



PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK 2025-2026

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Mother of Christ Catholic School & Learning Center (MOC)

*** Introduction to Handbook:** We are blessed and honored to welcome you as a valued member of Mother of Christ Catholic School & Learning Center. To answer some of your questions concerning the school's policies, the school has prepared this Parent-Student Handbook. Please read it thoroughly and retain it for future reference. The policies stated in this handbook are only guidelines and are subject to change at the sole discretion of the school, as are all other policies, procedures, or programs of the school. From time to time, you may receive updated information concerning changes in policy. However, the school has the right to add, delete or revise any school policy or procedure with or without notice. This handbook is not a contract, express or implied, and none of the policies or provisions should be construed as such. If you have any questions about the school's policies, please ask the principal for assistance.

Mission Statement: Mother of Christ Catholic School & Learning Center collaborates with our entire community as we strive to provide high-quality academic achievement in a Catholic environment that is guided by Mary and driven by faith.

Philosophy: MOC believes that each child is a gift from God. Together with the parents, MOC will aid the children in the realization of the personal love God has for them. We help the children grasp this loving and personal relationship with the prayerful use of the Sacred Scriptures. We strive to instill the basic value of self-respect, respect for others and the appreciation of the beauty of the world by creative expression of their God-given talents.

Statements of Beliefs

1. **Spiritual:** To be a witness for Christ in family life and the parish community. To make children aware of their God-given capabilities. To provide children with the opportunity for personal and communal prayer, participation of the Sacraments and the opportunity to participate in class, school masses, and prayer services.
2. **Intellectual:** To encourage children to think independently and to make sound judgments based on Catholic Christian Principles. To provide children the acquisition of skills needed to recall, organize, synthesize data, and to evaluate this in accordance with their values. To provide children the opportunities to express themselves through creative writing, poetry, and dramatic speaking.
3. **Academic:** To provide a strong academic curriculum. To give children the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to live in a changing world, changing society and a new century.
4. **Social:** To create a community of Christians. To provide children the opportunity to accept and respect others as self, to develop the sense of team spirit, good sportsmanship, and positive peer-pressure. These sentiments stimulate the love of God, self and others.
5. **Emotional:** To create an environment where children are accepted as unique individuals. To provide them the opportunity to develop self-esteem and respect for themselves and others.

Beginning of Year Orientation: At the beginning of every school year, parents are invited to an orientation meeting. The mission, curriculum, classroom rules, regulations and teachers' expectations will be discussed at this time. We encourage parents and guardians to be present for this meeting.

School Office Policies

School Office Hours: Monday through Friday the school office is open from 7:30AM to 3:30PM; and the learning center office is open 7:30AM to 5:30PM. When calling the office, we truly appreciate that you call after or before the morning/afternoon busy times (7:30-8:15 AM and 2:30-3:15 PM).

*** Open Admission Policy:** The school and learning center has an open admission policy. No person, on the grounds of race, color, disability or national origin, is excluded or otherwise subjected to discrimination in the receiving of services. Nor does the school discriminate in hiring, promotion, discharge, pay, fringe benefits, job training, classification, referral and other aspects of employment on the basis of race, color, disability, age, gender, or national origin.

Families and prospective students may be asked to meet with the principal or assistant principal prior to acceptance in the school. Students may be accepted at MOC on a probationary period for up to one school year. During that period, the teachers and administration will evaluate the student. The school reserves the right to accept or retain only those students whose needs can be met within its educational program and whose families participate in the life of the parish. As a result, many factors may be considered in evaluating new and returning students. In matters of admission and registration, the decision of the local pastor and principal are final.

*** Undocumented Students:** A student's enrollment and/or graduation from school does not confer a legal status nor does it serve to regularize an undocumented student. Although the Archdiocese of Miami may assist with the completion of an I-20 form, the school does not guarantee or confer any privileges or rights available to documented legal residents. Parents should consult with immigration legal counsel if they have any questions as to immigration status.

Registration: To register at MOC all new students must present proof of:

- A. Birth Certificate
- B. Updated Original Health/Immunization Certificate (No child will be allowed to attend school or learning center without the required immunization. **If these forms expire during the school year, your child will not be allowed to return until the original form has been brought to the office.** Make sure you keep up with your expiration dates to avoid your child from being kept from attending class.
- C. Baptismal / First Holy Communion Certificate (if Catholic)
- D. If Catholic, Parish Name & Contribution Number
- E. Letter of Recommendation from Pastor (if applicable)
- F. Final Report Card from previous school (if applicable)
- G. Copies of Standardized Test Results (if applicable)
- H. Copy of any evaluation academic/psychological done by another school, by Early STEPS, FDLRS (Florida Diagnostic & Learning Resources System) or any another private consultant

To register for VPK, students must be 4 years of age, and to register for kindergarten, students must be 5 years of age, and for first grade, students must be 6 years of age on or before September 1st. These are requirements of the State of Florida and cannot be changed by the school/learning center. If a new student moves to Florida from another state and is presently entering a grade other than kindergarten or first grade, considerations will be given to accommodate the student's needs on an individual basis.

The school reserves the right to test a student's academic performance for placement in the program. Some students may not be accepted because of the school's educational program and facilities are not able to meet their needs.

*** Financial Obligation:** The satisfaction of all financial obligations to the school, including tuition and fees, constitutes a material condition for continued enrollment in the school. The school may disallow students from taking quarterly, semester, or final examinations if the parents or legal guardians fail to meet any financial obligation to the school. In addition, the school may withhold the issuance of transcripts or any other student records and/or disallow participation in or access to school activities, and/or administratively withdraw the student if any financial obligations are not met.

Parents/Guardians, by executing the acknowledgment of receipt of this Handbook, HEREBY AGREE to be responsible for the full balance of tuition and any related fees regardless of any scholarship that may be available. Should such scholarship awards not cover the entire balance due or otherwise not become available, Parents/Guardians agree that they remain responsible for the full tuition amount and fees. Additionally, with respect to these scholarships, any student with a disability does not have an individual right to receive some or all of the special education and related services that the student would receive if enrolled in a public school under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as amended.

Re-Registration: Re-registration will occur in late January or early February. Siblings of students in good standing currently attending MOC will have priority in registering for school. Re-acceptance will be based upon regular mass attendance, church contribution, active participation in the parish/school community, and space availability. Parents are asked to re-register by the due date or waive their right to placement. Prior to re-registration the teachers will recommend to the administration the names of the students who should not return to MOC for the following year. The recommendation will be based upon the child's academic performance, behavior, and parent's willingness to cooperate with the child's educational needs.

Registration Fee: This fee is due when registration or re-registration is done, and it is non-refundable. Re-registration is contingent upon clearance of all previous financial obligations.

School & Learning Center Tuition and Fees: Tuition is paid in 10 monthly installments August-May. Additional Summer Camp/Care runs June -August and may be paid weekly or monthly. Delinquent tuition payments will carry a late payment fee of \$25.00 (monthly). Students are subject to dismissal from the school/learning center if financial obligations are not kept current. **DO NOT SEND CASH WITH STUDENTS.** The school/learning center are not responsible for cash sent to school with the students. Although cash payments are discouraged, they will only be accepted by an adult.

Returned Checks Policy: If the bank returns a check, it will not be re-deposited. The family will have to pay in cash. There will also be a \$35.00 returned check fee. No post-dated checks will be accepted. Families that consistently have NSF checks may be required to make future payments in cash. This applies to all checks received from the family throughout the year.

Withdrawal: Parent who wishes to transfer a child should contact the office. An exit interview may be scheduled, and proper documentation prepared. All financial obligations must be fulfilled before records are sent to another school. A student's grades at the time of withdrawal will be recorded. VPK parents are able to withdraw and transfer to another VPK program.

***Fundraising:** No student or family member may solicit funds in the school's name unless such solicitation has been authorized in writing by the principal.

***Parental Cooperation:** The school views the education of a student as a partnership between the parents and the school. Parents and students are expected to comply with the school rules and policies, and to accept and support the authority of school officials, whether it be at school events, on or off school campus, or on social media or other public forum. Just as a parent can withdraw a child from the school if desired, the school has the right to administratively withdraw a student if it determines at its discretion that the parent or student partnership with the school is irretrievably broken.

Change of Address/Telephone Number: It is the parent's responsibility to advise the school office of any change of address, telephone number, or e-mail address. This must be done in writing. When contacting you about an emergency, we need to have updated information.

Emergency Contact Information: At registration, parents must complete an Emergency Contact Form. These forms are kept on file and will be used if/when the student experiences an emergency, illness, or accident while in school. It will include authorization for the school to act in an emergency when the parent or guardian cannot be reached. It is of vital importance that the emergency form is kept accurate, complete and up to date. Parents are required to inform the school of any changes. In an emergency, time is a critical matter, students may not be released if a person is not on list.

*** Text Messaging/Telephone Calls:** The school may use text messages and automated telephone calls to alert parents/guardians of important information related to the school's mission, operations, and activities. Parents/guardians acknowledge and consent to the receipt of these messages when providing their telephone numbers.

E-mail: All school faculty and staff VPK-8th grade have an e-mail address. You may access the directory on the school website <http://motherofchristcatholicschool.net>. The school sends memos via e-mail instead of hard copies, please keep your e-mail address up-to-date. For PK1 - PK3 Ms. Yarelis (yarelis.rodriquez@motherofchrist.net) should be emailed in order to forward information to the teachers.

School Website: The school website is a vital source of information and resources. The yearly and monthly calendar will be posted on the site, as well as other important forms. You may download Authorization for Medication, Athletic Participation, as well as other important forms from the website.

Lost and Found: There is a designated LOST AND FOUND area in the office, and parents are encouraged to check it occasionally. Found articles will be kept in the Lost and Found until the last Friday of each month, at which time the area will be completely cleaned out and all articles will be donated to a charity. Misplaced books will be returned to the classroom teacher, when properly identified. Toys and jewelry should be left at home.

The school is not responsible for personal valuables brought to school. Make sure to label all your child's items, especially all of their clothing (uniform and outerwear), it facilitates return. Teachers will not be responsible for items left in their classrooms. Please do not call the office for an employee to search for an item in the lost and found, please visit the office personally.

Home and School Association (HASA) of MOC is designed to serve as a Parent Advisory Board, strengthening our Catholic unity among the school, home, church and community. It also supports the administration in organizing social and fundraising activities. Although there is a board all families are members of this group. As our mission states we collaborate as an entire community, and we share in our time, talent and treasures walking in Christ's footsteps. To fulfill this mission, all families are expected to complete 25 service hours per school year. These hours can be fulfilled in various ways, including but not limited to participating in church activities or retreats, supporting school fundraisers, attending HASA meetings, or other preapproved opportunities.

Visitor/Volunteers: Anyone, visitor or volunteer, coming to school unexpectedly or by appointment, must first report to the school/learning center office. Appropriate attire is required when volunteering in school (no shorts, biking shorts or tank tops or see-through clothing). Parents are asked to leave siblings at home when coming to school to volunteer. Parents are not allowed to walk their children to class in the morning. Instant conferences are not allowed in person or by phone. All parent/teacher conferences are to be documented.

Anyone who desires to volunteer must fill and sign an Archdiocesan Volunteer Pledge to Promote Safe Environment form, have a cleared fingerprint background check through the Archdiocese of Miami and completed the "VIRTUS: Protecting God's Children for Adults" workshop offered by the Archdiocese. Once the course has been completed, ongoing training must be completed on-line. Parents are asked to remain current with expirations of Virtus and Fingerprints to remain in good standing. Families are required to volunteer at school events: Harvest Festival, Pig Roast, etc. All families are asked to complete a minimum of 20 volunteer hours per school year.

Room Parents: Each class has a designated homeroom parent. In consultation, the teacher and the administrative team choose the homeroom parent. Parents need to be in good standing (as stated above) to become a homeroom parent. The function of a room parent is to help the teacher; therefore, coordination and planning of activities is to be done in accordance with the teacher's plans. Teachers will authorize all room parent activities. Please note that room parents may not always attend all field trips.

School Attendance

Academic Calendar: The 2025-26 school year will begin August 12, 2025, and end June 3, 2026. All holidays and professional days will be announced on the yearly and monthly calendars.

ELC VPK and School Readiness Attendance Policies: MOC has its own attendance policy. If a child or a parent does not comply with MOC's attendance policy, the provider may dismiss the child from its program.

Tardiness: K- 8th grade students must be in their seat by 7:45AM.
PK4 students must be in their seats by 8:00AM.
PK1 - PK3 students must be in their class by 8:30AM.
Any child arriving in class after the respective time is considered tardy.

School drop-off doors will be closed as soon as the 7:45AM bell rings. Any child arriving late must be accompanied by a parent and will be marked tardy in the office. If the child arrives late by the drop-off area and does not receive a slip, he/she will be marked "tardy" by the teacher. Any work turned into the teacher after 7:45AM may be considered late and will be marked accordingly. If

students are continuously tardy, parents may be contacted by the assistant principal/director for a conference. K - 8th grade students who have over 40 tardies, regardless of whether they are excused or unexcused, may be required to attend summer school in order to be promoted.

PLEASE ENSURE YOUR CHILD ARRIVES AT SCHOOL ON TIME!!!

Sickness: If your child has a fever or has obvious signs of being sick, we will contact you immediately so that your child may be picked up.

Procedure for Absence: Student absences will be excused for the following reasons:

- A. illness of student when a doctor's note is present.
- B. family emergency (principal/parent conference necessary)

Students may only be counted as present if attending school for no less than 3.5 hours in a school day. When a student is absent a parent or guardian is requested to contact the office, either by e-mail to (school) sandy.sanchez@motherofchrist.net or by phone 786-497-6111; (learning center) yarelis.rodriguez@motherofchrist.net or by phone 305-559-6047 and give the name of person calling, student's name, grade & homeroom teacher's name, reason for absence, and day the student is expected to return.

Students returning to school after an absence should present a note explaining the absence. Students who are absent three consecutive days must present a doctor's note stating that the child is ready to return to school. All absences will be recorded. **The Principal/Director has the right to refuse an excused absence at their discretion.**

Makeup Work: For VPK - 8th grade absences that are more than one day, please e-mail your child's teacher by 9:00 AM, so that she may prepare the work during her break. This allows the teacher to prepare your child's homework without interrupting their class. All work may be picked up after 3:30 PM.

Students will be allotted the same number of days that they were out to make-up their class and homework; if they were out 2 days, the child will have 2 days to make-up the work (including weekends). If a child has been assigned a project or monthly book report, please remember the dates provided are deadlines. Students are encouraged to turn in those assignments before that date to ensure full credit will be applied. Students absent on a deadline date that have not yet turned in their assignment may be subjected to a lower score on the project or book report.

Truancy: By law, students have the responsibility to attend school 180 days each school year. K -8th grade students who have more than 18 unexcused absences may be retained. K-8th grade students who have over 20 absences, regardless of whether they are excused or unexcused, may be required to attend summer school in order to be promoted. Parents must ensure that students are present, unless illness or emergencies are of such severity as to prevent attendance.

*** Immunizations:** The Archdiocese of Miami requires that, prior to attendance in school, each student present or have on file with the school a certificate of immunization for the prevention of those communicable diseases for which immunization is required by the Department of Health. A Florida Certificate of Immunization (Form DH 680) completed by a health care provider licensed in the state of Florida and participating in Florida Shots is required to document the administration of prescribed immunization doses.

The Archdiocese of Miami does not accept immunization exemption requests based upon religious, philosophical, personal, or other reasons. Medical-related immunization exemption requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Such requests must be made through submission of the Florida

Certificate of immunization (Form DH 680) and signed by a health care provider licensed in the state of Florida. Medical exemptions are only approved for legitimate documented medical needs. The Archdiocese reserves the right to not accept any medical exemption request.

Should there be an outbreak of a communicable disease at school, students with medical immunization exemptions may be asked to remain home throughout the incubation period of the disease.

*** Medication Guidelines.** Except as authorized by the school, students are not permitted to carry or distribute any prescription or non-prescription drugs or treatments, including aspirin, on the school grounds or at any school function. The administering of medicine to a student outside the doctor's office or a health institution is a parental responsibility and should only be delegated to school personnel when necessary and authorized by the school. Parents should ask their physicians if it is possible to prescribe medication so it can be administered at home. Only, when necessary, will the school allow the administration of medication on campus, and only under the following guidelines:

1. An authorization form must be completed and submitted by a parent or legal guardian of the student. The name of the medication and dosage should be indicated on the form.
2. Medications to be dispensed at school should be labeled with the child's name and the exact dosage. The name and telephone number of the physician should also be on the label.
3. While the school may monitor a student taking the medication, the school will not remind students to come and take their medication.

Exceptions to this policy may be made for the use, supply and administration of an epinephrine auto-injection (Epipen), or as otherwise authorized in writing by the school. In particular circumstances, the school may agree to administer medication or otherwise provide health care interventions that go beyond a minor adjustment for a particular student. In those cases, Parents hereby release the school, the Archdiocese, and their corporate members, officers, employees, affiliates, and agents from any claims or liabilities that allegedly arise from or are related to the provision of those health care interventions that are beyond minor adjustments.

*** Communicable Diseases and Related Items.** Attendance at school and participation in school activities poses some risks including the transmission of communicable diseases. Although the school has taken various measures to reduce the risks of transmission, the possibility of infection from communicable diseases is nonetheless present. Parents expressly assume such risks by allowing their children to attend school and participate in school activities and/or by coming onto the school campus and attending school activities themselves.

In the event of a natural disaster, disease outbreak, or any other circumstances which in the judgment of the school administration make it unfeasible, unsafe or otherwise imprudent to continue campus-based education, school educational programs shall resume as soon as practical by way of distance learning and/or other methods adopted by the school administration and faculty. Due to the school's continuing financial obligations related to its operations, there will be no suspension, reduction, or refund of tuition in these circumstances.

Parents will be informed of any communicable disease discovered at school to which their child may have been exposed. Students who are absent due to a communicable disease must present a doctor's note and medical clearance before returning to school.

Accidents: Parents/Guardians will be notified immediately in case of sudden illness or accident. In case of minor accidents (scratches and bruises), the school will inform the parents by sending a note home at the end of the school day. We report all known self-reported accidents.

Cancellation of School or Class: In case of emergencies and natural disaster, the school will follow procedures devised by the Archdiocese of Miami. Parents are to listen to AM, FM & TV Emergency Broadcast Warning for special instructions.

Arrival & Dismissal Procedures: Our main concern is the safety of the children and the expediency with which we carry out morning drop-off and afternoon dismissal. Children will not be placed in a car unless proper identification is displayed. Student Patrol officers will help by opening and closing car doors. DO NOT address concerns with safety patrols; you may do that with the school administration. Drive slowly and be patient. Safety is extremely important. Please do not enter through the 142 Ave. gate. If the school gate is closing, please park and bring your child in through the office. **CHILDREN THAT ARE TARDY MUST BE WALKED INTO THE SCHOOL OFFICE. FOR THEIR SAFETY NO CHILD MAY BE LEFT TO ENTER THE SCHOOL PROPERTY ALONE.**

Students will be released only to persons listed on the registration or emergency forms. This documentation must be kept current, and any changes or special permission must be made in writing by the parent/guardian. Students will not be allowed to call home to make arrangements to leave school with another child. In the event that your child will be leaving with another parent, the office must receive written authorization in advance.

Any situations involving court orders and legal documentation require an official copy to be placed in the child's file.

The emergency dismissal of a child will be granted for valid reasons only. Parents are urged to set up appointments for after-school hours and to keep emergency dismissals to a minimum. If there is a need to be dismissed during the school day, a note from the parents must be sent to the office. No child will be allowed to leave school without written permission from a parent/guardian. This is for the child's protection. The note should contain the date, time of expected early dismissal, name of person picking up the child, reason the child is leaving and the signature of the parent/guardian.

No child will be allowed to go home with another family unless arrangements have been previously made. **Children will not be dismissed from the school office after 2:00 PM.** Please make your appointments for after 3:00 p.m. Students may not be released to a faculty member for dismissal.

*** Transportation Arrangements:** Parents hereby acknowledge and agree that the school does not provide or arrange for student transportation to or from school, except as specifically set forth in writing by the school. Student transportation to and from school each day is a parental responsibility. The school does not authorize or endorse any private transportation arrangements. In limited and documented circumstances, a parent may engage a commercial transportation company to transport a student from school; however, any such engagement requires the written authorization of the school and the execution of school documents allowing for such an arrangement. Except upon the written consent of the school, parents should not utilize internet-based transportation services (such as Uber or Lyft) to transport students to/from school and school-sponsored activities.

School Dismissal Schedule: K-8th grade will be dismissed through the school's circular driveway on the west side of the school building.

Kindergarten-1st grade at 2:40 PM, 2nd - 4th grade at 2:50 PM, 5th - 8th grade at 3:00 PM

Please arrive at your assigned time, siblings are dismissed with eldest child.

Learning Center and School: If a student is picked up late after their scheduled pickup time there **may be a charge of \$15.00 and an additional \$1.00 per minute.** Families with children who are consistently late may be called for a conference.

Please note that when driving up to the canopy, if your child's class has not been dismissed, you may be asked to park or make the correct line in order to continue with the pick-up of other students. Please ensure that grandparents or any other family member picking up your child are aware of the rules. If an authorized person approaches the canopy for pick-up with the "Car Tag" but we are not familiar with this person or we did not receive a letter from the parents, we will not allow your child to leave with this person. The person would have to park and wait for the office to establish parental/guardian authorization, proper identification will be required.

After School Care: Will be provided until 6:00 PM for registered students (Space is limited).

School Lunch

School lunch can only be preordered on a monthly basis. If bringing lunch from home, please ensure that your child is receiving a balanced lunch. Lunch must come with the child in the morning. If lunch is delivered after 11:00AM students may be required to eat in the office. Please have your child bring a water bottle to school, especially on PE days. Water bottles must be spillproof, no cups with straws allowed.

Allergies & Special Medical or Dietary Needs: We take the health and well-being of all our students seriously, and the decision to become a **NUT-free** school has been made to protect those who suffer from severe nut allergies. Please make sure you **inform the office and your child's teacher** of any allergies, medical condition, dietary needs or any areas of concern your child may have and also make sure you write it on the enrollment application so that we can take the necessary precautions to protect his or her health. ***Lunches and snacks provided may have been processed by equipment containing but not limited to eggs, wheat, soy, almonds, coconuts, peanuts, tree nuts, pecans and milk.**

Spirituality: A religious atmosphere is maintained and fostered throughout the school, and in accordance with the school mission, vision and philosophy, religion receives special attention. The foundation of our school is built on our personal relationship with Our Lord Jesus Christ. Emphasis is placed on instruction in the classroom, prayer life, participation in Mass, the Sacraments and community service. The program includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. In School at 7:45 AM and at Learning Center at 8:30 AM each school day, there is a school-wide prayer and pledge of allegiance.
2. School Masses are held weekly. Students are required to wear their official uniform.
3. The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be held school-wide at least two times a year.
4. During the school year, various religious programs including class Mass, Stations of the Cross, Rosary Prayer, Respect Life Presentations, and special guest speakers from the community may supplement the Theology Program.

Students participate in class liturgies scheduled in the beginning of the year. Students PK2 through 8th attend Mass on Fridays. All students will receive ashes on Ash Wednesday.

*** Community Service Activities:** Community service activities are not school activities and Mother of Christ Catholic School does not mandate or direct any specific location or locations in the community where these services are to be performed. Students are free to select the location where they wish to perform community service so long as the location and the activity meet the requirements of the school. Mother of Christ Catholic School does not operate or control the locations where students choose to perform community service and consequently the school, its agents, and affiliates do not assume responsibility for any injuries, damages, or losses incurred in the course of performing these services in the community. Students perform these services at their own risk.

Sacramental Preparation: Third grade students are prepared for First Reconciliation and First Communion. Eighth grade students are prepared for Confirmation. Students need two years of Sacramental preparation to receive the sacraments. Parents are required to attend one meeting and a retreat for these sacramental preparations. Students are required to attend mass and abide by the guidelines set forth at the first sacramental meeting. The Pastor reserves the right to deny First Communion/Confirmation to any child that has not been fully prepared or has not fulfilled requirements to receive the sacrament. In order to receive said sacraments students must attend mass and complete attendance slip at least twice a month.

Retreats: Families are recommended to attend one retreat per year in order to continue their spiritual journey. Information about retreats available through our parish will be emailed and can be found in the church bulletin.

Parishioner: A parishioner is a family practicing good stewardship at the parish. Since that involves the giving of one's time, talent, and treasure, benchmarks need to be established. Please note that the following benchmarks are minimums developed by the parish in order to determine if one qualifies for a "Parishioner" status at MOC, they are in no way intended to weaken the stewardship message. Due consideration must be given to the fact that not all families are prepared to make responsible stewardship decisions without first receiving some initial guidance.

1. Be a registered member of the parish with students baptized in the Catholic faith.
2. Complete a stewardship intention form each year during stewardship renewal.
3. Attend Mass regularly, attendance is considered a pre-requisite to maintain an active in-parish status.
4. Share gifts of time and talent by contributing a minimum of 25 hours per family per school year in the parish or school related service.
5. Share gifts of treasure by contributing to the parish. Donations must be turned in with parishioner number to ensure proper credit. Tuition is not considered a church contribution.

Non-Parishioner: A family in this category would be one who does not meet all of the above criteria. These guidelines will be strictly followed in the 2025-26 school year. Please read carefully and govern yourself accordingly. All students registered at the school as parishioners should follow the above guidelines.

Academics

Report Cards (K-8th grade): are issued four times a year. **Report cards may be withheld pending settlement of financial obligations.**

Grading Scale

Kinder, 1st and 2nd Grade	3rd - 8th Grade
4=Exceeding grade level standards (Equivalent (Eq.) to 95-100)	100%-90% = A
3=Proficient in meeting grade level standards (Eq. to 80-94)	89%-80% = B
2=Developing grade level standards (Eq. to 70-79)	79%-70% = C
1=Emerging in the development of grade level standards (Eq. to 60-69)	69%-60% = D
	59% or Lower = F

Honor Roll: Awards will be given only to students in 4th - 8th grade. **Students with any disciplinary concerns, including but not limited to more than two detentions in a quarter, will not be eligible for recognition during the Honor Roll Ceremony.** As per ADOM Office of Catholic Schools Honor Rolls will be determined using the following criteria:

Principal's Honor Roll: 95 – 100 **First Honors:** 93 – 100 **Second Honors:** 85 – 100

Progress Report: PK1 - PK4 (VPK) are issued two progress reports during the school year.

Home-learning is an essential part of a good school program and is assigned for all grades everyday. Teachers will assign home-learning that is relevant and not simply busy work. It should reinforce the skills that were learned in class, unless it is a reading/research assignment in preparation for an upcoming class. It encourages a sense of responsibility and initiative for student's own progress.

If your child is not bringing home-learning assignments, parents are requested to check with the teacher. An important reminder to parents is to encourage the child to seek help when s/he needs it, however the home-learning assignments are the child's responsibility.

Suggested home-learning time listed below, please note that this does not include "study time" and may vary according to the needs of each particular student:

PK3 - K approximately 20-30 minutes

Grades 1- 2 approximately 40-50 minutes per night

Grades 3 - 8 approximately 60 minutes a night

*At times, projects may have to be done on the weekend.

Studying for a test, reviewing assignments, or reading is not considered homework.

Students will not be allowed to use the school phone to contact parents or family members for items they have forgotten (sneakers, assignments, lunch, etc.). In the event that the school feels the issue at hand warrants a phone call to the parents, the phone call may be made by office personnel and not the student.

Weekly Progress Report: If your child is having academic or behavior problems, your child may be placed on a weekly progress report.

Student Evaluation: will be conducted by the teacher who will use objective tests, projects, home-learning, and classroom participation. Each teacher will have available for the parents the requirements and standards for his/her class during Parent Orientation Night.

Grade Level Promotion: Students will be promoted to the next grade when their achievement is satisfactory or a grade above 60. Students who receive a **NEEDS IMPROVEMENT** grade or below 60, may be asked to attend Summer School or receive pre-approved tutoring in order to continue at MOC.

Retention: Students who receive a 59 or below on more than one core subject may not be promoted to the next grade. Religion, English, Reading, Mathematics, Social Studies and Science are considered basic-core subjects. Promotion and retention will be based on grade level competence in these subjects.

Graduation Requirements: In order for a student to graduate their academic standing must be according to the school's requirements please see the Grading Scale/Achievement Codes. All financial obligations must be up to date prior to being considered for graduation.

Parent Portal: (K-8th grade) This website-based program gives parents access to their child's grades and other vital information. Please contact the office for issues with access. Teachers may post their classroom policies, projects, news, and upcoming events.

*** Private Tutoring, Coaching or Lessons:** Except as specifically noted in this Handbook, the school does not sponsor, oversee, or otherwise provide private tutoring, coaching, therapy or other similar private lessons or services. Parents who engage school staff members for the provision of these services do so at their own risk and expense and are hereby advised that such services are outside the scope of the staff member's employment with the school. **Parents, by executing the acknowledgment of receipt of this Handbook HEREBY RELEASE the school, the Archdiocese, and their corporate members, officers, employees, affiliates, and agents from any claims or liabilities that allegedly arise from or are related to the provision of private tutoring, coaching, therapy or other similar private lessons or services, regardless of where they may occur.**

*** Section 504 - Policy Statement:** Mother of Christ Catholic School complies with the mandate of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in certain programs and activities. Pursuant to the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act, Mother of Christ School will make those minor adjustments that can accommodate students with disabilities to the school's educational programs and activities.

The school's designated 504 Coordinator and contact information are as follows: Dr. LaTonya White, (305)762-1269. Parents with questions regarding the school's disability accommodations or related items should contact the 504 Coordinator.

Parents may file a grievance as to any decisions related to a disability accommodation and request an internal hearing and review by sending a written notice addressed as follows: Dr. LaTonya White, Associate Superintendent, Office of Catholic Schools, Archdiocese of Miami 9401 Biscayne Blvd, Miami Shores, FL 33138

The internal hearing and review will seek the prompt and equitable resolution of disability discrimination complaints.

Parent-Teacher Conferences: MOC strongly encourages open communication between teachers and parents. It is our belief that the job of educating a child can only be accomplished by parents and teachers working together.

Parent-Teacher conferences and good communication are a vital part of the educational process. Teachers share with parents the privilege and obligation of educating their children, therefore, every effort should be made for parents or guardians to keep informed about school programs, student progress, and special student activities.

Faculty members are always eager to discuss pupil progress with parents/guardians. MOC appreciates the interest parents show in their children's progress. It is, however, necessary that a

conference be scheduled beforehand. Parents may do so by emailing the teacher or calling the school to schedule a conference. **"Instant Conferences"** in person or by phone are NOT permitted. Parents may not walk directly to their child's classroom during or after school hours. Visitors are required at all times to report to the office.

Parents' phone calls and e-mails are to be responded promptly (within 24 school hours). Teachers need to document all conferences with parents. This documentation should have the date, time, persons present, subjects discussed and outcome. If there are follow-ups to be done, documentation is required as well.

In keeping with the Church's principle of subsidiary policy, all problems should be solved at the lowest level whenever possible. It is then advised that persons having a problem with another individual go directly to that individual before going to that person's supervisor. The principal will hear parents' complaints about teachers only after the problems have been voiced to the teachers and to the Assistant Principal/Director.

Student Official Records: Students' official records (academic transcripts; academic testing; health records, and court orders) are kept in the school office in a folder. Only contents of the official record folder will be forwarded to another school. The principal and parents reserve the right to reverse this decision if other records are to benefit the child. Mutual consent is necessary.

Release of Students Records: The school substantially follows the guidelines set forth in the Buckley Amendment pertaining to the release of student's records.

*** Confidentiality Statement:** School officials including teachers, administrators and other paraprofessionals in the performance of their duties will have access to student educational records. **Parents/Guardians by executing the acknowledgment of receipt of this Handbook, HEREBY AGREE AND CONSENT** to the disclosure of such records including the nature and existence of a disability, a medical/educational diagnosis, or any associated minor adjustments or accommodations made to such school officials with a legitimate educational interest in the information.

Technology

Textbooks and iPads are school property. The students are required to take good care of them. There will be charges for lost or damaged books and/or iPads and cases. Please refer to our iPad Agreement Form.

*** Technology Use:** The school may provide its administrators, faculty and students with access to technological devices (e.g. computers, tablets, etc.) various information technology resources including email and Internet access in order to enhance the teaching and learning environment of the school and to improve the school's operations. Students must use these resources in a responsible, ethical, and legal manner in accordance with the mission of the school and Catholic teachings. Therefore, students must abide by the following general rules of conduct:

1. Respect and protect the privacy of others:
 - a. Use only assigned accounts and passwords;
 - b. Do not share assigned accounts or passwords with others;

- c. Do not view, use or copy passwords, data or networks to which you are not authorized;
 - d. Do not share or distribute private information about yourself or others.
2. Respect and protect the integrity, availability, and security of all electronic resources:
- a. Observe all network security practices;
 - b. Report security risks or violations to the school principal;
 - c. Do not vandalize, destroy or damage data, networks, hardware, computer systems or other resources;
 - d. Do not disrupt the operation of the network or create or place a virus on the network;
 - e. Conserve and protect these resources for other students and Internet users.
3. Respect and protect the intellectual property of others:
- a. Do not infringe on copyright laws including downloading or copying music, games or movies;
 - b. Do not install unlicensed or unapproved software;
 - c. Do not plagiarize.
4. Respect the principles of the Catholic school:
- a. Use only in ways that are kind and respectful;
 - b. Report threatening or discomfoting materials to the school principal;
 - c. Do not access, transmit, copy or create materials that violate the school's code of conduct (such as indecent, threatening, rude, discriminatory or harassing materials or messages);
 - d. Do not access, transmit, copy or create materials that are illegal (such as obscene, stolen, or illegally copied materials or messages);
 - e. Do not use the resources to further any other acts that are criminal or violate the school's code of conduct;
 - f. Do not use the resources for non-educational purposes such as visiting chat rooms, social websites or networks;
 - g. Do not send spam, chain letters or other mass unsolicited mailings;
 - h. Do not buy, sell, advertise, or otherwise conduct business or political campaigning without prior written approval from the school's principal.
1. Do not engage in any form of cyberbullying.

*** Supervision and Monitoring:** The school and its authorized personnel may monitor the use of information technology resources to help ensure that users are secure and in conformity with this policy. The school reserves the right to examine, use, and disclose any data found on the school's information networks or on any technological devices used by students on campus in order to further any administrative concern. It may also use this information in disciplinary actions and may furnish evidence of a crime to law enforcement.

*** Unacceptable Use of Outside Technology:** The school expects students to use information technology and social media (including, but not limited to, the Internet, email, instant messaging and text messaging) in a responsible and ethical fashion in compliance with all applicable laws and with Christian moral principles, both in and out of the school setting. Accordingly, students may not post, place, upload, share, or communicate any images, photographs, statements or inferences relating to or including profanity, vulgarity, indecency, illegal use of drugs, illegal use of alcohol or other illegal or illicit activities. Additionally, students may not use information technology for the purpose of defaming, threatening, teasing or harassing any other student, staff member, parent, faculty member, or other person. This includes, but is not limited to, texting and communications on social networks. In addition, this rule applies to communications both during the school year and while students are on vacation or summer breaks. Students are responsible for all materials and communications made on personal websites and on social media, and the materials and communications should be consistent with Christian moral principles, including any materials or communications posted on their sites by other individuals. Moreover, any unauthorized use of the school's name (or common names associated with the school) or any likeness or image of the school or its employees or agents is strictly prohibited.

Consent: Many technological devices used at school have the capacity to generate audio recordings, video recordings, photographs, and other similar reproductions of images, likenesses, and/or sounds. The use of any such recordings and reproductions is governed by school policy. Parental/guardian execution of this Handbook constitutes an express consent and waiver as to any such recordings and reproductions incidental to the use of any technological devices on school property or at school events.

Consequences for Violations: A violation of these rules may result in disciplinary action, including the loss of a student's privilege to use the school's information technology resources and any additional consequences at the principal's discretion including administrative withdrawal.

*** Artificial Intelligence:** Artificial Intelligence refers to systems that simulate human decision-making processes without direct human intervention. These systems include chatbots, machine learning algorithms, and automated tools. Generative Artificial Intelligence refers to technology that creates content including text, images, video, and computer code by identifying patterns in large quantities and training data, and then creating original material that has similar characteristics. These AI tools have a great potential but also have potential risks and ethical implications. Mother of Christ School recognizes the growing impact of AI on education and this policy aims to guide our students in the responsible and ethical use of AI within our community.

Before using AI, students should engage in three steps: (1) Consultation. Students should always consult with their teacher prior to using any AI tool to determine if the task, assignment, or assessment can be completed with AI assistance. (2) Documentation. If granted permission to use a Generative AI tool, students must document their interaction with it by cutting and pasting the conversation into a separate document that can be shared with their teacher. (3) Citation. Where its use is permissible, students must cite the use of Gen AI tool.

AI tools may not replace a student's work and students should be mindful to engage in ethical practices when using AI, carefully consider the validity of any AI generated content, and

ensure their work product reflects their original thought and understanding. The presentation of AI generated content without a teacher's approval will be considered academic dishonesty and will result in disciplinary consequences.

Conduct and Safety

*** Conduct:** Mother of Christ Catholic School is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and disciplined learning environment. In order to uphold these standards, the school administration is empowered to fully investigate allegations of student bullying, misconduct, threats of violence, and other concerns that may impact the school community. As part of this process, school administrators may conduct inquiries, review relevant information, and interview students as necessary. Students are expected to cooperate fully with any investigation. The school may also involve parents or guardians at its discretion. The failure to comply with an investigation or provide truthful information may result in disciplinary action.

In addition, students and Parents are expected to behave consistent with the mission, philosophy and spirit of the school and the moral teachings of the Catholic faith as determined by the Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Miami. Because the school cannot anticipate all conduct that violates this policy, it reserves the right to take any form of (1) student disciplinary action, including administrative withdrawal, and/or (2) restrictions against any behavior that violates this policy, even if not specifically stated in this handbook.

School Discipline Procedure: Each teacher develops their classroom discipline. The parents (during parent orientation) and students (during the first week of class) are duly informed of the rules and consequences for undesirable behavior. In the teacher's disciplinary steps there will be recommendations for parent information.

The Principal retains the right to make exceptions to the above-stated procedures. The principal will be the final resource in all disciplinary situations and may waive or accelerate any disciplinary rule for just cause at her discretion. Students who receive a referral will not be eligible for the Honor Roll.

Cheating: Any student found being dishonest, including plagiarizing, but not limited to with regards to classwork, homework, exams, projects, tests, forging signatures, etc., may receive a zero for the assignment and may have other consequences at the administration's discretion.

Stealing Vandalism: Students will respect the properties of self and others. Unauthorized possession of another's property without the owner's consent is stealing. Willful/malicious destruction and/or damage of another one's property are considered vandalism. It will not be tolerated and warrants a suspension.

Inappropriate Language: Students will respect and obey teachers and all school personnel at all times. Verbal disrespect or the use of vulgar, profane language will not be tolerated. School rules are to be followed for the protection of all.

Prohibited Items: Cell phones, smart watches, cameras, video games, trading cards, and all other toys are to be left home. The school is not responsible for the loss or damage of such. **Students are not allowed to bring these items to school.** These types of items will be returned directly to the parent the first time they are confiscated, thereafter the item may remain at the school until the end of the current school year. Cell phones are not permitted in afterschool activities.

*** Search and Seizure Policy:** The principal and his/her designee has access to any lockers, handbags, electronic devices, cell phones, book bags, desks, cars or any other object that is brought onto the campus of the school or any school-sponsored event, and may remove or confiscate any object which is illegal or contrary to school policy.

*** Anti-Bullying Policy:** The school is committed to promoting a safe, healthy, caring, and respectful learning environment for all of its students. As such, bullying is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Therefore, this policy prohibits any unwelcome verbal or written conduct or gestures directed at a student by another student that has the effect of:

- (1) physically, emotionally, or mentally harming a student;
- (2) damaging, extorting or taking a student's personal property;
- (3) placing a student in reasonable fear of emotional or mental harm;
- (4) placing a student in reasonable fear of damage to or loss of personal property; or
- (5) creating an intimidating or hostile environment that substantially interferes with a student's educational opportunities or the Catholic mission of the school.

1. Definition

- a. **Bullying** is the willful and repeated harm inflicted upon another individual which may involve but is not limited to: teasing, name-calling, slurs, rumors, jokes, false accusations, intimidation, stalking, innuendos, demeaning comments, pranks, social isolation, gestures, cyber-bullying or other verbal or written conduct. Cyber-bullying includes the following misuses of digital technology: teasing, intimidating, or making false accusations about another student by way of any technological tool, such as sending or posting inappropriate email messages, instant messages, text messages, digital images or website postings (including blogs and social network sites). Bullying reflects a pattern of behavior, not a single isolated incident.
- b. This definition includes students who either directly engage in an act of bullying or who, by their behavior, support another student's act of bullying.

2. Scope

- a. This policy prohibits bullying that occurs either:
 1. on school premises before, during, or after school hours;
 11. on any bus or vehicle as part of any school activity; or
 111. during any school function, extracurricular activity or other school-sponsored event or activity.

3. Reporting Complaints

- a. Each student and parent has a duty to report any bullying to the school immediately. If a student experiences (or a parent witnesses or learns of) any incident of bullying, the incident must be promptly reported to the school principal. The principal will provide the student/parent with the Bullying Complaint Report Form which must be completed, dated and signed by the complaining party so that the school may initiate further inquiry, when appropriate.

4. Disciplinary Action

- a. Any student found to have violated this policy may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, which may include: temporary removal from the classroom, loss of privileges, detention, counseling, parent conference, suspension, administrative withdrawal, and/or notification to appropriate authorities. The disciplinary action may be unique to the individual incident and may vary in method and severity based on the principal's discretion.

False reports or accusations of bullying also constitute a violation of this policy and may subject the offending party to appropriate remedial action which may include, but is not limited to, the assessment of costs incurred by the School in its investigation and review of any reports deemed to have been made in bad faith.

Bullying/Harassment Investigation Disclosures. While the School Generally prohibits the nonconsensual disclosure of information contained in educational records, limited exceptions apply including for the disclosure to victims of bullying or harassment when disciplinary sanctions or other measures relate directly to the victim. Parents hereby consent and acknowledge that the School may, pursuant to this exception, disclose to the victims of harassment or bullying, and to their parents any information related to disciplinary sanctions and/or bullying at issue regardless of whether the matters disclosed are part of an educational record.

*** Drug and Alcohol Policy:** The use or possession of illegal drugs or illegal mood-altering substances, alcoholic beverages, drug-related paraphernalia, or the abuse of prescription or over-the-counter drugs by any student on school property or while attending or participating in any school-sponsored activity or at any time the student is wearing a school uniform is forbidden. Transgression of this rule will result in disciplinary action, which may include administrative withdrawal from the school, even for a first offense.

Any student selling drugs on school property or at school functions may result in a disciplinary response, up to and including administrative withdrawal.

The school is committed to a drug-free environment. This commitment may, under some circumstances, prompt a need for testing of students for evidence of substance abuse. It may also involve the use of drug dogs and other methods in the discretion of the school administration which seek to deter the use and/or distribution of illegal drugs or alcohol.

If a student exhibits the symptoms, or is suspected of substance abuse, the school may require that the student undergo substance abuse testing at the parents' expense. If the results of the test suggest abuse (and the substance was not used on or brought to campus or a school-related activity), the school will normally use this information to help the student seek assistance. Refusal to participate in such a test may result in administrative withdrawal from the school.

At times, the school may choose to conduct random drug testing of the student body at the parents' expense.

A school may conduct random searches as set forth in this handbook.

*** Smoking/Vaping:** It is a violation of Florida law for any minor to knowingly possess any tobacco product, nicotine product, or nicotine dispensing device. In addition, the use of tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, and vaping carry known health risks that can be very serious. The use of any tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, and/or vaping in any form is prohibited on school property and at any school events. Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary consequences which may include administrative withdrawal from school.

*** Public Display of Affection:** The Catholic school promotes friendship, charity, kindness, love and respect for self and others. However, student inappropriate displays of affection, such as kissing or embracing which connote more than simple friendship, are not permitted in school, at school dances, or at any school event. Those who violate these rules may be subject to disciplinary measures, including detention, suspension or administrative withdrawal. The administration reserves the right to determine what is, or is not, appropriate behavior in a Catholic school.

*** Sexting:** The electronic transmission or receipt from one minor to another of any photograph or video that depicts nudity may constitute illegal sexting. Students engaged in sexting will be subject to serious disciplinary consequences which may include administrative withdrawal from school. In addition, the school administration may report instances of sexting to the Florida Department of Children and Families or local law enforcement for appropriate investigation as to violations of law. The electronic transmission of sexually explicit language by a student may also constitute grounds for disciplinary action.

*** Safety in Private Spaces:** Mother of Christ Catholic School complies with the requirements of §553.865, Florida Statutes, The Safety in Private Spaces Act. Except where facilities are specifically designated as unisex, the school's bathroom and locker room/changing facilities are designated exclusively for use by biological females or biological males. Any student who willfully enters a school restroom or locker room/ changing facility designated for the opposite sex and refuses to depart when asked to do so by any school personnel will be subject to disciplinary consequences as established by the school principal unless a specific statutory exception applies. This handbook provision shall be considered a part of the school's code of student conduct.

*** Harassment and Discrimination:** The school is committed to providing an environment that is free of discrimination and harassment. In keeping with this commitment, the school will not tolerate harassment or discrimination on the basis of a person's protected status, such as gender, color, race, ancestry, national origin, age, physical disability, mental condition, marital status, veteran status, citizenship status. All employees, faculty members and students are protected under this policy. In addition, this policy applies to all conduct occurring on school grounds, at assignments outside the school, or at school-sponsored events. All students are responsible for helping to assure that any harassment or discrimination is reported. If a student witnesses or learns of any conduct that violates this policy, the student must immediately report the incident to his/her principal. If, however, the principal is the individual who is believed to have engaged in the inappropriate conduct, the student should notify the Superintendent of Schools of the Archdiocese of Miami. If an investigation reveals that inappropriate conduct has occurred, the school will take corrective action based on the circumstances.

*** Threats of Violence:** The disciplinary consequences for a student whose verbal or written comments, including email messages, that threaten serious bodily harm to another student or member of the faculty or staff or destruction of property, may include, but not be limited to:

1. Immediate suspension from the school;
2. Reporting to law enforcement;
3. Treatment or consultation by a psychologist or psychiatrist at the parents' expense and/or by the school counselor, both of whom may be asked to submit a written evaluation. If it is determined that the child was serious about the threat and has the capacity to carry it out, the child may be administratively withdrawn from the school. If it is determined that the child did not seriously intend to do harm to others, the child may be allowed to return to the school, at the discretion of the school principal.
4. If allowed to return to school, the child may be placed on probation with an indication that, should a similar threat occur, the child will be administratively withdrawn from school;
5. The school should inform the Office of Catholic Schools of these cases. The school may submit an informational report to the police.

***Weapons:** Weapons are not permitted anywhere on school grounds or at any school activity. Any student who brings a weapon to any school activity, who is in possession of a weapon, or who threatens others with a weapon may be administratively withdrawn from the school. Any item used to threaten or cause bodily harm may be considered a weapon. In particular, the possession of any instruments or objects that can be used to inflict serious harm on another person or that can place a person in reasonable fear of serious harm will be considered weapons. Included in this category are BB guns, Airsoft guns, and toy or replica guns represented as real guns. Also included in this category is the possession or storage of items which are prohibited at school, including but not limited to ammunition clips, bullets or cartridges, flammable liquids, combustible materials, poisonous substances, mace, pepper spray, and any other items which may result in injury.

Fire and Tornado Drills: In an emergency, all effort is directed toward getting the students out of the building safely. Teachers are instructed and routes will be posted in each classroom. Regular fire drill practices will be done.

Lock Down Procedures: When potentially hazardous conditions exist in the vicinity of the school or on the school property, the school may go into a lock down procedure. All doors will be locked, and no one will be allowed in or out of the school. We may also follow lock down procedure when instituted and instructed by the Archdioceses of Miami/Miami-Dade County Public Schools, whether the potential may or may not be directed towards our immediate school. We ask that everyone please follow the instructions being given at the moment, and keep in mind that these procedures are followed for the safety of your children.

Dress Code

In order to maintain a wholesome image, the school will require that children wear their complete uniform, and no substitutions are made. Information about uniforms is sent to parents at the end of each school year in preparation for the upcoming year and may also be obtained from the uniform company.

- Plain navy or black belts are always required for boys. (K - 8th grade)
- Girls' skirt hems should fall at the **top of the knee**. Please monitor this as girls get taller throughout the year or may have grown from the previous year. Girls may also wear pants.
- Black dress shoes for boys and black mary-jane style shoes or penny loafers for girls.
- (PK4 - 8th grade) On designated P.E. days, students must wear a gray Mother of Christ P.E. shirt and navy Mother of Christ P.E. shorts (**not to be worn tightly or short**). These are available at Risse Uniform. No other shirts or shorts will be allowed.
- It is required that only the PE uniform or sports uniform be worn during afterschool practices. Otherwise, students will not be allowed to participate in the practice.
- Sneakers can be any variation of colors within navy blue, black, gray, or white. Please stay away from bright-colored sneakers that include, but are not limited to, turquoise, aqua, red, yellow, green, purple, or pink. No lighted sneakers are permitted. PK1 - Kinder students only are encouraged to purchase sneakers and shoes with Velcro. Daily uniform includes wearing navy M.O.C. socks available at Risse Uniform. No other socks will be permitted **including P.E. days** (No basketball socks allowed).
- Sweaters/sweatshirts must be purchased from the uniform store or the school office. Absolutely NO other sweaters/sweatshirts/hoodies will be permitted.

- On denim days and field trips, students are to wear the navy-blue Crusader shirt that can be purchased in the school office for \$16.
- Nail polish or makeup is not permitted. Students will be sent to the office for nail polish/makeup removal. Gel will need to be removed upon return the next school day.
- No fad haircuts will be permitted (including but not limited to faux-hawks, mullets, buzzed lines, or designs). Boys' hair must be cut above the collar and ear. **Only traditional haircuts allowed. No fad hairstyles or coloring (dyeing) or highlighting permitted.** Any issues with inappropriate haircuts must be remedied by the next school day and dye in 2 days.
- Girls may wear small stud earrings. Hoop earrings are NOT permitted for safety reasons.
- Students may wear one small gold/silver religious chain and one simple bracelet. Chokers and multiple bracelets are not allowed.
- For afterschool sports students are to wear school PE uniforms.
- **PK1-PK4 student:** Parents are encouraged to provide a change of clothing for their children to keep on the premises in case of an accident.

Dress Code Violations: Children will receive a Uniform Violation Form when they do not come to school in their proper uniform. Once a 3rd-8th grade student receives 3 violations, he/she will receive a detention which must be served on the assigned date. When your child receives a hair infraction notice, you will have 2 days to correct the problem. After the 2 days if it has not been corrected, 3rd-8th grade students will receive a detention, PK1-2nd grade parents may be required to meet with the Assistant Principal/Director.

Dress Procedures for Denim Days and Other Special Days: Children who participate in denim days, must wear their Crusaders t-shirt with denim pants. On other special days (St. Patrick's, Say No To Drugs, Earth Days, etc.), we will announce the color of shirt and jeans. Shorts, capris, jeggings, ripped or colorful jeans are **NOT allowed**. Please ensure that your child does not wear inappropriate attire, if so, you will be called by the office to bring appropriate clothing for your child.

Sleeping Bag: Children enrolled in our Learning Center program must purchase from the office a nap-time package which includes pillow, bed cover, sheets and carry bag. These items must be taken home every Friday to be washed and returned clean on Monday.

School Events & Athletics

Class Parties: Parties should be planned and organized according to the teachers' plans. Parents are of vital importance in helping teachers, but it is the teacher's responsibility to organize, control the discipline, and set up the parameters for the celebration. This applies to all parties. A "surprise" party for a teacher needs to be approved and coordinated by the administration. Students may bring a simple snack to be served to the whole class immediately after lunch on the Friday before/after their birthday. The date must be pre-approved by the teacher. No money can be collected for parties unless cleared with the administration first.

MOC does not sponsor any outside of school parties. Invitations may not be handed out at school unless the entire class is invited.

*** School-Sponsored Events:** The school does not sponsor, oversee, or in any way control parties or social functions at private residences. School-sanctioned events, including all field trips, excursions, or parties, are specifically identified in this Handbook or are identified in the school calendar and/or written notices generated and distributed by the school.

Parents, by executing the acknowledgment of receipt of this Handbook, HEREBY RELEASE the school, the Archdiocese of Miami, and their corporate members,

officers, employees, affiliates, and agents, from any claims or liabilities that allegedly arise from or are related to attendance at parties or social functions at private residences or from participation/attendance at events not identified in the school calendar or in written notices from the school, including field trips, excursions, or parties.

Students engaged in conduct that is contrary to the mission and philosophy of the school may be subject to disciplinary action regardless of whether the conduct occurred at a school-sponsored function.

*** Participation in Co-Curricular and Extra-Curricular Activities:** The school recognizes the following co-curricular and extra-curricular activities (including official athletics activities and school dances):

1. School Clubs: National Junior Honor Society, National Junior Thespians Honor Society, Alph Chi Honor Society, and National Association of Student Council
2. Major School Activities: Church Festival, School Pig Roast, Drama Shows
3. Dances: Valentines Dance, Mother/Son and Father/Daughter Dance and Middle School Dance
4. Athletics: Basketball, Soccer, Volleyball, Cheerleading, Dance and Flag Football

Parents acknowledge that participation in these co-curricular and extra-curricular activities may be inherently dangerous and, the school cannot ensure the safety of all students involved in its activities and programs.

Prior to participation in any athletic activity, each student must complete the Parent Consent and Release of Liability form and a physician's certificate to the effect that the student is physically fit for participation in the sport. Participation includes pre-season conditioning, open gym, tryouts and practice. **Parents, by executing this acknowledgement of receipt of this Handbook, HEREBY RELEASE the school, the Archdiocese of Miami, and their corporate members, officers, employees, and agents, from any claims or liabilities that allegedly arise from or are related to participation in any co-curricular or extra-curricular activities, including all athletics activities and school dances.**

The school is not responsible for student participation in any co-curricular and extra-curricular activities not identified above. Parents hereby acknowledge that students who participate in any such program or activity do so at their own risk. Parents further acknowledge that the school does not control or sanction any such program or activity and that it shall not be held liable for any injuries or damages sustained by students or others arising from participation in such program or activities.

For purposes of this handbook, a co-curricular and extra-curricular activity defined as a group of individuals dedicated to a particular interest or activity and a league is defined as a group of teams or individuals participating in an athletic activity.

Students need to attend school in order to participate in any after-school activity including but not limited to sports games, performances, and other school sponsored activities.

Athletic Fee: All athletic fees must be paid, and all required documents turned in before a student is allowed to attend practice.

Insurance: The Archdiocese of Miami requires mandatory school accident coverage insurance. The cost of this insurance is included in the school fee. School insurance covers sports activities but not transportation.

Transportation to Athletic and Other After School Events: Occasionally, students participate in off- campus activities. The school does not provide transportation to these events, it is the parent's responsibility to pick-up their child and transport them to the event. If your child will be attending the event with the parent of another child, we ask that you please send us a letter with the complete name of the person picking up the child authorizing us to release your child to this person.

Students wanting to be spectators for afterschool events on campus, a student must be accompanied by his/her parent/guardian or the parent/guardian of another student with an authorization note. Students are NOT allowed to attend activities/sports events without a parent/guardian.

Field Trips: Teachers will take children on field trips as an integral part of the curriculum. It will be purposeful and related to the educational program of the school. Advance notice will be given when a field trip is planned. Permission forms will be sent home. These must be completed and returned prior to the scheduled trip. Children who have not returned their permission form will not be allowed to accompany their class on the trip. Any student not attending a field trip must stay home and will be marked absent. To go on a field trip with the school is a privilege, not a right. If a student's discipline can cause a problem, or endanger his/her or anyone else's safety, s/he will not be given permission to go. Siblings will not be allowed to attend field trips. Field trip fees once paid are non-refundable. To chaperone a field trip with your child, you must be a cleared, active, current, registered volunteer. Please note that not all parents that wish to be a chaperone may be chosen. Once the chaperones have been chosen, you will be notified. Please do not send chaperone payment before being notified. Permission forms for field trips will include information about the means of transportation to be used, the destination and the cost. Please do not send money with your child, as students will not be allowed to purchase anything.

School Regulations

Ethics in Education Policy: Mother of Christ Catholic School & Learning Center complies with the terms of Florida's Ethics in Education Act. Additionally, the school adopts a Code of Ethics for Instructional Personnel and School Administrators and will ensure that all instructional personnel and school administrators receive training on the Code and its reporting requirements. In addition, the school has posted its Code of Ethics on its campus and on its website.

School Counselor: The school has a counselor on staff. Please be advised that anything that your child discusses with the counselor may be shared with the administration as deemed necessary by the counselor and will be kept private among the related parties. We welcome parents to discuss issues that may arise with the counselor and invite your child to visit the counselor. You may recommend your child to visit with the counselor, please keep in mind that recommendations may also come from your child's teacher and/or the administration. An authorization form must be on file in order for your child to visit with the counselor. Please be aware that any incidents of suspected child abuse will be reported to the proper authorities.

*** Child Protective Investigations:** Florida law provides that any person who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver or other person responsible for the child's welfare must report such knowledge to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). The school will cooperate with all child protective investigations by DCF or the local law enforcement agency. Reports should be made to Florida's Department of Children and Families by calling the Abuse Hotline at: 1-800- 96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873).

In addition to contacting DCF, abuse may be reported to the Safe Environment Office of the Archdiocese by calling 305-215-6635 or emailing abuserreporting@theadom.org.

Child protective investigations by DCF or local law enforcement agencies sometimes include interviews of students at school and may occur without advance notice. When it is reasonably possible, the school will seek to notify the parents that their child has been asked to participate in a child protective investigation. The school may also request the presence of a school staff member during investigative interviews on school property. However, please note that, under Florida law, DCF and local law enforcement have the discretion to conduct unannounced interviews and to disallow school staff member's presence during these interviews.

***Notification of Rights under FERPA:** The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access.
Parents or eligible students should complete the Request for Release of Student Records and submit it to the School principal (or appropriate school official) identifying the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.
Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the School to amend a record should write the School principal (or appropriate school official), clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person or company with whom the School has contracted as its agent to provide a service instead of using its own employees or officials (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.
A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-5920

Non-Custodial Parent: MOC will substantially abide by the provision of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, the school will provide the non-custodial parent with access to academic records and to other school-related information regarding the child. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order.

*** Testifying in Divorce or Custody Proceedings:** The Catholic Church recognizes marriage as a Sacrament. In the Union of Christian spouses, the sacrament of Matrimony celebrates the relationship of Christ to the Church. Therefore, the school strongly supports the sacrament of matrimony as the foundation of family life and of the domestic Church. In recognition of the importance of the matrimonial sacrament to the Catholic faith, parents agree not to compel the attendance, testimony, or deposition of any school or church employee in any divorce, custody, or other legal proceedings which may in any way involve the dissolution of marriage or the determination of parental/custody rights. A violation of this policy will constitute a breach of the parental cooperation requirement.

In the event that a parent or legal guardian breaches this policy, any school or church personnel who are required to attend legal proceedings may be represented by an attorney. In addition, any and all legal fees and costs incurred by the school will be charged and become the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian.

*** Use or Photos:** The school reserves the right to use student or parent photos in any school or Archdiocesan publication including but not limited to print publications, videos, or websites including Facebook, Instagram and other social media websites. Any parent who does not want his or her child's picture or video to be used accordingly must notify the school's principal in writing prior to the beginning of the school year. **By executing this acknowledgement of receipt of this Handbook, Parents HEREBY CONSENT, authorize and grant permission to the school, the Archdiocese of Miami, and their agents, employees or duly authorized representatives to photograph or videotape students and parents and CONSENT to their publication for any purpose deemed proper by the school, including but not limited to, use on the internet.**

Additionally, Parents, by executing this acknowledgement of receipt of this Handbook, HEREBY RELEASE the school, the Archdiocese of Miami, and their corporate members, officers, employees, and agents, from any claims or liabilities that allegedly arise from or are related to the use of student or parent photos.

*** Electronic Acknowledgments:** Periodically, the school may require that parents or guardians make electronic acknowledgments confirming the receipt and/or acceptance of various policies, procedures, notices, releases or updates. Any time a parent/guardian makes an electronic acknowledgment by clicking "submit" or "accept" on an electronic document, that individual is agreeing that he/she has read, understood, and agrees to be bound by the contents of the electronic document. Electronic acknowledgments and signatures are valid and binding and may serve as consent to the contents of any electronic communication. Parents and guardians are responsible for reviewing the contents of any electronic document prior to making any electronic acknowledgments. In addition, **Parents/Guardians, by executing the acknowledgement of receipt of this Handbook, HEREBY AGREE** to receive and be bound by electronic acknowledgments.

PRINCIPAL'S RIGHT TO AMEND THE HANDBOOK

The Principal has the right to amend this Handbook. Parents and teachers will be promptly notified if changes are made via memo or e-mail from the principal.

Yesenia Feria De La Torre, M.S.,

Principal 2025-2026

EARLY CHILDHOOD PARENT HANDBOOK ADDENDUM

Welcome and Philosophy: Our Early Childhood Program reflects the belief that every child is created in God's image and likeness, with unique gifts and abilities. We nurture spiritual, social-emotional, physical, and cognitive growth through developmentally appropriate, play-based learning in a Catholic environment. Families are partners in this journey, and together we build the foundation for lifelong faith and learning.

Curriculum and Learning Approach: We align our curriculum with: Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards, Florida Catholic Conference Early Education Program Standards, and NAEYC best practices

Our curriculum weaves Catholic values, daily prayer, and Gospel teachings into play-based, child-led learning experiences. Teachers thoughtfully design environments filled with opportunities for literacy, numeracy, science, and hands-on exploration to inspire curiosity and a sense of wonder in God's creation. Using ongoing, research-based assessments, learning experiences are continually tailored to support the unique needs and growth of every child in our care.

Daily Schedules and Routines: Consistent routines help children feel secure. A typical day includes:

- ✓ Morning welcome and prayer
- ✓ Center-based learning and outdoor play
- ✓ Snack and mealtimes
- ✓ Rest/nap time
- ✓ Closing prayer and dismissal

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures:

- Learning Center opens at 7:00 AM. Children must be in class by 8:30 AM except VPK that must be in their class by 8:00 AM.
- It is in the best interest of children that they are on time and able to participate in the opening activities of the group as this sets the tone for the rest of the day and aids in smooth transitions.
- The Learning Center requires that you **sign your child in and out** on a daily basis. All authorized family members must print their name. If your signature is not legible, you must provide the learning center office with a copy of your driver's license.
- Students arriving late may have to make up missed work.

Dismissal

- PreK1 through VPK students are dismissed at the Learning Center Office by 6:00 PM. All students must be signed out.
- VPK students that are 3 hours dismissal is at 11:00 AM.
- If a student is picked up late after their scheduled pickup time there **may be a charge of \$15.00 and an additional \$1.00 per minute.** Families with children who are consistently late may be called for a conference.

Authorization for Pick-Up

- Children will only be released to their parents and those persons listed on the registration form as emergency contact/alternate pick-ups.
- A photo ID will be required of someone whom we do not know. Staff have access to all student files to ensure that children are dismissed only by those listed on the emergency contacts. A signed note must be given to the school office prior to releasing your child to someone who is not listed on your child's registration form.

Toileting and Self-Care Policies: We encourage and support toileting independence in alignment with Florida DCF and ADOM guidelines.

- **Developmentally appropriate support:** Toileting skills develop gradually from infancy through preschool. Teachers provide age-appropriate guidance, encouragement, and support at each stage of development.
- **Infants and toddlers:** Diapering and toileting routines are handled with care, consistency, and attention to hygiene. Families are encouraged to communicate toilet training readiness so we can partner in supporting this milestone.
- **PK2 children:** At this stage, many children are still developing toileting independence. Teachers will encourage self-help skills (pulling up/down clothing, washing hands) and support progress without pressure. Families should provide extra clothing and keep us informed about toilet training at home.
- **PK3 and older:** Children entering PK3 and PK4 programs are expected to be toilet trained and able to manage their toileting needs with minimal assistance. Occasional accidents are understood as part of development and will be handled calmly and respectfully.
- **Partnership with families:** Open communication between home and school helps maintain consistency and supports your child's success.
- **Extra clothing:** Families are asked to provide several complete changes of clothes (including socks and shoes) to keep at school for use if needed.
- **Encouraging independence:** At all ages, teachers gently guide children toward greater self-care skills, promoting confidence and a sense of accomplishment.

Health, Illness, and Safety

- **When to Stay Home:** Children must stay home if they have:
 - A fever of 100.4°F or higher (must be fever-free for **48 hours without medication** to return).
 - Vomiting or diarrhea (must be symptom-free for **48 hours without medication** to return).
 - Any undiagnosed or contagious rash.
 - Any communicable illness (e.g., flu, chickenpox, pink eye, strep throat, stomach virus).
 - Head lice or nits.
 - Eye discharge (eyes must be clear to return, even with a doctor's note).
 - Excessive nasal or ear discharge.

Absences: Parents must notify the school by email yarelis.rodriguez@motherofchrist.net by 9:00 AM if their child will be absent.

Physician's Note: Required for any absence of **3 or more consecutive days** or after a contagious illness to verify the period of contagion has passed.

If a Child Becomes Ill at School:

- Parents will be contacted to pick up their child **immediately**.
- Staff will assess the illness, keep the child comfortable, and monitor until pickup.

Health & Safety Practices:

- Frequent handwashing is practiced daily.
- Monthly emergency drills are conducted to ensure preparedness.

Exposure Notifications: If a child in the program is diagnosed with a communicable illness, parents will be notified with the illness name and symptoms for awareness.

Immunizations: Before attending school, all students are required to have a valid immunization record on file in compliance with the Florida Department of Health guidelines.

- A **Florida Certificate of Immunization (Form DH 680)** completed by a healthcare provider participating in Florida Shots must be submitted to document:

- Required immunizations
- A valid medical exemption (temporary or permanent) if applicable
- Only medical exemptions certified by a physician are accepted. Exemptions based on religious, philosophical, or personal beliefs are **not permitted**.
- Students without the required documentation will not be allowed to attend until all immunization requirements are met.

Communication with Families

- **Partnership and Respect:** We value open, respectful communication and strong partnerships with families to support each child's growth and development.
- **Classroom Updates:** Teachers provide regular updates through ClassDojo or folders to keep families informed about daily experiences, learning, and upcoming events.

Parent-Teacher Conferences:

- Held 1–2 times per year to discuss your child's progress, screenings, assessments, and overall development.
- Dates will be shared in advance, and families will have opportunities to sign up for a convenient time.
- Additional conferences may be scheduled as needed to support your child's success.
- **Addressing Concerns:** Sensitive matters should first be discussed directly with your child's teacher. If further support is needed, families are encouraged to reach out to school administration.
- **Ongoing Communication:** Families are welcome to schedule a meeting with teachers or administration at any time to discuss questions, concerns, or celebrations.

Positive Behavior Guidance and Social-Emotional Development

Our Approach:

- We use positive guidance strategies that reflect the dignity of each child and model Christ's love.
- Teachers encourage self-regulation, problem-solving, and making amends when needed.
- Clear and consistent limits are set with kindness and respect.
- Prohibited practices include corporal punishment, shaming, food withholding, and punitive toileting methods.

Positive Guidance Strategies:

- Redirecting children from inappropriate behavior toward positive choices.
- Teaching appropriate social-emotional skills to address challenges.
- Reassessing the environment, activities, and supervision to support positive behavior.
- Using positive language and celebrating appropriate behaviors.
- Maintaining consistent, age-appropriate consequences for classroom rules.
- Building and maintaining strong, supportive teacher-child relationships.

Family Partnership:

- Parents will be notified if disruptive behaviors arise.
- Conferences may be scheduled with the Director and family to discuss strategies for supporting the child.
- A specialized team may be formed to create a plan that promotes the child's success.

Prohibited Practices:

- Any form of corporal punishment (e.g., hitting, spanking, shaking, rough handling).
- Isolation where the child cannot be seen or supervised.
- Binding, tying, or restricting movement.
- Using or withholding food or beverages as punishment.
- Demeaning or humiliating toileting practices.
- Emotional abuse, threats, profane language, or verbal abuse.

Biting: Although a toddler or small child may bite when angry, frustrated, or lacks the necessary language skills to express him or herself it is taken seriously. If a child bites another s/he will be taken to the office and the office personnel will talk to both children involved in the incident and reinforce the message about using words not biting. The incident will be logged, and an accident/incident report will be completed for students involved. If a child continues to bite, parents may be contacted and asked to pick their child up immediately, keep their child home for a day, or possibly remove the child from the program. Every child's safety must be considered.

Expulsion & Suspension Policy: Our program is committed to creating a safe, nurturing, and inclusive environment where all children can grow, learn, and thrive. We align with the Florida Department of Children and Families and the Office of Early Learning's position on supporting children's social-emotional and behavioral health through positive practices.

- **Our Commitment:**

- Promote positive, developmentally appropriate classroom environments.
- Prioritize the social-emotional well-being of all children.
- Encourage developmental screenings and referrals for additional support as needed.
- Support parent involvement and partnership in addressing their child's needs.
- Provide professional development for staff on alternatives to expulsion and suspension.
- Collaborate with early childhood mental health consultants and interventionists when appropriate.
- Track and analyze data on expulsions, suspensions, and dismissals to ensure fair, thoughtful decision-making.

- **When Enrollment May Be Terminated:** While every effort is made to avoid expulsion or suspension, the program reserves the right to discontinue a child's enrollment for reasons including, but not limited to:
 - Failure to follow the policies and procedures outlined in the Parent Handbook.
 - A child's needs exceed what the program can safely and effectively support within current staffing and resources.
 - Behavior that poses a serious risk to the health and safety of the child, other children, or staff.
 - Parent or guardian behavior that is disruptive, unsafe, or violates childcare licensing regulations (e.g., vulgarity, intimidation, harassment, or interference with program operations).

We strive to work closely with families to address challenges and seek solutions before reaching this point. Every decision to terminate enrollment is made thoughtfully, with the best interests of all children and staff in mind.

Nutrition and Mealtime Expectations

- **Parent-Provided Snacks:** Parents are asked to provide nutritious snacks for their child's mid-morning and afternoon snack times. Please ensure all snacks are cut into small, bite-sized pieces to avoid choking hazards.
- **Nut-Free Facility:** To protect children with allergies, our program is a **nut-free environment**. Any food items containing nuts or nut-based ingredients will be sent home unopened.

Lunch Program: A well-balanced, hot lunch is available daily through our lunch caterers. Menus are posted in classrooms and available on our website. Meals exceed USDA minimum standards and include:

- Home-style cooking
 - Generous serving portions
 - Monthly menu cycles
 - Meals prepared fresh the same morning
 - Kid-friendly options
- **Mealtime Practices:**
 - Teachers model gratitude and lead children in prayer before meals.
 - Mealtime is treated as a social and learning opportunity where children practice self-help skills and table manners in a supportive environment.

Special Diets & Allergies: Parents are encouraged to review the posted menus regularly. If a child has an allergy to an item on the menu, families must provide nutritious alternative food options for their child.

- If parents do not provide appropriate substitutions for a meal, the program will supply supplemental food items to ensure the child receives a complete and balanced meal.
- For children requiring a special diet:
 - A written note from the child's pediatrician is required, along with a sample meal plan for the special diet.
 - This documentation will be kept on file, posted in a visible location in both the kitchen and classroom, and followed by all staff members responsible for the child's care.

Rest Time Procedures: Daily rest/nap time is provided 12:30 PM to 2:30 PM.

Celebrations, Birthdays, and Holidays

- **Religious Observances:** Classroom celebrations and activities reflect the liturgical calendar and Catholic traditions.

Birthday Celebrations: All treats must be **store-bought** and **free of any nut ingredients** to protect children with allergies.

- Homemade treats are not permitted.
- Non-food items (such as stickers, pencils, or small toys) are preferred for celebrations.
- Gum and candy are **not allowed** in the center or inside goody bags.
- Goody bags may only contain items safe for children under 3 years old and will be distributed to parents at dismissal.
- Birthday celebrations are for your child and their classmates only; family members or outside guests are not included in classroom celebrations.

Transition to Kindergarten: Teachers and administrators support a smooth transition by:

- Building readiness skills
- Offering parent resources
- Coordinating visits to Kindergarten classrooms when possible

Family Involvement Opportunities: Families are welcomed to participate in:

- Classroom activities
- Faith-based events
- Volunteer opportunities (must meet ADOM Safe Environment requirements)

Possessions from Home

- **Jewelry:** For safety reasons, children may not wear jewelry to school. Jewelry can pose hazards if it gets caught on play equipment or breaks and becomes a choking risk. The program is not responsible for lost or damaged jewelry. Parents are also asked to use caution with small hair accessories, as they can be a choking hazard for younger children.
- **Toys and Personal Items:** Toys from home are not permitted unless a teacher has requested an item for a specific classroom activity or event. Please check your child's pockets before school to ensure small items such as toys, coins, or other objects are not brought to school.

What Students Need Daily

- Each child is assigned a labeled cubby for personal belongings.
- A **complete change of clothes** (shirt, shorts/pants, socks, and underwear) must always remain in the cubby.
- For children in PreK-2 who are not yet toilet trained, parents should provide wipes and diapers as requested by the teacher.
- Full-day students will need a **nap bedding**, which may be purchased through the Learning Center Office for \$45.00 (includes carrying pouch). Bedding will be sent home every Friday for washing and must be returned the following Monday in their pouch. If a replacement mat is needed, a \$45.00 fee will apply. Bedding may not be shared between students.
- **Labeling:** All personal items, including clothing, water bottles, and nap bedding, must be labeled clearly with your child's first and last name.
- **Water Bottles:** Water bottles must have a secure cap and be labeled with the child's first and last name.
- **Restricted Items:** Bottles and pacifiers are only allowed for students under 2 years old. Sippy cups are not recommended at school.