: School Day Officially Begins for All Students</b>
3:00 pm	Final Dismissal Bell Rings
3:00—5:30 pm	Afterschool Care Programs & Extracurricular Activities
5:30 pm	School Offices & School Building Locked

**For the safety of our school community, parents attending morning assembly or other campus events must enter through the front office entrance and obtain a visitor's pass. Once the event or assembly is over, parents may exit only through the 11th St. or Hackberry St. gym doors.**



# OUR LADY OF SORROWS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

## Section I



### ACADEMICS/CURRICULUM

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School follows the Diocesan required academic curriculum standards, which are consistent with National Standards and the State of Texas Education Agency (TEA) guidelines, in the teaching of all secular areas. Subject textbooks and programs are chosen for their alignment to these guidelines.

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School offers students opportunities for growth in the following subjects:

**Religion:** Catholic Doctrine and Tradition, Scripture Study, Catholic Social Teaching, preparation for the Reception of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. The Religion program provides each student the opportunity to develop and enrich their relationship with God.

Holy Mass is celebrated weekly for the entire school community (families are welcome). In addition, there is an OLSS Weekend Mass once a month at Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church where students volunteer as active participants.

Students in Grades 5 and 8 take the ACRE Test (Assessment of Children/Youth Religious Education) each spring.

Students in Grade 8 take Church History and Theology of the Body.

**Computer Literacy:** Word Processing, Spreadsheets, Intro to Coding, Digital Citizenship (including appropriate and ethical use of social media and the internet), and Integration with Curricular Subjects.

**Fine Arts:** Music / Choir, and Art

**Handwriting:** Students in Montessori use the “Handwriting Without Tears” program; students in 1st & 2nd Grade use the D’Nealian Printing and Cursive Program. Grades 3 through 8 are expected to submit all handwritten work in the cursive handwriting method, unless required otherwise (flexible in grades 3-5) by the instructor.

**Language Arts:** Reading, English, Spelling, Vocabulary, Composition, Library Skills, and Appreciation of Literature. The Accelerated Reader Program is part of the Elementary and Middle School Curriculum.

**Mathematics:** Mathematics Skills, Pre-Algebra, & Algebra I.

**Advanced Math Pathway (7th Grade Algebra 1 & 8th Grade Geometry):** Placement is probationary & contingent upon ongoing acceptable performance in current year math as well as advanced performance on the Iowa 6th Grade Math Test & a passing score on the Math 2 Placement Test. This is a high school level pathway taken for high school credit with an elevated expectation of time and effort.

**Physical Education:** Physical fitness programs appropriate for each grade.

**Science:** General Sciences and Laboratory Experiences.

**Social Studies:** History, Geography, Economics, State History, and Current Events.

**Spanish:** Grades 1st – 8th. Vocabulary, common expressions, grammar, conversation, and culture. Middle school students are working toward Spanish high school credit as they take Spanish I in 6th grade and Spanish II in 7th



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grade. For students to receive credit, they must be enrolled as students since the 6th grade.

**AP Spanish Language** is a new course offered to eligible 8th grade students who are identified through their successful course work in Spanish I and Spanish II. Specific students are recommended by the teacher, and are screened and tested for potential placement into this college level course. Participating students will take the AP Spanish Language test at the end of the school year.

### MONTESSORI PROGRAM

The Montessori classroom is a prepared environment which has a definite order and purpose. The classroom curriculum includes religion, practical life, sensorial, language, math, science, and cultural areas.

### REPORT CARDS

The academic year for PK3—8th grade is divided into two (2) semesters, with two (2) nine-week quarters per semester.

Report Cards with numerical grades are available for family pickup every nine weeks for 1-8 grade students, generally the week after the quarter ends. Montessori students receive pro-

gress reports at that time as well. Iowa Assessment results are mailed at the end of the year with final report card.

Student grades are generally posted the week after their completion date and available for viewing on the FACTS Family Portal. ***Parents are encouraged to check their child's progress weekly; Jr. High students are encouraged to check their grades as well.***

### ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY / PROBATION

A student whose academic performance indicates serious deficiencies may be placed on academic probation. Academic probation is for students who ***can*** learn, but choose not to learn. Grades are checked for academic eligibility every three weeks by the Assistant Principal. ***Students whose average is below 70 in any class are not allowed to participate in any athletic, academic or afterschool activities, special events or competitions until all grades are passing (70% or higher) at the next academic eligibility check. Please note that this is not a punitive measure—the goal is to give students both time and motivation to focus on their studies.***

**A student failing two core subjects may not**

### GRADING POLICY

94—100 = A    86—93 = B    75—85 = C    70—74 = D    69 and below = F (failing)

Grades are weighted in 1st—8th grade as follows:

Tests	50% of Academic Grade
Classwork/Quiz	40% of Academic Grade
Homework	10% of Academic Grade

Class projects may be counted as a test, quiz, and/or classwork grade at the teacher's discretion.





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be promoted to the next grade level at the end of the school year. Retention is at the discretion of the Principal and Teacher. Students may also be *transferred* to the next grade level but cannot continue at OLS School. 8th grade students must have 21 credits at the end of middle school to receive a diploma and promotion.

### HONOR ROLL

Honor Roll recognition is granted per quarter, based on the following criteria:

- ♦ “A” Honor Roll: grades for all subjects, including electives, must be 94-100.
- ♦ “A/B” Honor Roll: grades for all subjects, including electives, must be 86-100.

### HOMEWORK

Homework is an important part of the student’s educational experience. It is given for

reinforcement and enrichment purposes. It is also given to foster habits of independent study and to meet growth needs of individual students. Assignments are expected to be neatly written and completed when due. Elementary teachers strive to not assign homework on Wednesday nights—Jr. High students may receive homework every evening.

### MAKE-UP WORK AND TESTING

It is the responsibility of the student (grades 4-8) to arrange time and place for make-up work with the teacher. Parents of students in grades 1-3 are responsible for contacting teachers for make-up work. Students are given one day per each absence day to make up missed work or tests. Students who do not make up work during the allotted time or dates receive a grade of zero (0%) credit for missed work.

Work missed during out-of-school suspension

### HOMEWORK GUIDELINES (1ST—8TH GRADE)

- ♦ Homework is due the day following the given assignment, unless otherwise noted by teacher. It is checked and returned in a timely manner by the teacher.
- ♦ Guidelines call for approximately 10 minutes of homework each night per grade level. This does not include any classwork not finished or special projects. Homework is given at the discretion of the teacher.
- ♦ Parents are notified by note, phone call or email if homework is not consistently returned. This inconsistency may also be noted on report cards.
- ♦ Students who are absent are given a day for each **excused** absence to make up their missed homework and assessments. Homework should be turned in a rolling basis (first missed work due the day after student returns, then following work is due), with all work being turned in as soon as possible.
- ♦ *When advanced notice is given for a long-term assignment, **no excuse** is accepted for lateness. It is our goal to help each child develop responsibility in completing their assignments.*
- ♦ Parents may contact the front office to request homework for students out more than one day. Requests must be made by 9 am and picked up after 3 pm.



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receives at most (70%) credit, as this is an unexcused absence due to disciplinary action. Students are expected to complete missed assignments and assessments to remain current with coursework. Maximum grade is given at the discretion of the teacher.

Testing of students may include the following:

- ♦ Assessment of Children / Youth Religious Education (ACRE) Level 1 (5th grade) & Level 2 (8th grade).
- ♦ Map Growth Testing is administered as a benchmark during the start of the Fall semester (K5-8 grade), at the mid-year mark and during the Spring semester (K5-8 grade).
- ♦ Classroom testing (weekly / quarterly) for student performance assessment.
- ♦ Requests for services/special academic needs testing is done by the appropriate agency or school district in which the child resides.

***Note: OLSS is limited on what is deemed a "reasonable classroom or testing accommodation" based on staffing, resources and programs.***

### ACADEMIC RECOGNITION

Students who have attended and completed the entire three (3) years of 6th, 7th, and 8th grades at Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School or another diocesan Catholic or Christian school qualify for consideration as Valedictorian / Salutatorian.

Valedictorian is conferred on the student with the highest grade point average for all three combined middle school years in all classes. Salutatorian is conferred on the student with the second highest grade point average for all

three combined middle school years in all classes. Ties for each position are permitted.

### PROMOTION / RETENTION

A student is promoted to the next grade level if, considering his/her academic abilities, he/she has satisfactorily completed the work for the current grade level and adhered to the attendance policy. Retention is decided on a case by case basis by teacher, team leader, and / or administrators. Specific regulations for promotion include:

#### **Kinder 5 yrs.**

A student must have completed the requirements for the Kindergarten Montessori program and have the social maturity to move on to the next grade level.

#### **Grades 1-5**

A student must have passing grades in all major core subjects: Religion, Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies.

#### **Grades 6-8:**

A Middle School student, according to accreditation requirements, must earn a minimum of 7 credits per year, with a minimum of 21 total credits required for the three years.

### SUMMER SCHOOL

Middle School students who fail major courses must sign up and successfully complete a Summer School Program in order to be considered for promotion. Upon completion, the highest grade awarded to the student will be a grade of 70 for the course. If OLSS does not offer such a course, families must make arrangements with their zoned public school for course comple-



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tion.

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School places high value on academic integrity. It does not permit any form of dishonesty or deception that unfairly, improperly or illegally enhances a grade on an individual assignment or course grade.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- ♦ Cheating on exams, homework or classwork
- ♦ “borrowing” or “sharing” answers on tests and exams, classwork or homework
- ♦ Taking tests for other students
- ♦ Plagiarism in any submitted coursework (copying another person’s work / words and turning them in as if they were original

work)

Students who choose to violate these guidelines face a failing grade (zero), detention, out of school suspension (OSS), and / or expulsion at the discretion of the teacher and administration. ***Final decisions are not open to any appeal process.***



*We cannot live for ourselves alone. Our lives are connected by a thousand invisible threads, and along these sympathetic fibers, our actions run as causes and return to us as results. -  
Herman Melville*



## OUR LADY OF SORROWS CATHOLIC SCHOOL



### ADMISSIONS & ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

#### Nondiscriminatory Policy

*Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School exists primarily for Catholic students, and secondarily for students of any other denomination who choose a Catholic School. Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its admissions, academic, athletic, or tuition assistance programs.*

The application process begins with an online application form and an enrollment / registration fee. If a student is not accepted or space is not available at Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School, the registration fee is refunded. After enrollment is completed and the student is officially accepted, the registration fee and tuition payments are non-refundable. Consumables and textbooks are included in the tuition payment.

**The criteria for enrollment are as follows:**

#### **Montessori Program: Pre-Kinder and Kindergarten (3, 4, & 5 yrs.)**

- ◆ Submission of all required documents
- ◆ Child must be toilet-trained
- ◆ Child is emotionally and socially ready for a school environment
- ◆ One (1) evaluation form from previous Pre-school or Day Care Director, and one (1) evaluation from parent must be provided

- ◆ Child has some understanding of the English language
- ◆ Admission is subject to space availability and interview process
- ◆ Child must meet September 1st Texas mandated age requirements
- ◆ Approval by school principal

#### **Grades 1-8**

- ◆ Standardized test scores showing on or above grade level, and in the “50 percentile” or better on Reading Total, Math Total, Language Total, and Battery Composite **OR** Successful completion of entrance exam (cost of the exam is \$10.00)
- ◆ Children entering first grade must meet September 1st Texas mandated age requirements
- ◆ Submission of all required documents
- ◆ Passing grades of C or better in all subjects
- ◆ Behavior ratings of satisfactory or better
- ◆ Attendance/Tardy records must be in compliance with TCCBED standards
- ◆ Two (2) recommendations from current school
- ◆ Admission is subject to space availability and interview process
- ◆ Approval by school principal

OLS School does not accept new 8th graders unless they are coming from a diocesan school or have attended Catholic schools in 6th & 7th grades and have requisite credits. A review may be considered and potentially approved by pastor, and/or principal.





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### ADDITIONAL CRITERIA: ADMISSION OF NON-CATHOLIC STUDENTS

The non-Catholic applicant should:

- ♦ Understand, accept, and actively support the philosophy and goals of the school
- ♦ Relate responsibly to the members of the school community, whether adults or students
- ♦ Cultivate personal talents and abilities to the extent that he/she is able
- ♦ Attend religion classes
- ♦ Attend church service and/or liturgy at the school and understand the reasons for invitation
- ♦ Participate in the school's service projects

### REENROLLMENT

For the convenience of our families, Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School implements rolling registration each year. ***Any family who does not advise the front office of their desire to not enroll for the next school year by January 24, 2025 is automatically re-enrolled on February 14, 2024 for the 2025-2026 school year.*** Accounts are automatically charged the \$320 reenrollment fee per student in March or the fee may be divided into 3-monthly payments due by May. To make arrangements, please contact the business office. ***A reminder that after March the 1st, registration fee is non-refundable.***

### IMMIGRATION

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School complies with Immigration and Naturalization Service (SEVIS) requirements regarding non-

immigrant, F-1 students. Such students entering the United States to study must hold passports with a U.S. student visa. Authorized personnel will complete all information required using the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System SEVIS registration. Our offices must conform to all policies issued by SEVIS and all student information must be accurate and kept current. Once families receive the SEVIS issued I-20, it must be taken to the consulate to have it validated. It would expedite the procedure if this is done on the same day it is issued.

### ENROLLMENT BLOCK

The school reserves the right to dismiss or block re-enrollment of a student for the following reasons:

- ♦ Repeated violations of the Discipline & Behavior Policies
- ♦ Violations of specific policies
- ♦ Excessive unexcused absences or tardiness
- ♦ Excessive non-compliance with academic requirements
- ♦ Continued non-compliance with tuition payment policy
- ♦ Continued uncooperative / non-supportive behavior on the part of the parent, including disrespectful treatment of faculty & staff

***Because it is impossible to foresee all issues which may arise, this clause empowers the administration to block enrollment for any repeated behavior which violates the spirit & philosophy of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School even though not specified above.***



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### WITHDRAWAL/ TRANSFER POLICY:

- ◆ Notice of withdrawal of a current student during the school year must be made by the parent verbally or in writing to the principal.
- ◆ An official withdrawal form must be completed by the school along with the parent.
- ◆ If a student withdraws during the school year, reimbursement of any monies applied to tuition are determined by the administration and finance office if applicable.
- ◆ **No records are sent to transferring schools of students whose financial commitment is in arrears.**

### STUDENT RECORDS

- ◆ Records of students transferring to other schools are sent directly to the other school only after an official request is received from the new school by the registrar or administration **as they are official and legal documents.**
- ◆ A student's permanent student file is kept in a secured area and contains academic transcripts, testing scores, grades, earned credits, sacramental certificates, and promotion information.
- ◆ Health records are kept in the nurse's office.

Requests for student records / transcripts / recommendations are filled within three business days. All forms must be submitted directly to the OLSS Front Office for distribution. Completed forms are sent via U.S. Mail or electronically directly to the requesting institution. Forms are not given to students or family members. Special handling may require that all postal fees be paid by the parents.

No records are sent to transferring schools of students whose financial commitment is in arrears.

### PROBATIONARY PERIOD

#### (ALL STUDENTS PK3 – 8TH)

If a student is admitted to Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School, a probationary period of nine weeks exists during which time a decision is made whether the school can continue to meet the academic and behavioral needs of the child. Parents are informed by the principal of the need to enroll the child elsewhere if the school is not able to meet the needs of the student or the child is unable or unwilling to acclimate to the culture of OLSS. This decision may be based on academics, attendance/tardiness, and / or disciplinary infractions. For our Montessori students, this time is usually considered a period of adjustment where they will demonstrate readiness for school.





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### AFTER SCHOOL CARE PROGRAM

The After School Care Program at OLSS provides a safe environment until 5:30 pm on campus for children of working parents when OLSS is in session. Due to state regulations, a limited number of students per age group are accepted on a first come, first served basis. **Priority placement is given to families with both parents working.** Drop-ins are not allowed and this is not a babysitting program.

Students enrolled in ASC who are picked up from school before or at dismissal time may not return to ASC on the same day.

A completed enrollment form must be submitted before students are accepted into the program. Payment for this service is due with the tuition payment at the first of the month, payable by the 15th of the month. Failure to abide by all school policies may result in removal of the student from the program. More information is available in the *After School Care Program Handbook*.

### ARRIVAL

The school gym opens at 7:05 a.m. to accommodate working parents. **Do not drop off your child earlier than 7:05 am. Please ensure your child has entered the building before leaving if outside staff are not on duty yet.** After 7:15 a.m. students may enter the campus through the 11th street gym entrance, the Gumwood driveway entrance or through the Montessori entrance with siblings. The school day officially begins with morning prayer & assembly for all students promptly at 7:45 a.m. in the gym. Students arriving after

7:45 AM should enter through the front office and report to the cafeteria; they are marked as tardy. Students arriving after 9:45 am or leaving before 10:15 am & not returning are marked absent.

### DISMISSAL

- ♦ All parents must follow Dismissal Site instructions provided through email before the first day of school by the school principal. This email will also include a detailed map to follow.
- ♦ No student is allowed to wait in the office area or outside the school building without supervision while waiting to be picked up.
- ♦ Parents must notify the school in writing when a student is allowed to go home with another student or adult not on the parent's designated pick-up list. **Students report to their normal dismissal areas; vehicles must pick them up there.**
- ♦ Custodial parents must communicate with each other and work out schedules in advance (in accordance with any legal directives) so students know who is picking them up daily.
- ♦ Because of the disruption it causes during our dismissal and to eliminate hurt feelings, no limousines or similar vehicles are permitted to pick up students from school.

### ATHLETICS PROGRAM

Students in grades 6, 7, and 8 are eligible to try out and participate in the interscholastic sports program offered by the school. Other grade levels are permitted to participate based on the Athletic Director's discretion. Continued participation is determined by academic perfor-



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mance, attendance/tardiness, and / or behavior. Refer to the *Athletic Handbook* for more details regarding eligibility and participation, especially in reference to maintaining passing grades and to following all policies and procedures in this Handbook.

### ATTENDANCE, ABSENCE, TARDIES

#### Attendance

In compliance with the Texas State Education Law and the Texas Catholic Conference Education Department (TCCED, accreditation agency), Our Lady of Sorrows School follows compulsory attendance laws. Therefore, a student in PK3-8th grade who is enrolled in school must meet the legal attendance requirements. A school calendar provides a total of 180 instructional days. A student who does not attend school for a **minimum of 162** of those days or misses more than 18 days (10%) of the school year may be retained for loss of academic instruction or unenrolled for the following school year. The school calendar is published prior to the beginning of each school year and provided with this handbook. Parents / guardians are expected to honor this calendar when planning vacations and appointments, as regular attendance is essential for a continuous, uninterrupted program of instruction as a basis for academic success.

In the event that a student fails to attend the required 162 days, the parent or guardian is required to meet with the school Principal before May. Parent or guardian must furnish reasons for the absences, including medical verification, before credit is given for the school year. Acceptable reasons may include the following

as "extenuating circumstances" for the purpose of granting credit: personal sickness, sickness or death in the immediate family, or participation in approved, school sponsored, extracurricular activities.

#### Absences

A written statement giving reasons for an absence must be brought within 3 days to the student's teacher upon the student's return in order for the absence to be marked Excused. These notes / letters (preferably on the attending physician's [non-household] letterhead) are retained in the office for one year. Should absence for any reason other than illness seem imperative, parents must consult with Administration and present a written reason for the absence.

Please note that ill students may not return to school until they are symptom free for 24 hours and be cleared by their attending physician (preferably not from their same household) to return to classes (including, for example, cases of fever, pink eye, lice, etc.). Parents are called to pick up their children if they exhibit signs of any infectious / contagious condition.

Students have one day to make up work for each day they are absent (**excused absences**) from school. Work turned in after that deadline receives only partial credit. Assignments not turned in by the second-class day after they've had time to make up the work must still be finished, but students receive no credit (0% entered into the gradebook) for their work. For example, a student who is absent





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three days is given three school days to complete the missed work; please note, however, that work must be turned in sequentially, that is, the work missed on the first day is due the first day after coming back to school; students should not wait to turn in all missed work at the very end of their allotted make up time.

**Teachers do not prepare material ahead of time for pre-planned absences (such as, but not limited to, vacations during normal school days). Absences as such are deemed as unexcused.**

When a student is absent for two or more days due to illness, a parent may call the school office before 9:00 AM to arrange for homework assignments. Assignments may be picked up at the school office from 3:00 – 4:00 PM that same day. Requests placed after 9:00 a.m. are available the next normal school day after 3:00 pm in the front office.

For short absences, students should make arrangement with classmates regarding assignments. Students may also receive missed assignments from their teacher when they return to school.

Arrangements for classroom tests missed because of an absence are to be made with the individual teachers. These tests must be taken no later than one week of the original test date.

### EARLY DEPARTURES

A written note is required for a student to leave school before the regular dismissal time. The note is presented to the teacher in charge at the time of departure, and the student reports to the office at the designated time for

pick up by the parent who signs out the child. **Class is not interrupted to call a student to the office.** The school does not release a child to anyone other than the parent, legal guardian, or adult listed on the school record. **A student may not be released early on a continual basis.** Patterns of early departure or consistent appointments made at the same class time will result in a conference with administration. The school encourages all doctor and dental appointments be made after 3 pm when the instructional day has ended. **Students are not allowed to leave early between 2:15—3:00 pm.**

### EXCUSED / UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Excused absences are granted for illness, death in the immediate family, or any other unusual and unexpected events which must be cleared by the school principal.

**Pre-planned absences, such as vacations, are counted as “Unexcused” and are discouraged.** Teachers do not accommodate parents by outlining lesson plans in advance and no assignments are given in anticipation of the vacation. Teachers do not give make-up tests or assignments for absences due to vacations; a grade of zero (0) or 50 is entered into the gradebook. A meeting is required with administration and the final decision is left at their discretion.

If an absence excuse is not submitted within the required 3 days, the absence will be marked Unexcused and will count against the limit of unexcused absences allowed by TCCBED. For that reason, any unexcused absences are strongly discouraged.



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*For school approved trips, such as academic or athletic competitions, excused absences are counted for one day of travel before the event and one day afterwards. Any other days are counted as unexcused.*

### TARDINESS

Promptness is an indication of good self-discipline. Habitual tardiness seriously disrupts the educational process of other students and affects the school performance of the student who is tardy. It is the responsibility of the parents to make sure the student is punctual to school. Habitual tardiness will require a conference between the parents, student, and Principal.

### EXCESSIVE ABSENCES / TARDINESS

The following consequences are in place to address excessive absences and tardiness:

- ◆ 8 Tardies equal 1 day of absence per 9-week quarter.
- ◆ 18 Tardies (maximum for full year) may result in blocked enrollment, and results in elimination from extracurricular activities (athletics, academic competitions, after school dances, etc.) for the remainder of the school year at the administrations discretion
- ◆ 8 Unexcused Absences – elimination from extracurricular activities (as above, per quarter).
- ◆ 18 Absences (excused or unexcused) may result in academic retention or blocked enrollment for the following school year as per TCCBED mandate. Exclusion from extracurricular activities (as above) for remainder of the school year is additionally implemented.

### ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLAN AND GAS PIPE TESTING PLAN

In compliance with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) enacted in 1986, all schools—public or private—are required to have an inspection of all buildings for asbestos-containing building materials (ACBM) by accredited asbestos-trained personnel. All Catholic School facilities of the Diocese of Brownsville were inspected in 2021 including Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School in McAllen, TX. The Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School campus was inspected for ACBN by personnel from EFI Global, Inc. (EFI), an environmental consulting firm located in Houston, Texas. EFI is accredited and licensed by the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) to perform asbestos condition assessments of all suspect and identified ACBM. Building materials at Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School were observed to be in undamaged condition and/or present minimal hazards, if any, to building occupants. Periodic surveillance is also conducted semi-annually by campus personnel.

This management plan assures that students and personnel are free from any exposure to asbestos containing material. The inspection findings, both current and previous, and management plan are on file in the administrative office. These are available for review upon request at any time during normal school hours.

In compliance with the mandate from the Railroad Commission of Texas, Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School undergoes Gas Pipe Testing every two years.



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### BACKPACKS

*Rolling backpacks are not allowed*, unless it is medically necessary and accompanied with doctors' orders. Must be approved by administrator:

- ◆ Companies manufacture and sell ergonomic backpacks that support the back and waist.
- ◆ Many student books are consumable workbooks and pages may be removed and sent home in the case of homework, eliminating the need for books to be taken home.
- ◆ Many hardback textbooks are accessible online to students allowing for student copies to remain at school unless there is no computer access for student.
- ◆ Accidents / injuries of students tripping over long-handled rolling backpacks.
- ◆ Limited space in classrooms for rolling backpacks being brought to school.
- ◆ Students bring rolling luggage as a backpack.
- ◆ Often, when staff inspect backpacks, unnecessary items such as multiple sweaters, multiple library books, toys, extra notebooks, etc. are found; parents are urged to periodically clean out their child's backpacks.

### CAMPUS CRISIS PLAN

OLSS adheres to all regulations stated in the Campus Crisis Plan issued by the Diocese of Brownsville Catholic Schools Office. This Crisis Plan covers emergencies that may arise at school and includes response procedures, emergency numbers, and other pertinent information. The Crisis Plan is available for review in the school office.

### CELL PHONES / ELECTRONICS

*Cell phones and other personal electronic devices are not allowed on campus.* Students may **not** bring or use cell phones, smart watches, fitness trackers, eBook readers, tablets, laptops, Mp3 players, cameras, hand held video game systems, radios, or any other electronic devices onto school grounds. These items are confiscated and turned in to the principal's office if brought to school and / or used by a student.

*If a student chooses to bring in a personal cell phone and turn it into the front office upon arriving at school, and to be picked up after school concludes, please be aware that **the school is NOT responsible for lost or stolen devices that may occur. Parents and students understand they are choosing to leave it in the front office at their own free will and the school is not held liable for any handling or misplacing of the device.***

If a student is found with electronics during the school day (**whether having been used or not**) the student's device is confiscated for two days and a parent must retrieve the device from the principal. In addition, the student will receive a discipline mark in FACTS to track the infraction. Further violations of this policy will result in a student receiving a day of in-school suspension (along with a fee to parents to offset the cost of the ISS supervisor).

### CLINIC AND SCHOOL NURSE

#### Immunization Records

All immunizations must be up-to-date within 30 days of entry into school. Failure to comply



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will result in the child's removal from school.

### Religious Beliefs Exemption

The Catholic Bishops of the U.S. and Catholic moral and ethical theologians have concluded that the use of vaccines is not morally wrong, therefore, **no exemptions are granted in the Diocese of Brownsville on the basis of religious beliefs.**

### Medical

If for medical reasons, an exemption requires a written statement signed by the child's physician (MD or DO), duly registered and licensed to practice medicine in the US that, in the physician's opinion, the vaccine required is injurious to the child's health or poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the child. Unless it is written in the statement that a life-long condition exists, the exemption statement is valid for only one year from the date signed by the physician. This document must be submitted to the principal prior to the child attending school and will be reviewed annually.

**Texas State law forbids the dispensing of medications by school employees without the written request of the parents or legal guardians. The designated school employee at the school is the nurse.**

A student with severe health issues such as diabetes, epilepsy, asthma, etc. needs a note from their doctor summarizing the condition, to be kept in the student's emergency file.

If your child requires medication during school hours, this medicine must be sent to the clinic with a note containing the following information:

- ◆ Name of student
- ◆ Name of the medication
- ◆ The prescribed dosage of the medication
- ◆ The time(s) and exact dates of administration of the medication
- ◆ In the case of prescription drugs, the full name of the doctor prescribing the medication
- ◆ The signature of the parent or legal guardian
- ◆ Medications must be prescribed by a U.S. physician and come from a U.S. pharmacy.

### Returning after Illness or Condition

Ill students may not return to school until they are symptom free for 24 hours and be cleared by their attending physician (preferably not from the same household) to return to classes (including, for example, cases of flu / fever, pink eye, lice, etc.). Parents are called to pick up their children if they exhibit signs of any infectious / contagious condition.

### Health Screenings

#### Vision, Hearing, Scoliosis and Acanthosis Screening

As per the Diocese of Brownsville policy and in compliance with The Texas Department of Health requires that students be screened for vision, hearing, acanthosis and scoliosis annually. Schools follow the screening schedule of the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Education Department.

#### **Acanthosis Nigricans Screening (AN)**

AN screening is a state mandate and required for all students in 1st, 3rd, 5th and 7th grades. AN is a light brown to black velvety, rough or





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thickened area on the surface of the skin usually found around the neck.

AN can signal high insulin levels, which can lead to insulin resistance and then to Type 2 diabetes. This screening usually takes place during the first semester of the school year.

The Texas Risk Assessment for Type 2 Diabetes in Children is a legislatively mandated program developed, coordinated, and administered by certified screeners within the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Border Health Office (BHO). The program assesses children who may be at risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes.

***Note: If a parent wishes to decline any of the state-mandated health screenings be done in school, a letter is required stating that they are declining school-based screening. However, the parent is required to present the results and documentation completed at their primary care physicians office to the school nurse for documentation. For health screenings, it must be completed by a licensed US Physician.***

Results: If your child does not pass one of the required screenings at school, you will be notified in writing by the school nurse and a referral will be given to follow up with your primary care physician.

### COMMUNICATION / CONFERENCES

The lines of communication should always be open and positive between student, teacher, parent, and administration. Therefore:

- ♦ Students are encouraged to approach their teachers first in the event of any concerns or questions in regards to academics, school

policies, extracurricular activities, or events

- ♦ Parents are encouraged to keep in close contact with their child's instructors. Although teachers strive to maintain contact with every parent, the reality is that, due to instructional demands, this is not always done in a timely manner. Do not wait for that teacher phone call or email if you have concerns. Call the front office and a message will be forwarded to the teacher or a parent conference will be set up. You may also email faculty members through FACTS or the school website
- ♦ Teachers have designated parent / teacher conference times. If these times are not convenient, accommodations are attempted, including before and/or after school hours.
- ♦ All conferences should be conducted in a professional, confidential manner, and in an appropriate setting. ***Hallways, dismissal time, sports or school events, personal events and chance meetings in public are not appropriate settings.***
- ♦ Conferences are limited only to the parents' child/legal guardian on record and to the issue at hand; the behavior of other students is not discussed.
- ♦ The teacher has the right to stop the conference if a parent becomes verbally or physically abusive; the parent will be asked to leave the building.
- ♦ A parent asking to meet with the principal or assistant principal in regard to student concerns must first meet with the teacher. It is in the spirit of open communication that we support resolving issues at the root.
- ♦ If a parent and teacher cannot resolve an issue, a counselor or the assistant principal is asked to step in and mediate.



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- ♦ The principal will step in when all other mediation is exhausted.

### FACTS FAMILY PORTAL

OLSS contracts with FACTS, a hosting communications company, to develop and maintain direct electronic communication between OLSS and families, including email, online grades, and online homework / classwork postings at <http://ols-tx.client.renweb.com/pw/>

### SCHOOL WEBSITE

The OLSS website ([www.olsschool.org](http://www.olsschool.org)) is a good source of information and support that includes a copy of the handbook, menus, calendar, events, and much more.

### SOCIAL MEDIA

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School maintains an official digital presence at the following social media sites: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

### EMAIL / REMIND APP

Teachers have school email accounts & parents may communicate with them through these accounts, always remembering to be professional in their correspondence. Staff will respond within 48 hours. ***Staff are prohibited from communicating with parents through personal accounts or apps such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Messaging / Texts, etc.***

The Remind App or Class Dojo may be used to communicate immediate assignment changes or send reminders / field trip information. The teacher will instruct parents on how to join.

### TELEPHONE CALLS

Parent-teacher telephone messages are placed in teacher boxes. Teachers generally check their boxes at the beginning or end of the day. If the concern is urgent, the receptionist will attempt to let the teacher know without interrupting instructional time.

Students are not called out of class to answer a parent phone call. In case of an emergency, the phone call is directed to an administrator.

**Telephone calls requesting a student be told of a change in transportation, After School Care, etc. are discouraged and accepted only if done before 2 pm and only for emergencies.** Relaying these messages is very disruptive to the learning process, as well as to the front office staff's duties.

### CONFIDENTIALITY

School staff, including teachers, counselors, and administrators, will keep confidential information entrusted to them as long as no one's life, health, or safety is at stake. Parents will be notified promptly if there is an immediate concern.

### EDUCATIONAL OUTINGS

All off-campus educational trips are related to some aspect of the curriculum. Educational outings are initiated by the teacher, approved by the principal and must be completed before May.

***Permission slips must be signed by a parent or guardian and returned to the teacher along with applicable fees. Permission by fax or email is accepted in lieu of an official***



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***written permission slip. Verbal permission is not accepted due to liability issues.***

Students not participating in the trip must attend school. Students who are participating in the educational outing must ride the bus to and from the field trip with their class. School staff may dismiss a student to their parent attending the field trip at the end of the event but the parent must sign off on the permission slip release that the school is not liable.

Medications (including an EpiPen, if applicable) and a copy of the student's Emergency Health Care Plan must accompany the student. The adult carrying the EpiPen will be identified and introduced to the student as well as the other chaperones.

***All educational outings are a privilege, not a right; thus, participation can be denied if a student fails to meet academic and/or behavioral requirements.***

### EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

In order to assure our ability to make contact in case of emergency, parents must update Emergency Contact information as changes are made to home addresses, home phone, cell phone numbers, or emergency contact persons.

### EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students participating in extracurricular activities are evaluated every three weeks on Fridays at 2 pm based on their current grades in FACTS. A student receiving a failing mark in

any subject is ineligible for extracurricular activities (meetings, practices, games, tournaments, performances, dances, weekend events, etc.) until the next check-in period three weeks later. ***Parents & students should periodically check their grades in FACTS to see if there is improvement.*** Continued participation in any activity is contingent on academic performance, behavior and compliance with all procedures and policies in this Handbook and the Discipline Policy. Grounds for removal from an activity can include, but are not limited to: serious violation of the Discipline Policy, excessive tardiness and / or absence, behavior contract, excessive discipline slips, detention, and / or suspension.

### Altar Servers

Students in 5th—8th grade may join this parish and school organization. Altar Servers are responsible for serving all parish and school weekday and weekend Holy Mass celebrations, including wedding, funeral and special Holy Masses for the school and parish. Students may join at any point during the school year by speaking with Mr. De la Rosa, Mr. Moreno, or Scott Henry at the parish.

### Liturgical Choir

The purpose of choir is to provide students the opportunity to express themselves musically, learn to perform, and to compete. Choir is an expansion to our music education department. The activity benefits each student in many different areas. Students learn about breathing and vocal techniques that are necessary for be-



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coming a good singer; learn to use sight-reading and rhythm skills to follow along the music; and learn to work as a team. Choir is beneficial for the student that wishes to continue music education, music performance or learn to compete in high school. Most importantly, the self-confidence and personal satisfaction that the student experiences in learning to sing in front of an audience and together in harmony is extremely rewarding. 4th—8th grade students may audition at the beginning of each school year for inclusion. Ms. Jaclyn Ybanez is the faculty advisor.

### **National Junior Honor Society**

Our Lady of Sorrows School is a participating member of the NJHS. This organization is part of the National Honor Society, the oldest and most respected organization for recognizing the academic accomplishments of young scholars in America. Any student in the seventh and eighth grade who meets the challenging academic standards set forth by the organization's Charter is eligible for selection and possible induction. Selection, discipline, and dismissal are reviewed and recommended by the Faculty Council as set forth in the NJHS Constitution. Mrs. Fuentes, and Mrs. Salazar are the faculty advisors.

### **Student Council**

Student Council is a service organization that plans activities for the student body, and works with the PENS, the Athletic Program, faculty, and staff to promote school spirit and unity. Student representatives are elected at

the beginning of the school year. Once elected, continued membership is determined by academic performance and behavior. Faculty advisors are TBA.

### **Worship Committee**

Worship Committee's primary purpose is to enhance the religious climate of the school. Students in grade 7 may apply for their 8th grade year. The final selection of members is determined by academic grades, essay, citizenship, teacher recommendation, and parental consent. Once selected, continued membership is determined by academic performance and behavior. Students apply and are selected the year before their service begins. Mr. De La Rosa and Mr. Moreno are the faculty advisors.

### **8th Grade Camp Eagle Experience**

The 8th grade class takes an annual spring trip to Camp Eagle in Rocksprings in central Texas. In order to qualify for this experience a student must maintain a passing yearly average for all classes as well as be passing all subjects during the quarter the trip is taken. The student must also be in compliance with behavior requirements. A student is ineligible for the trip if they have faced multiple disciplinary actions during the year, including, but not limited to: detention, academic or behavioral contract, probation, or suspension. Final decision as to a student's attendance is made by the principal.

## **TYPES OF FAMILY STRUCTURES, LEGAL GUARDIANSHIP AND CONSER-**





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### VATORSHIP OF CHILDREN IN RELATIONSHIP TO SCHOOL PROCEDURES

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School is finding an increasing number of families experiencing transitions in parental custodial relationships. For this reason we find it necessary to clarify and restate the standard procedures the administration and faculty follow to communicate with parents or legal guardians in such situations.

OLSS relies on the information provided by the parent or legal guardian in the FACTS Student Registration Form under the sections titled: Student Demographics, Custodial Parents, Emergency Contacts, Transportation, and Authorized Extended Family Members or Persons. The administration and faculty communicate with the parent or legal guardian established as PRIMARY CONTACT in the Student Information Sheet provided during Orientation.

**If there is a relevant change** in the student's family structure, legal guardianship, conservatorship, or authorized pick-up, please update the [FACTS>Family Home>ContactInfo](#) immediately **AND** notify OLSS Front Office at (956) 686-3651.

In two parent families it is assumed that both parents are living at the same address, unless we are notified otherwise. OLSS personnel will therefore send home notices, communications, etc., with the child. It is assumed that both parents are communicating regarding the child and that all information is shared. This information includes, but is not limited to, conference appointments, report cards, discussions

with school personnel, tuition statements, and extracurricular activities.

In families experiencing separation of parents, or ending in divorce, the above information is sent home with the child to whichever parent currently has care of the child. It is assumed that this information is shared by the parents and between the parents. Since this situation frequently impacts on a child's achievement and interaction at school, parents are asked to inform both the principal and teacher of this fact so that appropriate support can be given to the child. Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School personnel cannot proceed on hearsay, rumors, or demands of a parent, but only with the appropriate documentation detailed below.

In cases of an actual divorce decree involving clear custody by one parent, the principal is to be informed by the custodial parent of this fact. A copy of the first page of the decree bearing the case number, the pages referring to custody and the relationship with the school, and the final page bearing the judge's signature are to be submitted to the principal. Unless the decree indicates otherwise, school communications will be sent home to the custodial parent. Custodial parents should understand, however, that unless the divorce decree specifically limits the non-custodial parent's right to access to records, the non-custodial parent has a right to the same access as the custodial parent. We will, unless instructed by a Court Order, release such records upon request to the non-custodial parent. "Records" include official transcripts, report cards, health records, referrals for special services, and communications regarding major disciplinary actions. It does



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not include daily classwork and papers or routine communications sent home through the child to the home of residence. In these cases the custodial parent is asked to cooperate with the school and share this information directly with the non-custodial parent. This avoids time-consuming duplication of services.

Further, you should realize that unless restricted by Court Order, any non-custodial parent has the right to attend any school activity of their child which includes sports activities and class programs. Parents should keep each other informed as to these activities to avoid duplication of communications and to allow the school to better attend to the duty of teaching your children.

In cases of "joint" custody (shared parenting agreements) entitling both parents access to school personnel and activities, it is assumed that one copy of communications and information will be sent home with the child and that this will be shared by and between the parents.

Regarding parent conferences in all situations: it is preferred and will be the general procedure that one conference appointment be scheduled "jointly" if both parents wish to be present. It is assumed that parents are able to set aside differences and to come together on behalf of their child for this time. A joint conference further insures that both parents are given the same information at the same time, thereby avoiding misunderstandings and misinterpretations.

In cases where joint conferences are clearly neither possible nor desirable by all parties in-

volved, alternative arrangements may be discussed with the principal, subject to the approval of both parents, and further reviewed by Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School's legal counsel. Every effort is made to keep communication open with both parents while at the same time avoiding duplication of services and excessive demands on the teacher's time.

Visitation should generally begin at the home of one of the parents and not at school. It is hoped that visitation arrangements would reflect the sensitivity of both parents to the consistency and routines that foster security in a child and allow for school responsibilities and homework to be taken care of during the school week.

If there are questions concerning this statement of procedures or circumstances you feel necessitate other arrangements, please contact the principal personally.

### **GRADUATION CELEBRATIONS**

The school coordinates Kindergarten Celebration and Eighth Grade Graduation ceremonies and receptions. Eighth Grade Graduation dinner and reception is planned in partnership with parent volunteers.

### **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES / HIERARCHICAL ORG CHART**

A grievance is a complaint based on any alleged violation or inequitable application of policy or a dispute over the meaning or interpretation of the terms contained in this handbook.

This procedure is intended to resolve a griev-



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ance informally at the lowest possible administrative level in a Christian atmosphere. Persons with concerns regarding application or interpretation of a policy should first attempt to address the concern with the teacher. Only after such attempts have failed should administrators be contacted.

The following are levels of submitting and resolving a grievance:

### **Informal Action—Resolution/Conciliation**

- ◆ Level 1: Meeting with the Teacher
- ◆ Level 2: Meeting with the Grade Level Partner and/or Team Lead(s)
- ◆ Level 3: Meeting with the Grade Level Partner and/or Team Lead(s) and Counselor
- ◆ Level 4: Meeting with the Assistant Principal
- ◆ Level 5: Meeting with the Principal

### **Formal Action**

If a satisfactory resolution is not reached at the resolution/conciliation level, the complainant shall state his or her complaint in writing (on a form to be provided by the principal), setting forth the nature of the complaint, all relevant details and the remedy sought. This form should be submitted to the pastor within ten (10) working days following the meeting with the principal.

- ◆ Level 6: Meeting with the Pastor
- ◆ Level 7: Meeting with the Superintendent

### **GUIDANCE PROGRAM**

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School offers two certified counselor who provides individu-

al, group, & class sessions. Parents may request additional counseling services by submitting the forms available in the school office.

### **LATE PICK UP**

Students not registered in the After School Care Program and not picked up on time at regular dismissal are taken to a classroom and supervised. There is a \$10.00 charge for this service. There is an additional charge of \$10 for every 15 minutes past 4:00 p.m. This is billed directly to the student's account. Continual late pick-up will result in a parent conference with an administrator.

### **LIBRARY**

The library is central to the school's total educational mission. As such, the library program is fully integrated into the curriculum, serving the school's educational goals and objectives. The library offers both traditional resources and new technologies as teaching and learning tools. The library is accessible to teachers and students during the instructional day, as well as before and after school at the library manager's designated times and days.

Students regularly visit the library to check out books, to receive instruction of library techniques, and to do research. When in the library they are under the supervision of the library manager. Fines are assessed for overdue books and all lost or overdue fees must be paid at year's end to receive report cards.

### **LUNCH / SNACKS**

The school cafeteria serves a nutritious lunch daily. Students inform their teachers during



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morning attendance whether they will eat the cafeteria lunch or have brought their own lunch from home. A student who forgets their lunchbox is offered a cafeteria lunch or salad. Students may not call their parents to bring them an outside lunch. ***Parents are not allowed to drop off lunch for students (fast food, home cooked, etc.).***

***Additionally, parents are responsible to ensure their child receives a filling and nutritious breakfast before coming on campus. Snack time is not part of our curriculum; individual teachers may allow a small, nutritious, and non-messy snack, but that is up to the discretion of the teacher and is a privilege extended to their class. Students should not, as a general rule, bring snacks to eat during the day, and/or share snacks/food.***

### PARTIES

Grades PK-5 have two class parties per year (Christmas and Valentine's Day). School sponsored dances and sports activity days are scheduled for Middle School students.

Class time is not taken for birthday parties & birthday cakes are not accepted into the classrooms. Birthday cupcakes or cookies may be brought to share with classmates during snack time for Montessori students.

**Birthday invitations may be distributed in class only with teacher approval to the entire class or boy / girl sections.** Invitations given out during morning assembly or lunchtime may be confiscated. These requirements are for the emotional well-being of all

students. It is very hurtful to see classmates receive an invitation while one is left out.

Students may not bring refreshments or collect money for any reason without approval from administration. Delivery of flowers, balloons, etc. to the school is discouraged; deliveries are held in the front office and given to students at the end of the school day.

### PHYSICAL EDUCATION

All students are required to participate in Gym / PE classes unless a written note from the student's physician (preferably not from the same household) is presented stating the reason and duration of the exemption. Copies should be given to the classroom teacher, coach, and nurse.

### SCHOOL CLOSINGS OR EVACUATIONS

Notification of school closings due to weather or other circumstances are cleared with the Diocesan Catholic Schools Office and then announced on TV Channels 4, 5, and 48. Notice is also posted on the school Facebook page, Website, and through the parent alert phone texting notification system.

In case of a school evacuation, students are to be picked up at the main Church or playground as necessary.

### SCHOOL FACILITIES

Use of the school facilities is encouraged for programs which provide a significant religious, educational, or civic contribution to the public, provided that such programs do not interfere with regular school activities or create expenses or liabilities which jeopardize the





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school's operation.

The principal in conjunction with the pastor will determine the conditions under which their school facilities may be used. Adequate insurance or bonding must be supplied.

### SCHOOL PROPERTY

The parent of a child who carelessly destroys or damages any school electronic device, furniture, equipment, buildings, or anyone's personal property is obligated to pay the full amount of repairs and labor or replacement. Textbooks rented by the student must have a proper book cover. No writing in rented textbooks is permitted. The student will pay a fine or replacement for damaged or lost texts before any final reports, transcripts, or diplomas are presented.

### SCHOOL SAFETY

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School attempts to provide a safe environment for all individuals. Verbal or written threats made against the physical or emotional well-being of any individual are taken very seriously. Students making such threats (seriously or in jest; in person or online) face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion.

In the event that the school suspects danger to a student or the school community, the school reserves the right to call the police.

### SMOKING

Bringing any tobacco, tobacco related products, or smoking products on campus is prohibited. Smoking (cigars, cigarettes, pipes, tobacco of any type, marijuana, e-cigarettes, va-

pors, etc.) is prohibited as well.

### SOCIAL MEDIA

#### Social Media Postings of Student Photographs

Social media and communications websites and apps such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, TikTok, Tumblr, Pinterest, WhatsApp, AskFM, and others allow users to connect instantaneously with others across the globe and share messages (text/voice), pictures and video. Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School works to protect the confidentiality rights of all students. The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1973 (FERPA) and the Child Protection Act of 2012 (CPA) were designed to protect personally identifiable information of minors. OLS School adheres to these laws in its attempt to protect the privacy rights of all students. As a result, the parents of students enrolled at OLS School are discouraged from posting photographs taken at school sponsored events that include the images and names of students other than their own on their personal social media pages. Such postings are a violation of OLS School's adherence to FERPA and the Child Protection Act.

Furthermore, **photos and captions on a student or parent's social media account that depict the school, the faculty, other students, or the parish in a defamatory manner, or attempt to defame, may result in disciplinary action up to expulsion from OLS and/or other legal action.**

**Sexting:** Students involved in possession or transmission of inappropriate photos on their cell phones or other electronic devices which



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negatively impact the learning environment at school face suspension and/or expulsion. In accordance with the law, the McAllen Police Department will be notified and students and parents may face legal repercussions as well.

**Texas Penal code Section 43.261**, it is a crime for a minor to “intentionally or knowingly” send another minor an obscene photo/video or a photo/video of a minor engaging in sexual conduct, if they know it was a minor. It is also illegal for a minor to possess such material, even if it was produced by a friend.

**Texas Penal Code 21.19** which states that a Class C misdemeanor is committed by a person if they knowingly transmit electronic visual material that depicts any person engaging in sexual conduct or with the person’s intimate parts exposed that is not sent at the request of or with the express consent of the recipient. This applies to all electronic platforms such as e-mail, texts, apps, and social media.

**Texas Penal Code 21.16** was amended, updating the penalty to a state jail felony for someone to reveal or disclose images of someone engaged in sexual conduct, simulating sexual conduct, or to reveal or disclose images of someone’s intimate parts unless that person gives their consent. Just because someone took an intimate picture of themselves and sent it to a partner or someone else does not mean they gave consent for it to be posted, sent, or shown to anyone else.

**Texting:** Students should at no time be involved in texting or other online communication during the course of the school day since electronic devices are prohibited. Students in-

involved in texting at school face detention, suspension and/or expulsion. **This includes chatting or emailing on school provided laptop/electronic device in class or school hours.**

### SOLICITATIONS

Literature promoting private businesses, organizations, or political candidates may not be distributed through the school.

### STUDENT FUNDRAISING

Students may not engage in fund-raising activities without the approval of the Principal, either individually or as a club.

### STUDENT DELIVERIES

The school front office staff does not notify students when parents drop off homework, books, etc. It is up to the parent to let the student know the approximate time the item will be delivered, and for the student to check with the front office for deliveries.

### STUDENT LUNCHES

The school cafeteria provides a hot lunch daily. Students may bring their own lunches from home as well. Food brought from home will not be heated by cafeteria staff.

All other food deliveries must be authorized by administration and are allowed to students who have monitored dietary needs, such as diabetes. Otherwise, lunch deliveries are not allowed (parents may not deliver fast food / restaurant food to students during the day). The school staff reserves the right to check dropped off lunchboxes for such food.



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### TECHNOLOGY

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School's computer facilities provide unequaled opportunities to explore and use a varied and exciting set of educational resources including network-based and internet-based programs.

We recognize that the internet's access to virtually limitless sources of information can pose a hazard. Some internet sites contain materials which are sexually explicit, offensive, or contrary to our educational mission. Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School uses filters and a firewall that limit access to undesirable web sites. However, these measures are not completely effective in deterring individuals who are intent on accessing such sites. Therefore, we provide supervision wherever computers are in use.

Engagement in social media sites, messaging apps or online blogs such as, but not limited to, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, etc. may result in disciplinary actions if the content of the student's blog or posts includes defamatory comments regarding the school, the faculty, other students or the parish.

We place primary responsibility on the student to use our computer facilities for appropriate means only. The rules for computer usage and guidelines for on-line conduct are posted in each room where computers are available for use. Failure to meet any of these expectations may result in revocation of the student's permission to use the school's computers and/or other disciplinary action.

**To be granted permission to use the school's computers, the student must:**

- ♦ Digitally sign the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) Agreement;
- ♦ Digitally obtain a parental signature on the AUP Agreement.

**The following are considered serious violations which may lead to suspension or termination of privileges:**

- ♦ Use of the network or internet to plagiarize or violate copyright laws.
- ♦ Use of the network or internet to send or display offensive and/or obscene messages or pictures.
- ♦ Use of computer to access material that is profane or obscene, that advocates illegal acts, or that advocates violence or discrimination towards others.
- ♦ Use of the network or internet to harass, insult, or attack others.
- ♦ Use of the network or internet for commercial purposes or sending of unsolicited junk mail.
- ♦ Trespassing in another's folder, work, or files **for any reason.**
- ♦ Use of media devices (regardless of source / content) without the permission of the network administrator or classroom teacher.
- ♦ The creation, propagation, and/or use of computer viruses.
- ♦ Acts of vandalism, which include, but are not limited to, any attempt to harm or destroy the network/Internet or any networks or sites connected to the network/Internet.
- ♦ Attempts to breach security codes and/or passwords.
- ♦ Willful destruction of computer hardware, software, or attempts to exceed or modify



## OUR LADY OF SORROWS CATHOLIC SCHOOL



the parameters of the system (will require restitution for costs associated with system restoration, hardware, or software).

- ◆ Attempts to read, delete, copy, or modify the electronic mail of other system users.
- ◆ Deliberate interference with the ability of other system users to send or receive email.
- ◆ Electronic snooping for any purpose or transmission of discriminatory or harassing language by any student, school employee, or volunteer.
- ◆ Threats to carry out any of the above.

**Any violation of the above can result in forfeiting of the use of electronic device, detention, suspension or even expulsion from school. This will be determined by administration.**

### ONLINE SAFETY

When using the Internet, students are expected to act in a proper and ethical manner and to abide by these general rules when using school computers:

- ◆ Being polite. Not writing or sending abusive messages to others.
- ◆ Using appropriate language. Not swearing, using vulgarities, or any other inappropriate language.
- ◆ Not revealing personal address or phone numbers or those of fellow students or send my picture to anyone without getting parental permission.
- ◆ Never arrange a meeting with any person encountered online while using the school's computer system.
- ◆ Notify a staff member if a request for personal information or threatening statements, or

any transmission that causes the receiver to feel uncomfortable is received through the school's system.

- ◆ E-mail is not guaranteed to be private. People who operate the system do have access to all e-mail. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities may be reported to the authorities.
- ◆ Do not buy or order anything online or give out credit card information.

### PARENT DIGITAL PERMISSION FOR MEDIA RELEASE

Through the registration/re-enrollment process, Parents or Guardians give digital permission for Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School to use a child's name, picture, or comments in any materials used to promote school programs, recruit new students, and / or dispense public information. If needing to rescind that permission, you must submit that request in writing to administration/front office.

### TEXTBOOKS

All student textbooks, workbooks, and paperbacks must be cared for at all times. Students who lose, deface, or misplace a textbook, workbook, or paperback are required to replace it at their own expense. Student accounts will be billed for the cost of the replacement book plus shipping.

### TUITION, FEES, & MANDATORY FUND RAISER

Annual tuition is paid in twelve (12) equal payments with the first payment due on June 1st. The remaining payments are due on the first





## OUR LADY OF SORROWS CATHOLIC SCHOOL



(1st) of each month and payable until the fifteenth (15th). Payments are made online through FACTS. Current tuition and registration amounts may be obtained by consulting our website [olsschool.org](http://olsschool.org) or calling the school business office at (956) 686-3651.

Additionally, as the cost of tuition does not cover all the associated costs of educating each child, OLSS conducts two mandatory fundraisers per year:

- ♦ Fall Raffle, commitment\* is \$200 (40 tickets @\$5.00)
- ♦ Spring Car Raffle is \$200 (2 tickets @\$100).

\*As per the enrollment application and registration forms, families are asked to commit to selling raffle tickets for each of the school's major fundraisers. The funds from this raffle help to supplement the school's operating costs. Commitments not fulfilled by the deadline are assessed a \$30 late fee and charged to the family account.

- ♦ Registration fees and tuition payments are not refundable after July 1.
- ♦ Unused lunch and drink fees are refundable.
- ♦ Educational trip fees that have been paid to the agency to be visited are non-refundable.
- ♦ There is a thirty-five dollar (\$35.00) charge on all returned checks. A returned check constitutes grounds for payment in cash or by cashier's check. This applies to all checks made out to the school, not just tuition.
- ♦ A late fee of thirty dollars (\$30.00) is added to each payment received after the 15th of the month. If the account is not cleared by the last day of the month, the student is not admitted to class until all financial obligations

are met.

- ♦ June and July tuition must be paid in full prior to the first official day of class. If any obligations cannot be met, you must make arrangements with the school administration. Failure to make these arrangements may result in your child not being allowed to begin the school year at OLSS.
- ♦ In order to be eligible for January registration for the next school year, all financial obligations must be cleared. The school reserves the right to block enrollment if there is a documented history of non-compliance with the tuition payment policy or any other policies and procedures at OLSS.
- ♦ The school will not forward records for students who withdraw with an outstanding balance.

### UNIFORM DRESS CODE

**In a society where there is so much emphasis on external appearances and material possessions, it is our responsibility as parents and educators to help our children grow in the ability to see through and beyond these concerns to more important values. In an effort to teach our children that it is neither the clothing nor the possessions that make each person special, we require all students to wear the uniform prescribed for their grade level.**

**All students must be in full OLS uniform every day.** If a student is not in uniform, a uniform violation notice may be entered into FACTS and / or parents called and asked to deliver the necessary items to school for the child. The school has "dress-down" days (blue jeans, non-uniform clothing, theme days, etc.) which are announced during the course of the school



## OUR LADY OF SORROWS CATHOLIC SCHOOL



year.

Our Lady of Sorrows School, in conjunction with the Diocesan Catholic Schools Office, has a uniform contract with [Ibiley Uniform Company](http://www.ibiley.com). A list of the required OLS School uniform clothing is available on their website at [www.ibiley.com](http://www.ibiley.com). **No part of the uniform shirt/blouse or pants may display a name brand or logo (including, but not limited to, Polo, Nike, Adidas, UA, AF, Old Navy, etc.); in order to keep uniformity and maintain a good overall student community appearance, clothing from any other company is not allowed.**

- ♦ All shirts/blouses must have school emblem
- ♦ All shirts must be at a length to be tucked in. (**Crop top shirts/blouses or attire are prohibited**).
- ♦ Jackets & sweaters must be navy blue or black (no stripes, logos, images, advertising or hoodies promoting any pop culture references, etc.)
- ♦ Scouting uniform may be worn to school on the day of regular meetings or for special Scout events
- ♦ All visible clothing must conform to uniform code
- ♦ All clothing must be clearly marked on the inside with the student's name in as many areas as possible
- ♦ Any official school shirt may be worn on Spirit Day (most Thursdays) as long as the school name is visible
- ♦ PK/K may wear navy blue warm-up bottoms instead of shorts during cold weather

**Shoes / Socks for Girls PreK3 – 8th grade:**

- ♦ **Shoes:** White/navy, white with navy stripes, or all white tennis shoes (including logo).
- ♦ **Socks:** Ankle, crew or knee-high socks (all white) or tights (navy, white or black). **No-show socks NOT allowed.** No visible logo or name brand on socks.

**Shoes / Socks for Boys PreK3-8th grade:**

- ♦ **Shoes:** All black tennis shoe (including name brands or logos); no cloth shoes, non-marking sole); PK/K recommends Velcro closure for shoes
- ♦ **Socks:** Ankle or crew socks – white or black. **No-show socks NOT allowed.** No visible logo or name brand on socks.

**Belt for boys:**

- ♦ Black belt – grades 1st -8th

### GROOMING

- ♦ Students must keep a neat appearance at all times. Shoe laces are to be kept tied.
- ♦ Boys' shirts must be kept tucked in.
- ♦ Students' hair may **not** be bleached, tinted, highlighted or dyed, nor be in any type of "shaved" style. Students may **not** wear beads, strings, colors, etc. in their hair.
- ♦ Boys must maintain a neat haircut. Hair must not cover the ears, eyebrows, or collar.
- ♦ Girls' hair is to be worn neatly so that it does not cover their face. A ponytail may be worn, or barrettes, bows, head bands and combs that match the uniform jumper / skirt or are in school colors may be used.
- ♦ Inappropriate hair styles for boys and girls are determined by administration.
- ♦ Light make-up is permitted for 8th grade girls only.



## OUR LADY OF SORROWS CATHOLIC SCHOOL



- ◆ Only one pair of earrings may be worn (one in each ear lobe), even though a girl may have multiple piercings. Earrings are not allowed for male students.
- ◆ No other visible body piercing or tattoos are permitted. Students may not write on themselves or other students.
- ◆ One ring, one chain, medal, or cross may be worn (no chokers). An additional faith-based ring or bracelet may be worn as well.
- ◆ Hair sprays, deodorant sprays, fingernail polish, colognes, or perfumes may not be brought to school. These will be confiscated. (Roll on or stick deodorants should be used as needed after P.E. class or recess.)
- ◆ Only clear fingernail polish may be worn in all grades. Removal of all other will be done by school nurse. Fake nails are not allowed.

### VISITORS AND GUESTS

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School is a closed campus. All parents, visitors, and guests must check in at the front office and receive an ID pass via our Raptor system. A current photo ID or Driver's License is required at all times.

### VOLUNTEERS

All volunteers dealing directly and consistently with students must undergo a criminal background check or name based search through law enforcement databases as well as training in a diocesan program on recognizing child abuse called *Protecting God's Children*. Both are done through the school and sessions will be announced as needed. Volunteers performing community service will be assigned an area

and duties explained on tasks they will be responsible for. Cell phones should not be in use during assigned duty. More information may be reviewed in the Volunteer Handbook.

### RIGHT TO AMEND

*If changes are necessary during the school year, OLS School administrators maintain the right to amend the contents of this publication. Such changes will be announced through parent notices, monthly newsletter to parents, and the school website ([www.olsschool.org](http://www.olsschool.org)).*

*Revised 7/18/2024*







## UNIFORM DRESSCODE

Mass Day  
1-5

Boys-Girls  
K5—5th Grade

Boys-Girls  
Pk3-Pk4



UNISEX DRIFIT POLO W/ LOGO  
\$13.98 - \$15.98



1-3 Girls  
V-FRONT PLEATED JUMPER  
\$46.98 - \$48.98



Pk3-k Girls  
PLAID CULOTTES  
\$42.98 - \$45.98



4-5 Girls  
PLAID SKIRT  
\$34.98 - \$36.98



6-8 Girls  
PLEATED NAVY SKIRT  
\$27.98 - \$29.98



PK- 8 Boys  
KHAKE SHORTS  
\$10.99 - \$19.99



PK- 8 Boys  
KHAKE PANTS  
\$13.99 - \$23.99



6-8 Girls  
OXFORD UNISEX S/S  
\$20.98 - \$24.98



6-8 Girls  
OXFORD UNISEX L/S  
\$21.98 - \$26.98



8 Boys & Girls  
Navy Blazer  
\$62.98 - \$77.98

### GALA



6-8 Boys  
OXFORD PIN STRIP L/S  
\$25.98 - \$27.98



6-8 Boys  
OXFORD PIN STRIPE S/S  
\$23.98 - \$25.98



MASS DAY  
GIRLS TIE  
\$8.99



MASS DAY  
BOYS TIE  
\$11.99

### WINTERS



PK- 8 Boys & Girls  
REVERSIBLE NAVY JACKET W/ HOOD  
\$29.98 - \$39.98



PK- 8 Boys & Girls  
CARDIGAN  
\$29.98 - \$35.98



PK- 8 Boys & Girls  
VEST  
\$22.98 - \$26.98

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## OUR LADY OF SORROWS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

### Section II—Discipline Plan & Policies



#### CATHOLIC SCHOOL DISCIPLINE:

Discipline is as fundamental in Catholic Education as it is in Catholic life. Discipline in the Catholic school is an aspect of moral guidance and refers to those reasonable controls which promote the individual student's development and self-discipline. Discipline also promotes a Christian environment in which the rights and responsibilities of students and teachers are recognized and upheld. It is important to constructively maintain discipline in order to further the student's growth in Christian virtue and to create a safe and peaceful atmosphere to advance the educational process. Helping children develop self-control while interacting with their peers in a Christian environment is the priority of our discipline policy.

#### DISCIPLINE POLICY:

In the Diocese of Brownsville and at Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School emphasis is placed on the individual growth of the student. The goal of this discipline policy is to help students achieve habits of self-discipline, to safeguard the rights of all, and to foster virtuous living by each member of the school community. Thus, each person in the school community bears a responsibility for the success of this discipline policy by ensuring that his or her actions are in accord with the highest standards of behavior. It is the individual student's responsibility to exercise self-discipline, and to strive to fulfill the school's expectations.

All staff, faculty & administrators hold both the authority and the responsibility to implement the philosophy, goals, objectives, and policies

of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School. Therefore, when a student fails to exercise self-discipline, it is the faculty or staff member's responsibility to respond with appropriate corrective action that will support the values of the school, teach the student the appropriate way to act, and safeguard the rights of other members of the school community. It is the principal's responsibility to ensure the given corrective actions follow the discipline plan in a fair and constructive manner.

Because student behavior needs to reflect the Catholic values of Our Lady of Sorrows School, the following Code of Conduct has been established. It is applicable at any time a student's behavior would reflect upon the school or parish community, **whether the action takes place on or off school property, in the physical world or in the digital arena.**

#### DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES / POLICIES

Within each class positive discipline is modeled and used. This varies between grade levels and is explained to students by their teachers and administration. Parents are informed of the classroom rules and consequences at the beginning of the class or they may speak directly to the teacher.

**All school faculty & staff are responsible for issuing** a range of consequences for minor offenses which may include loss of a privilege, a time-out period, loss of recess, or lunch detention, etc. Parents are notified by the teacher or administration if the misbehavior persists. Parents are asked to come in for a conference if the teacher notices a pattern of misbehavior.



## OUR LADY OF SORROWS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

### Section II—Discipline Plan & Policies



Good communication is essential for understanding the problem and shaping behavior changes.

### CONSEQUENCES

When a child chooses to disregard the rules that have been put in place, it is important that he/she understands that consequences will take place.

In general, the following steps are taken:

1. Verbal / visual reminder/cue about expected behavior.
2. Consequence by adult supervisor (5 minute time out, moved seat, behavior card, etc.).
3. Discipline notice entered into FACTS / legal guardian(s) notified.
4. Recess, and/or lunch Detention.
5. Discipline notice, detention, and / or academic / behavioral contract.
6. Once on behavioral contract, the next infraction leads to in or out of school suspension (ISS / OSS).
7. Final step is expulsion / blocked enrollment.

***\* Some behaviors may necessitate expediting the disciplinary process at the discretion of faculty, staff and / or administration.***

### Discipline Tracking

A discipline infraction is entered into our FACTS system and kept in our digital data base as a 1st warning issued to students by a staff member witnessing a violation of school poli-

cies. It is generally, but not necessarily, given after a verbal or visual warning has been previously issued. Upon entry, the notice of infraction is recorded and shared with administration and advisory / homeroom teachers are notified of the recorded infraction as well. Parents are automatically emailed by FACTS daily at approximately 4 pm if a disciplinary notice is entered for their child(ren). Notification may also be through a phone call or a separate email by a faculty or staff member.

- ♦ The supervising adult may issue a discipline notice for any infraction that goes against classroom rules and / or the policies and procedures outlined in this Parent-Student Handbook, or amendments made to the Handbook by administration.

It is important that parents support this process and that they take time to discuss the infraction that occurred and a plan for how their child can improve his/her behavior.

***\*A student may serve lunch and/or recess detention for each disciplinary notice they earn.***

**Automatic Detention may be issued for the following infractions (but is not limited to this list):**

- ♦ Abusive, disrespectful, profane, or indecent language or gestures (including ethnic, racial or gender slurs).
- ♦ Repeated noncompliance / disrespect towards faculty & staff in word or deed.
- ♦ Bringing any type of electronic device on campus.
- ♦ Fighting, harassment, bullying and any forms of intimidation.



## OUR LADY OF SORROWS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

### Section II—Discipline Plan & Policies



- ◆ Defacing of school property.
- ◆ Dishonesty – which includes, but is not limited to: cheating on tests, copying someone else's work, letting someone else copy your work, looking at a test, quiz or exam of another student's, signing a parent's name, etc.
- ◆ Stealing.

#### Detentions

Detentions are determined at the discretion of the administration and/or teacher. Detentions are generally held during recess and/or lunch time. **Any extracurricular activities scheduled for the day of detention are forfeited.** For further details on athletics, please refer to the Athletic Handbook.

A conference may be held with the student, parents, faculty/staff and / or administration to discuss consequences and strategies for improving the student's conduct. A plan will be put in place for helping the student follow the discipline code; improvement in behavior must take place. If subsequent referrals are issued, the student will receive in-school suspension (ISS) or out-of-school suspension (OSS).

**Immediate Suspension and/or Expulsion may be issued for the following infractions (but is not limited to this list):**

- ◆ The use or possession of drugs, alcohol, or weapons of any kind.
- ◆ Fighting that causes or has the potential to cause serious injury.
- ◆ Leaving the school grounds during school hours without permission, or skipping class during the school day.

- ◆ Flagrant violation of the Acceptable Use Policy for technology.
- ◆ Flagrant inappropriate physical contact.
- ◆ Repeated lower-level infractions.

#### Suspensions / Expulsions

Any deliberate action that is contrary to the moral climate, serious in nature, and having potential to cause harm to any student or staff member may result in a suspension of up to three days and/or expulsion. The final decision rests with the administration and pastor. Parents are informed as soon as possible of the decision.

Suspensions are all recorded as out-of-school (OSS). Out-of-school suspension results in a maximum of 70% credit recorded in the grade book for all missed work, projects, and assessments once turned in by the student or as determined by the teacher.

#### Detrimental Conduct

A student who engages in conduct detrimental to the school's reputation, whether on or off school grounds, is subject to suspension or expulsion at the discretion of administration.

#### Uniform Violations

Students are issued a uniform violation when they are not wearing the correct uniform. Repeated refusal will result in a discipline notice. Uniform violations also may include spirit and mass days.



## OUR LADY OF SORROWS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

### Section II—Discipline Plan & Policies



#### STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- ♦ **Respect Authority:** students will not defy school authorities and/or challenge school rules and policies.
- ♦ **Accept consequences for your actions:** students will not refuse to accept discipline and the consequences of their behavior.
- ♦ **Avoid school or classroom disruptions:** students will not deliberately disrupt any school activity.
- ♦ **Avoid endangering yourself or others:** students will not endanger the well-being of themselves or others and avoid all forms of assault or violence and will not bring to school or have in their possession any article or object judged to be harmful to themselves or others or the good order of the school.
- ♦ **Show affection appropriately:** any expressions of affection between/among students will be simple and appropriate to the school situation.
- ♦ **Avoid foul language:** students will not use profane, vulgar, disrespectful, or hurtful language.
- ♦ **Maintain a bully-free environment:** students will not tease, bully, harass, and/or coerce others.
- ♦ **Respect school and personal property:** students will not damage, destroy, or deface any property and will be required to make restitution as directed.
- ♦ **No unauthorized snacks:** students will not chew gum or have or consume any unauthorized snacks, food, or beverages on school property.
- ♦ **No illegal substances:** students will not possess, sell, use, transmit, or abuse any drugs or look-alike drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or any illegal substance and will participate in the education and prevention programs provided or recommended by the school.
- ♦ **Follow the uniform policy:** students will follow the school uniform code regulations.
- ♦ **Complete assignments and do your own work:** students will be truthful and honest and not engage in any form of cheating or dishonesty.
- ♦ **Leave all electronic devices at home:** students will not have in their possession personal cell phones, smartwatches, pagers, electronic games, beepers, recording/listening devices, or unauthorized software.
- ♦ **Follow arrival and dismissal policies:** students will follow all school policies for arrival and dismissal and will not leave the school premises or assigned classes without authorized permission during the school day.
- ♦ **Follow rules and procedures:** students will not violate the Code of Conduct or its specific policies.

#### SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

Administrators, faculty, and staff at Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School are committed to:

- ♦ Motivating and assisting students to follow the Code of Conduct as a means of personal growth, an expression of Christian moral behavior, and respect and care for oneself and others.
- ♦ Enforcing the school rules and discipline policies with fairness and discretion.
- ♦ Allowing for adjustments in disciplinary ac-





## OUR LADY OF SORROWS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

### Section II—Discipline Plan & Policies



tions as deemed necessary due to circumstances and maturity of the student.

- ◆ Maintaining effective and respectful communications with parents regarding student behaviors and appropriate parental responses.
- ◆ Continually updating their understanding of student behavior and its influences, and the techniques of classroom and student management.

#### PARENT / GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents / guardians have the responsibility as primary teachers and disciplinarians of their child to:

- ◆ Model and support their child's practice of the Catholic faith.
- ◆ Support school policy and the authority of the administration and teachers.
- ◆ Insist that their child obeys the regulations and principles of good behavior.
- ◆ Support teachers and administration in the discipline of your child and respect their judgments as they apply the school discipline code.
- ◆ Be aware of and monitor external influences like TV programs, movies, social media, etc.
- ◆ Sign and return all correspondence in the time prescribed.
- ◆ Encourage their child to complete all assignments.
- ◆ Communicate openly with faculty and staff when necessary and avoid any criticism of teachers and school policy within and without the school building.

- ◆ Follow the policies and procedures stated in the handbook.
- ◆ Pay all fees (tuition, lunch, etc.) on time.
- ◆ Reimburse school for property destroyed (accidentally or intentionally) by their child.

#### SPECIFIC POLICY: BULLYING

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School is committed to providing an atmosphere conducive to learning with a focus on the personal worth and dignity of every child. All efforts are made to educate children in a Christ-like setting. Therefore, verbal, written, or online acts of name-calling, taunting, bullying, harassment, physical aggression, acts causing physical injury, or acts causing another to do the same are not tolerated.

Victims or witnesses to these actions should report them to the teacher and / or administration immediately. All allegations are investigated, and prompt, appropriate disciplinary action is taken.

**Note: SB 179** now defines bullying as a “**single significant act**” or a “**pattern of acts**” by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power.

**Disciplinary action may include any or all of the actions indicated in the *Discipline Policy* section of this Code of Conduct or as required by law.**



## OUR LADY OF SORROWS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

### Section II—Discipline Plan & Policies



#### **SPECIFIC POLICY:**

#### **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

The administration and staff of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School believe that all students are entitled to study and work in school-related environments that are free of sexual harassment. Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School does not tolerate sexual harassment of any type. (Harassment: Engaging in any type of unwanted and unwelcome verbal or physical behavior).

Victims or witnesses of these actions should report them to a teacher and/or administration immediately. Allegations are investigated and prompt, appropriate disciplinary action is taken. Parents of both parties are notified.

Examples of peer sexual harassment include, but are not limited to: verbal, written (including texts, chats, social media), or on-line taunting, bullying, other offensive, intimidating, or hostile conduct, gestures or touches, actions, clothing or accessories, music, verbal, written, or on-line communications, graffiti, jokes, nicknames, stories, pictures, cartoons, drawings, or objects which are offensive, annoy, abuse, or demean an individual or group.

**Disciplinary action may include any or all of the actions indicated in the *Discipline Policy* section of this Code of Conduct or as required by law.**

#### **SPECIFIC POLICY: STUDENT THREATS**

All student threats to endanger or inflict harm to oneself or others are taken seriously. Anyone hearing a threat must report it immediate-

ly to the supervising adult or principal. A student making a threat, whether verbal, written, online, or other is taken to the office for supervision.

Judgment as to the seriousness and immediacy of the threat will indicate notification of the parents and/or police, as the situation warrants, along with any intended or potential recipients of the threat (i.e., adults or, if the threat is directed against a student, the parents of the student).

**Disciplinary action may include any or all of the actions indicated in the *Discipline Policy* section of this Code of Conduct or as required by law.**

#### **SPECIFIC POLICY: FIGHTS**

Any student engaged in a physical altercation is subject to immediate disciplinary action appropriate to the age and maturity of the student. **This can result in immediate expulsion of the student at the discretion of the principal.**

**Disciplinary action may include any or all of the actions indicated in the *Discipline Policy* section of this Code of Conduct or as required by law.**

#### **SPECIFIC POLICY: WEAPONS**

A weapon includes but is not limited to any instrument, device, or object capable of inflicting injury and designed or specifically adapted for use as a weapon, and possessed or carried as a weapon. This includes any dangerous object (firearm, knife, deadly weapon, explosive,



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incendiary device) or look-alike.

This policy expressly prohibits the use, possession, transmission, sale or discharge of any weapons, instruments, or explosive devices in the school, on school grounds, or at school-sponsored activities. If it is determined that this policy has been violated, the parents of the offender shall be immediately contacted and shall cooperate with the disciplinary process.

**Disciplinary action may include any or all of the actions indicated in the *Discipline Policy* section of this Code of Conduct or as required by law.**

#### **SPECIFIC POLICY: DRUGS / ALCOHOL**

Students will not possess, sell, use, transmit, or abuse drugs or look-alike drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or any illegal substance. If it is determined that this policy has been violated, the parents of the offender shall be immediately contacted and shall cooperate with the disciplinary process.

**Disciplinary action may include any or all of the actions indicated in the *Discipline Policy* section of this Code of Conduct or as required by law.**

#### **SPECIFIC POLICY: SEARCH & SEIZURE**

*Because school officials have a legitimate interest in the safety and protection of all students within their care and custody, the school reserves the right to search anything brought on school property.*

Lockers are the property of the school and are subject to search at any time. The principal re-

serves the right to conduct locker inspection and / or search locker and or personal belongings if circumstances warrant it. Students tampering with another student's lock or locker are referred to the office for disciplinary action.

The principal reserves the right to have students empty their pockets, purses, and/or backpacks for stolen articles, weapons, and/or drugs if there is reason for suspicion. **Since situations/investigations/ and/ or circumstances require immediate attention, parents/guardians do not need to be notified of search ahead of time, but will be notified after the fact.**

**Disciplinary action may include any or all of the actions indicated in the *Discipline Policy* section of this Code of Conduct or as required by law.**

#### **SPECIFIC POLICY:**

#### **SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE**

Texas State law requires teachers, administrative personnel, and other employees of any public or private school to report all suspected incidents of child abuse to Child Protective Services (CPS). Child abuse includes physical abuse, physical neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional maltreatment. OLSS will follow the State of Texas guidelines for the CPS investigation.

#### **PARENTAL SUPPORT OF THE DISCIPLINE CODE**

Each teacher implements a plan of discipline



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for his / her classroom. It is the student's responsibility to follow the behavior guidelines provided by the staff and learn what behaviors are acceptable in the classroom, at recess time, and in the cafeteria. Students are held accountable for following rules. Parents are expected to support the Discipline Code. If any discipline notices are emailed home, parents should take them seriously because it is an indication that the child is deviating from acceptable behavior. If a child or parent consistently ignores rules, it becomes apparent that he or she has not embraced the school mission at Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School and may be asked to leave.

#### A NOTE TO PARENTS

*As the parent/guardian of an Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School student, you are principally responsible for the behavior and conduct of your child.* As school administration and teachers, our goal is to assist and support you in this responsibility. Also, through our direction and our code of conduct, we hope to provide motivation and guidelines for your child's behavior. In a particular way of

fulfilling your many parental responsibilities, we ask that you be especially mindful of your child's use of and exposure to our contemporary media and entertainment (television, films, games, music, internet access, etc.). More than ever, these expose our children to extremes of violence, sexuality, and personal disrespect, which can affect their own attitudes, values, and behaviors.

#### ELASTIC CLAUSE

*Because it is impossible to foresee all problems which arise, this clause empowers the administration to take disciplinary action for any behavior on the part of student or parent which violates the spirit and philosophy of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School even though not specified in this Code of Conduct.*

*The Administration and / or Pastor reserves the right to make changes to the Discipline Policy as needed.*







**2024—2025**  
**Handbook Acknowledgement Form**



As parents and/or guardians of

\_\_\_\_\_, Grade \_\_\_\_\_,  
(NEATLY Print Student's Name)

we have read and discussed the handbook with our child.

Our child and we understand the rules and regulations and will support the policies and philosophies of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**This page of the handbook is to be signed and kept in the office.**