

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School

School Handbook



School Year 2018 - 2019

The Eucharist and the OLM Super-S.T.A.R.S

**7 Elmwood Drive
Daly City, California 94015**

**650-756-3395
www.olmbulldogs.org**

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School is a Catholic elementary school active under the jurisdiction of the Department of Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of San Francisco and within the community of Our Lady of Mercy Parish in Daly City, California.

HISTORY OF OUR LADY OF MERCY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

In 1954 the Archdiocese of San Francisco selected Father Richard Power to open a new parish in the Westlake District of Daly City. Father Power's first commitment was to build a Catholic elementary school. It was his premise that the school would unite the families and encourage the growth of a vibrant parish. The School was built a year before the Parish Church. Under the educational leadership of the Dominican Sisters of San Raphael, Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School opened in September 1955. By opening day in 1959, the school greeted students in all grades, First through Eighth and had sent OLM's first graduating class on to high school. Fast-forward to today, Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School continues to serve the community as a double grade elementary school, Kindergarten to Eighth Grade. Sr. Claire's Preschool opened in November 2012 and welcomes early learners, 2 – 5 years old.

OLM proudly carries on the faith-filled teaching ethic planted by our founding pastor, Monsignor Richard Power and our founding principal, Sister Claire Maher O.P., and her teachers. Our curriculum today calls teachers to integrate our Catholic faith throughout their lessons as they shape each student's success through required academics, co-curricular classes, and extracurricular activities. This work is highlighted by an active emphasis on Christian Service and Leadership within the school, in the parish, and for the larger community. Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School draws further strength from the family participation that instills so much life into all our programs honoring our heritage of a strong Home-School partnership.

The academic achievement of our students grows through a vigorous curricular spiral and is validated by strong standardized test scores and successful placement in high school of our Eighth Grade Graduates. Well-planned programs including physical education, technology use, and the fine arts complement the core content areas. Students who experience diverse learning needs are supported by our Resource Center. A Homework Club for students in Grades 5 – 8 is open each day after school. OLM also boasts a safe and exciting Extended Care Program for before and after school needs.

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School actively participates in the parish life of Our Lady of Mercy Parish. OLM students serve as members of the Student Choir and as Altar Servers. There are occasions when OLM students act as Lectors, Ushers, or performers in special liturgies. The Pastor, Parochial Vicar, resident deacon, and other parish directors collaborate with School personnel for additional liturgical events. The School shares announcements to be made at Sunday Masses and to be published in the Parish Bulletin.

OUR LADY OF MERCY CATHOLIC SCHOOL
Transitional Kindergarten – 8th

The Administration of Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School under the guidance of the Archdiocese of San Francisco and in the spirit of full community with our School Family has developed this Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School Handbook.

This Handbook is prepared so as to provide all school families and personnel an overall general guide to the policies, governance, directives, protocol, and expectations pertinent to the daily and ongoing procedures in place at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School. The foundation material comes directly from the Administrative Handbook of the Archdiocese of San Francisco. Local policies are set in accordance with the instructions from the Department of Catholic Schools. Local policies are developed by the Administration of Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School as experience dictates. The School's Administration, in conjunction with the Archdiocesan leadership, reserves the right to all final decisions concerning the disposition of school policies and procedures defined in this School Handbook.

The policies and procedures described within this Handbook apply directly to Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School: its programs, events, and expectations of students, parents, guardians, volunteers, visitors, and all employed personnel.

Our Lady of Mercy School

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

At Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School, we believe that it is our responsibility to provide a faith-filled environment that is Christ-centered, safe, and nurturing where every student, faculty, staff, community member is valued and respected.

Learners come to realize their God-given potential and abilities through the collaborative work of our faculty and staff which is strengthened by our partnership with our families and the school community to prepare them for the challenges of the 21st century.

At the core of our work is the development of the whole child. All students are capable of meeting curricular and co-curricular standards and are entitled to opportunities that meet their diverse needs in an environment rich in Catholic values and practices.

Mission Statement

The Mission of Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School, in collaboration with our families and communities, is to provide faith-based Catholic Education that engages and nourishes our students' spiritual, academic, social, and emotional formation that empowers them to be of service to God and others.

Student Learning Expectations

With the support of our families, the guidance of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, and the confidence of our commitment to Catholic education, Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School students become*

Self-reflective Catholic Christian Learners who

- Value and maintain active prayer life
- Think critically to make good decisions
- Face challenges with readiness to move forward

Thoughtful Catholic Christian Learners who

- Respond to Jesus' call to serve others
- Value the gifts of diversity
- Respect self and others

Actively-Engaged Catholic Christian Learners who

- Learn and grow in the teachings of Christ
- Participate in the sacramental life of the Church
- Learn to work independently and collaboratively.

Responsible Catholic Christian Learners who

- Act with compassion
- Learn about and contribute to community
- Meet academic and behavioral expectations.

Successful Catholic Christian Learners who

- Live out the Gospel values
- Develop lifelong learning skills
- Express and utilize individual talents



ACCREDITATION

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School is accredited by the Western Catholic Educational Association (WCEA). WCEA accredits Catholic elementary and secondary schools in nine western states (26 (arch) dioceses) and the US Territory of Guam. WCEA co-accredits and is in partnership with three Regional agencies (WASC, NAAS, NCA) and two private agencies (CAIS and HAIS). WCEA began in 1957 in San Francisco and has a long and successful history of assisting school improvement through the accreditation process.

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School is also accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). This process currently takes place every six (6) years. The current WCEA/WASC accreditation runs through June, 2024.



GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION
Transitional Kindergarten to Eighth Grade

DAILY SCHOOL SCHEDULE

First Bell 8:00am
Second Bell 8:05am

Morning Recess	Grades K – 4	10:10 a.m. to 10:25 a.m.
	Grades 5 – 8	9:55 a.m. – 10:10 a.m.
Lunch Recess	Grades K -4	11:45 a.m. – 12:25 p.m.
	Grades 5 – 8	12:25 p.m - 1:00 p.m.
	(Mondays)	
		12:34 - 1:14 (Tuesdays, Thursdays, & Fridays)
		12:10 - 12:50 (Wednesdays)
Dismissal	Monday @ 2:30 p.m.	
	Tuesday – Friday @ 3:00 p.m.	
	<i>Minimum Day Dismissal @ 12:30 p.m.</i>	

SCHOOL OFFICE

The School Office is open from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday excluding holidays and special dismissal days designated in the annual School Calendar. Please note that the office will be closed when the entire school is attending mass. Special summer office hours are posted before the last day of the school year.

Our Lady of Mercy School is a secure/closed campus. Entry to the School (after 8:15 a.m.) is through the main door on Elmwood Drive. All Volunteers, Vendors, and Visitors must check in with the Main Office. Visitors remaining on Campus are given proper identification badges/stickers.

Classroom Volunteers must leave a PHOTO ID with the Office during their time on campus. This is returned when the parent signs out and leaves campus.

Forgotten items for students are to be delivered to the School Office; Office personnel will then deliver items to the student.

ADMISSION POLICIES: STUDENT REGISTRATION & ACCEPTANCE

At Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School acceptance of students follows the directives set forth by the Department of Catholic Schools, Archdiocese of San Francisco.

Kindergarten students must meet the designated age qualification in order to be considered for acceptance. All incoming Kindergarteners are interviewed and assessed to ensure a smooth transition to the all encompassing learning programs.

Students applying for entrance to Grades 1 – 8 are also interviewed and assessed so that a proper placement can be made. **5100 ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY STUDENTS**

(From the Archdiocesan Administrative Handbook)

5110 REGISTRATION AND ADMISSION / ACCEPTANCE

5111 ARCHDIOCESAN POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

The Department of Catholic Schools and the Superintendent have established general policies and guidelines to be incorporated in local admissions policies.

- .1 **Nondiscriminatory policy.** The schools of the Archdiocese of San Francisco admit students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the respective schools. These schools do not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, color, and national and/or ethnic origin, age, sex or disability in administration of their educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletic and other school-administered programs.

The schools shall annually publish their own nondiscriminatory policy.

- .2 (E) **Age of admission – Kindergarten.** A student entering kindergarten must be at least five years of age by September 1st of entering school year. The date of birth will be verified by a birth certificate and/or baptismal certificate.
- .3 (E) **(Age of admission – First Grade.** A student entering first grade must be at least six years of age by September 1st of entering school year. The date of birth will be verified by a birth certificate and/or baptismal certificate.)

The decision to admit any student as an exception to the general age requirement is left to the discretion of the school principal in consultation with the superintendent. Acceptance must be based on specific criteria of readiness and performance, and the decision should only be made after consultation with the parents and the kindergarten teacher.

- .4 **Conditions of admission.** A student is admitted to a school with the understanding that he/she will be retained in the school until he/she finishes the course, subject to school policies and procedures, unless the student withdraws voluntarily or gives cause for dismissal.

Financial conditions for admission must be in accord with the policies on tuition and fees in Series 3000 of this Handbook.

No student shall be admitted to any Catholic school unless there is reasonable hope that the student will complete that school's program. In doubtful cases students may be admitted on a

probationary basis with dates and criteria of evaluation clearly established in writing. Care should be taken not to admit students with academic or other needs that cannot be met by the school.

- .5 (E) **Policy on class size.** Elementary school classes shall be limited to thirty five (35) students. This limit may be exceeded only with explicit permission of the Superintendent.
- .6 **Admission priorities.** Since the schools of the Archdiocese are established by the Archdiocesan community as religious schools, preference in admission shall be given to practicing members of the Archdiocesan Catholic community.

(Page revised November 2011)

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

The annual School Calendar has 179 (plus 1 Accreditation release day for this school year) student attendance days. Students are expected to be in school each of those days. Excused absences include illness or some specified event that has been approved by the School Office.

TARDINESS: Classrooms, K – 8, open with the 8:00am Bell. Students are considered *tardy* after 8:05am bell. These students, arriving late, must report to the School Office for a Tardy Slip before entering the classroom. If the student has been at a medical appointment, he/she must bring an *appointment card* verification to the School Office for proper clarification of this absence from School. (Medical absences are identified differently in the Attendance Registers.)

Excessive tardies impact a student's effort grade on the quarterly Report Card. Excessive tardies may require a formal conference with the teacher, assistant principal, or principal to remedy the situation and disciplinary consequences may be imposed at the decision of the school administration. Excessive tardies do affect class participation and the simple daily achievement necessary for academic progress. Students are expected to be on time for school.

EARLY WITHDRAWAL: If an unexpected family situation or emergency matter arises, a student may be taken out of class before the scheduled dismissal time. A Parent or Legal Guardian must make arrangements before hand: a note must be sent to the Classroom Teacher and the Office explaining the early withdrawal and the anticipated time of pick-up. The Parent or Legal Guardian reports to the School Office to sign the student out; the Secretary will call for the student to come to the School Office prepared to leave school.

Again, it is important to note that a student who leaves early on a frequent basis misses important class activity and instruction that is not easily made-up. Please consider the need and the timing before making appointments or planning trips.

ABSENCES: *Parents or Legal Guardians must telephone the School Office before 9:00am to report a student's absence.* A request for daily homework must be made at the time of the initial telephone contact. The schoolwork will be ready for pick-up between 2:30 and 4:00pm at the School Office. The day the student returns to school, he or she must bring the teacher a **written** excuse from his/her parent or legal guardian. This is mandated by the Education Code of the State of California and required by the Archdiocese of San Francisco. The note must contain the following information:

- the student's full name, class section, and dates of absence
- a brief explanation as to why the student was absent
- signature of parent

All absences require that written notes accompany the student back to school.

APPOINTMENTS: Parents are encouraged to make arrangements for medical and dental appointments after school hours or during school breaks. The parent must contact the School Office by telephone and send in a written notice prior to any medical or vital appointment during school hours. Parents or Guardians must come to the School Office in order to sign the student out. The Office Administrator will call for the student to meet his/her parent at the Office. If feasible, the student checks in at the School Office when the appointment is complete.

Simple Reminders:

The School does not have an Infirmary, nor are there certified medical personnel on staff. Therefore, if a child gets sick during school hours, the parent or legal guardian will be notified immediately to come for the student. Also, note that students may not remain in the classroom or School Office during any recess or PE Class because of colds, allergies or such discomforts. If the student is too ill to fully participate in all activities, please keep him/her at home.

SHADOWING IN A HIGH SCHOOL: Eighth Grade Students are permitted to shadow in two high schools during the first semester of the school year. These days typically are morning only sessions. The student must inform the School Office and his/her homeroom teacher in advance of each shadowing day and must return to OLM for his/her afternoon classes. All work missed must be made up. (The student may return to school out of uniform as long as dress follows Our Lady of Mercy School's guidelines.) *High School Shadowing for more than two half-days will be considered absences that would prevent students from receiving the perfect attendance certificates.

EXTENDED ABSENCES: A parent does not have the right to amend the school calendar by taking their child on vacation or trips on school days. Being absent for extended vacations does not lessen the student's academic responsibility nor does it involve special academic consideration. An *Extended Absence Form* must be completed for students being taken out of school for extended periods of time. The student will be responsible for completing and submitting all the work during his / her absence upon returning to school. The Report Card for that Quarter can be impacted. Excessive absences could also affect promotion.

When a student is absent from school, he/she may not participate in or attend extracurricular or co-curricular activities, including, but not limited to, sports, plays, Choir programs, Band presentations, or meetings until he/she has returned to school full-time.

STUDENT DROP OFF & AFTER SCHOOL PICK-UP

Adult Supervision of Drop-Off and Lining Up before School begins 7:45 a.m. Prior to that time, student supervision is provided in Clubhouse, OLM's Extended Care Program. Students who arrive before 7:45 a.m will be escorted to Clubhouse and parents will be billed the Drop-In Fee for that day. The exception will be for students who are directly supervised by a parent who may be on Campus for an appointment with a Staff Member.

After school pick-up is accomplished through the Car Line Procedure. This is the most efficient and safest method of student pick-up. The gates on Southgate are opened fifteen (15) minutes before Dismissal. *Students are lined up in class groups facing the Upper School Yard. Cars enter the school grounds through the Southgate Avenue entry and proceed up the hill to the pick-up areas. All vehicles exit past the Kindergarten classrooms into the Church Parking lot and bear right to South Mayfair Avenue or proceed through the Church Parking Lot – carefully – to Elmwood Drive.

Students in Extended Care are met by Clubhouse Assistants at their classroom doors; students in OLM Homework Club wait with their respective classes until Car Line is finished, then line up outside the designated Homework Club classroom. Students who have written permission to walk off campus on file with the OLM School Office will be dismissed at the end of Car Line traffic. Students whose rides have been delayed must wait in the Main Hallway of the School. Students are not permitted to wait on Elmwood Drive unsupervised immediately following School dismissal.

Students in Homework Club must be picked up by 5:00pm in the assigned classroom by a parent of guardian. Students remaining on Campus for approved after school activities may be picked up in front of the School on Elmwood Drive, exiting through the big gate as they are dismissed from their activity. Coaches for after school sports will supervise their student athletes at arrival and departure for practices. (The Athletic Director assigns Practice sessions.) An authorized adult must sign students in Clubhouse out of Clubhouse. Clubhouse closes at 6:00pm. Sr. Claire's Preschool closes at 5:30pm.

GENERAL SCHOOL POLICIES

The School Administration in tandem with the Archdiocesan Administrative Handbook determines school policies for the Department of Catholic Schools. Policies outlined here are set to serve the efficient operation of OLM's local school programs. The Administration is the final authority on interpretation, implementation, and updating of local school policies.

SCHOOL INSURANCE: Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School provides insurance through an approved insurance vendor for all students. This is a secondary insurance coverage for accidents that occur during school hours or during school-sponsored events. Primary coverage is the responsibility of the parents or guardians.

This is the School's procedure regarding the Archdiocesan School Insurance:

1. The incident is/must be reported immediately to the classroom teacher, yard duty supervisor, or appropriate school staff member
2. Parents or Guardians will be informed as soon as possible
3. The School Office will prepare an incident/accident report and make it available to Parents or Guardians

TUITION: Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School is a tuition-based school. All guidelines regarding Tuition are stated on the Current Parent/Tuition Agreement that must be signed and submitted to the School Office at the time of Registration. This agreement remains active through the identified school year.

Tuition is an annual amount that is divided into monthly payments. The School partners with Tuition Management Company to facilitate the payment of tuition.

There is a one-time annual Student/Registration Fee for each child that covers various supplemental expenses: Yearbook, Testing Materials, proscribed archdiocesan fees, insurance, etc. Penalties are imposed on late payments as specified in the Tuition Agreement.

PARENT PARTICIPATION: Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School relies on the support of the parents and guardians of our students to carry out many of the auxiliary programs that add to the success of our school year. Parent Participation at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School is known as "Service Points." This participation program is outlined on the formal Tuition Agreement Form signed at Registration. Each family is expected to complete 50 points per year (or 25 points for a single-parent household). Parents may enlist the help of Grandparents, Aunts, or Uncles to assist them in reaching the required service points. ***Families not meeting the service point requirements by the end of the school year will be assessed a flat fee of \$750.***

MORE ON SERVICE POINTS:

On actual SERVICE point requirement:

- i. **For Dual Parent Families** → minimum of 30 points (out of the required 50 points) be for Service.
- ii. **For Single Parent Families** → Required that a minimum of 15 points (out of the 25 required points) be for Service.

Service Points: Service points are awarded for gifts of time, labor or personal talents towards approved school, classroom or PTO events.

1. In general, 1 hour of service equals 1 service point.
2. Certain activities or events may warrant weighted/higher Service points – this is at the discretion of the school administration.
3. All parents are expected to participate in and earn at least 6 Service points helping with the school Carnival/SpringFest. This includes planning, solicitation, prep, and volunteering on the actual day of the event.
4. Kindergarten parents are also expected to earn 10 service points volunteering in the Kinder classroom.
5. 7th grade parents are expected to earn 6 service points volunteering to help with the graduation events for the 8th grade.

Donation Points: Donation points are awarded for donations for food, items or money towards approved school-wide or PTO events.

1. Certain activities or events may warrant weighted/higher Donation points – this is at the discretion of the school administration.
2. Donation points will not be awarded for food or items provided as part of classroom parties, celebrations or activities. Room Parents should not sign Donation points for donated classroom food items or party supplies.

Additional Provisions:

1. Service points supersede Donation points, therefore you may complete 50 Service points to fulfill the family requirement (or 25 Service points for single parent families).
2. If you do not earn at least 30 points of Service (or 15 points of Service for single parent families), then you cannot count more than 20 earned Donation points towards your overall number of family points. (This affects eligibility for 200 Club.)

Examples:

- If you accumulate only 10 Service points and 60 Donation points throughout the year, you will be credited with only 30 points (10 Service points + max 20 Donation points) towards the required 50 points per family.
- However, if you accumulate the minimum 30 Service points and an additional 60 Donation points, you will be credited the full 90 points.

***Special Point of Information: General PTO Meetings, held quarterly, are for parents only. Children may not attend these meetings.

Tuition and fees provide a variable portion of the true cost of educating each student at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School. The remaining portion of the cost of the educational program at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School is derived from organized fundraising events, unexpected donations, and the full participation of the parents and families. Therefore, it is understood that parents are responsible for full payment of tuition and fees and for participating in fundraisers and volunteer programs that support the overall school programs. The Parent Teacher Organization Board and the administration decide on

fundraisers for the school year, with two of which identified as mandatory for all families. An opt-out fee will be charged to families who choose not to participate in these fundraisers. The parents will be apprised of these fundraisers in the quarterly PTO meetings as well as announcements in the newsletters coming from the school.

Unpaid mandatory fundraising costs and other unpaid fees will be automatically charged to the families' FACTS accounts.

SPORTS: Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School offers an After-School Sports Programs for OLM Students in Grades 3 – 8. The School's Athletic Director coordinates all sports programs and components under the oversight of the School's Principal. Each sport has a specific contract that describes the season and identifies the fee.

*Practices are closed – only the approved Coaches and Team Members are permitted to be in the Practice Area.

*Student – Athletes in Grades 6-7-8 must be Grade-Eligible to play in scheduled games. The Athletic Director works with the Teachers and Students during each season.

NOTICE: When a student is absent from school, he/she may not participate in or attend extracurricular or co-curricular activities, including, but not limited to, sports, plays, Choir programs, Band presentations, or meetings until he/she has returned to school full time.

LUNCH PROGRAM: Our Lady of Mercy School offers a Hot Lunch Menu with entrees purchased from various local community vendors. A monthly menu is published for parents and students to choose the meals to be purchased. All lunches must be pre-ordered and prepaid at least one week in advance. Directives are on the Monthly Menus.

Students are expected to bring a nutritious snack for the morning recess time and a balanced lunch each full day of school. Children perform much better when their brains have been nourished.

MEDICATIONS: According to guidelines from the California State Department of Education and the Archdiocese of San Francisco, **students may not be in possession of any medication**, prescribed or over-the-counter, during the school day, while on the school campus or if participating in a school sponsored event. The exceptions to this directive include medications for asthma, allergies, or diabetes. The School Office must have an official notice of all medications that a student needs for serious health conditions or takes during the school day. (Forms available in the School Office.)

If a student needs to take medication of any kind during the course of the school day, the medication, in its original container and *TWO written notes* (one from the doctor and one from the parent) must be brought to the School Office prior to the 8:00am bell. This note must explain purpose, dosage, and timing. Students must be able to self-administer any medication. School personnel must witness the student taking medication. School personnel may not oversee any use of medication without written permission of the parents and doctor.

In the event that a student needs aspirin, School personnel will call the parent or guardian for permission to assist the student.

EPIPENS: All teachers and staff members are trained to use the Epipen. If anyone needs to administer the Epipen on your child, 911 will be called immediately and then the first person listed on the emergency card in the school office will be contacted. Make sure the emergency contact information is current at all times.

We are also aware that precautionary measures can be in place to avoid the use of the Epipen. such as having Benadryl on hand to administer to your child when symptoms begin to rise if your child starts manifesting an allergic reaction. Please send into the teacher those precautionary medications such as Benadryl for us to use as allergic reactions become apparent. Send a picture of your child to attach to the Epipen box, as there are more than one Epipen users in some classrooms.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS: The recognition of a child's birthday must be very simple. If the family chooses to share a small treat, all arrangements must be made with the Classroom Teacher at least three days before the event. Balloons or flowers or other extravagant celebration symbols are not permitted at School.

**Invitations to a Birthday Party may not be distributed at School, nor may the Room Parent Email system be used to disseminate invitations.

CELL PHONE POLICY:

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School recognizes the family's need to provide students with cell phones so as to facilitate family communication. Therefore, students who choose to bring their cell phones to school, must follow these guidelines:

*All student cell phones must be placed in a Classroom Carrier each morning upon arrival. The carriers are stored in the School Office until dismissal, when students may retrieve their cell phones

*Students may not use their cell phones in anyway while on school grounds at any time. A cell phone may be utilized after the student exits the school and is on the public sidewalk away from any entry point to the School. Cell phones may be used in front of the church.

***If a cell phone is not turned in at the proper time and found by a teacher or other School official, the phone is taken away and stored in the Principal's Office. In order to regain custody of the phone, the parents need to make an appointment to meet with the Principal.**

*Cell Phones that have been taken away from a student may not be returned immediately. Details of return and further privileges are determined by the Principal and relayed to the Parents.

*In summary: the cell phone is never to be in a student's backpack, desk, or in his/her possession during the school day. Cell phones are not acceptable reference tools for classwork during the school day. Parents must make an appointment with the Principal in order to retrieve cell phones that have been taken away from the students

UNIFORM CODE

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School promotes a spirit of self-confidence in our students. The School Uniform allows students to focus on learning and participating in a school setting with a positive atmosphere. The following **Uniform Guidelines** identify the required dress codes for all OLM students, K-8. School Uniforms level the playing field making OLM School a safe zone. Parents are responsible for purchasing the correct uniform items and for ensuring compliance with the School's Uniform Guidelines. The *required* elements of the OLM School Uniform must be purchased from the Dennis Uniform Company. PE Uniforms and the School Hooded Sweatshirt are sold through the Athletic Office and/or School Office.

→The Administration reserves the right to make any changes to the Uniform Guidelines and is the final authority on all issues regarding uniform and dress code policies.

ALL STUDENTS: K - 8

→**JEWELRY:** Students may wear a simple watch only – **NO** leather, plastic or woven straps/bracelets may be worn. A small simple religious necklace – crucifix or medal – is acceptable. **No** other necklaces are permitted. Girls may wear only stud earrings – **one** pair. Boys are not permitted to wear earrings to School.

→**SHOES:** School shoes are to be a **solid** color, *free from decorations, wheels, or off-colors*. Boys are to wear BLACK and girls are to wear WHITE shoes. High-tops are **not** acceptable. Shoes must be tied and secure at all times! *The court shoe is the safest and most suitable shoe for school use.* **Black Mary Jane shoes with rubber soles are permitted for Girls in Grades K – 2. VELCRO Closures for court shoes are also acceptable for students in Grades K – 2. Safety is our primary goal with shoes.

→**HAIR:** Students are to have clean and neatly combed hair at all times. **NO:** designed cuts, exaggerated styles, or coloring are permitted. Hair must be appropriate for our school environment. *A student whose hair coloring, style, or cut comes into question will be removed from class and sent home for immediate correction. Boys must keep hair cut at least **2** inches *above* the shirt collar line. Styles must be simple - hair must be off the face. Please limit the use of styling products.

→**OUTERWEAR and JACKETS:** The red V-Neck Sweater is *required* with the school uniform. The approved sweatshirts include: the School-Spike Hoodie, the PE sweatshirt, and the Eighth Grade Class Sweatshirt. Jackets must complement the School Uniform. Jackets should be red, gray, or black and **free** of designs, words, or advertising. **No** Team or sports jackets are permitted! *The School Jacket offered by Dennis Uniform Company is a perfect all-weather coat.

→**APPEARANCE:** Shirts and blouses are to be tucked in during class times. **Belts are required** with the Uniform Pants. Turtleneck shirts are **not** permitted. *All Uniform clothing must be in good condition.*
***Students must not wear Uniforms that are torn or have holes in any part.*

GIRLS

K – 8 Uniform includes:

White, short-sleeved blouse – K-5

White Polo shirt – Grades 6-7-8

Red & Gray Plaid Skirt or the Skort

Black Pants purchased from Dennis Uniform Company

Red V-neck School Sweater

White shoes (With laces); Black Mary Janes' are Acceptable for Grades K - 2

Socks are to be gray or white (free of designs) – Crew style or knee-highs

Socks must go above the shoe

White or gray tights may be worn; *Leggings are Not permitted*

Any shirt worn under the blouse must be plain white. It is advisable to wear “bike or dancing” shorts in a complementary color under the skirt.

Hair accessories must match the uniform colors: red, gray, white. They must be simple in style and size.

NO Make-up of any nature: lipstick, blush, foundation, mascara, or eye makeup. **NO** nail polish← Girls may wear **only** stud earrings – **one** pair.

BOYS

K – 8 Uniform includes:

White Polo Shirt or a white short-sleeved shirt

Twill Gray pants purchased from Dennis Uniform Company

A leather belt – at all times

Red V-neck School Sweater

Black Shoes (With laces)
Socks may be white, gray, or black (free of
Designs)

Socks must go above the shoe
Any T-shirt worn under the Uniform shirt must be plain white;
Turtlenecks are not permitted
Haircuts must be simple, short – at least 2” above the collar line;
Boys must be clean-shaven at all times
Boys are **not** permitted to wear earrings to School on any occasion

PE UNIFORMS – For ALL Students K - 8

The PE Uniform is worn to school on the student’s assigned PE Day. PE Grades for each student begin with the student being in *full* PE Uniform. → Hooded Sweatshirts *are not permitted* at PE Class. (Safety Concern)

→ PE Uniforms are purchased through the Athletic Office or the School Office and include:

- Gray Crew Neck Sweatshirt → Hoodies are **not** to be worn to PE Class
- Red Sweatpants
- Gray PE T-Shirt
- School Appropriate court Shoes and socks that follow the School’s requirements

ALTERNATE DRESS GUIDELINES

→ Certain days have a *specific theme* and the dress code directives will be communicated directly to the students, teachers, and the Parents through the Newsletter, website, and email from Room Parents.

→ Students who are chosen as *SHINING STARS* are allowed to have Free Dress the following day.

SCOUTS may choose to wear their Troop Uniform the day of a meeting

SCHOOL ATHLETES may wear their Team Shirt to School **if** expressed approval has been given

ALTERNATE/FREE DRESS GUIDELINES:

Appropriate-fitting pants, including school appropriate jeans – shirts, skirts, and dresses

- *Shirts may be a collared style or T-Shirt style but they **may not** have inappropriate words, advertisements, or designs
- *Skirts and dresses cannot be shorter than 4” above the knee
- *Shoes and socks are to follow School guidelines; shoes may be alternate colors
- *Students are **not** permitted to wear slippers, boots, or sandals

→ The following list identifies apparel that is **unacceptable and not permitted at School ~**

Halter-tops, short skirts/dresses, sweats, shorts, leggings worn alone, jeggings, overalls, windjammers, baggy/oversized pants, skinny/tight jeans/pants, workout or jogging clothes, slippers, sandals.

The School Administration maintains authority over all School-sanctioned and School-sponsored events and designated dress guidelines. The School Administration reserves the right to remove students from class, activities, or events if their clothing or hairstyle is deemed inappropriate. Students are accountable for their compliance with the Uniform Codes.

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School follows curricular programs that are designated and required by the State of California Department of Education and the Archdiocese of San Francisco. An approved Religion Curriculum is taught in all grade levels, K – 8. All students, K – 8, participate in a well-organized PE program on a weekly basis. Art and Music are integrated into the classroom’s full curricular programs.

Students receive appropriate hard copy text materials and often use school-owned digital devices. All learning materials are to be respected and handled carefully. Parents will be charged for any and all damage or loss to school properties.

Progress Reports are sent out (electronically) at the midpoint of each quarter. Formal Parent Conferences are held at the end of the First and Third Quarters. Report Cards are sent out (electronically) following the close of each quarter.

At the end of each quarter, certificates of recognition will be awarded to students for:

- Perfect attendance – students with no tardiness and absences during the grading period. (Eighth Grade shadowing, only when taken no more than two half-days, will not be counted as an absence for purposes of granting this certificate.)
- Academic Improvement – students who have demonstrated remarkable academic improvement as evidenced by higher grades (GPA increase by at least .5 / skill proficiencies as measured by teacher assessments).
- Student Awards – students who have lived and exemplified our virtues of the month.
- OLM STAR Awards – students who have outstandingly demonstrated OLM’s Expected Learning Results.
- Christian Leadership – students who exemplify Christian values especially those who consistently demonstrate what love and charity are.

Sixth to eighth students will receive certificates of honor for meeting set criteria listed below:

Principal’s List: A- (3.7 GPA) or above average in all core academic subjects, 2 or better in effort, conduct, P in enrichment classes with no office discipline referral for the grading period.

High Honors’ List: B+ (3.3 to 3.69 GPA) average in all core academic subjects, 2 or better in effort, conduct, P in enrichment classes with no office discipline referral for the grading period.

Honors’ List: B (3.0 to 3.29 GPA) average in all core academic subjects, 2 or better in effort, conduct, P in enrichment classes with no office discipline referral for the grading period.

Grading and Homework policies follow the guidelines found in the Department of Catholic Schools, Administrative Handbook of the Archdiocese of San Francisco. Classroom Teachers explain individual grade level policies during the Back-To-School Parent Session at the start of the school year. Expectations for classwork, homework, and content testing are age appropriate and are put in place to support student progress in the prescribed curricular programs.

Standardized Testing follows all directives of the Department of Catholic Schools, Archdiocese of San Francisco.

RESOURCE CENTER PROGRAM AND SERVICES

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School recognizes that all students are learners and all students have unique gifts. OLM realizes that some students require adjustments and modifications to the required curriculum in order to follow the lessons and expectations of their grade-level curriculum. To this end, OLM has a well-planned program known as The OLM Resource Center in order to provide educational and social support services to students professionally identified with learning differences or special academic needs. The OLM Resource Center helps students, parents, teachers, and staff to respond to the national guidelines cited in the *2004 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*.

In order for students to qualify for support services through the Resource Center they must be referred by the Classroom Teacher, have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) provided by a local public school district, or a medical document defining a diagnosis that impacts the learning process. Each diverse learner receives unique support developed for him/her that promotes academic achievement within the student's current curriculum.

The Resource Center is a valuable educational program at OLM. The programs, forms, meetings, and outreach of the Resource Center align with all the current procedures and research relating to support for students with a demonstrated need. The Administration works closely with the Resource Center Staff to assure a quality experience for the students, parents, and teachers. Parents are welcome to contact the Resource Director with questions, concerns, or clarification of services.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are considered an important learning experience and are considered an extension of the classroom curriculum. Field Trips are planned carefully and deliberately by OLM's Classroom Teachers. In turn, the logistics are arranged by the teachers according to the hosting site so that the students can be prepared for the plans and programs of the outing. There are required Field Trip Permission Slips that must be completed for each student participating in the excursion. There may also be a "admission fee" set by the personnel of the destination site. All Field Trips must be discussed with and approved by the Principal.

- ✓ A Field Trip is a school day and students are expected to be present. Any absence must be verified with the School Office.
- ✓ Field Trips are not Play Days without a set schedule or purpose.
- ✓ The Classroom Teachers are the primary chaperones for each Field Trip. Parent Chaperones are chosen by random by the Classroom Teacher. There is usually a predetermined number of chaperones for each trip. Chaperones are expected to follow the protocols set up by the Teacher and by the Field Trip site.
- ✓ Younger siblings are not permitted to accompany a chaperone on a Field Trip.
- ✓ Non-Chaperone Parents should not impose on a class's Field Trip and just show up at the event.
- ✓ Most often Charter Buses are the transportation for the major field trips. Some classes take "Walking" Field Trips. If there is an event that may utilize parent drivers these directives must be followed:
 - **All Drivers must be at least 25 years old and in possession of a current valid California Driver's License
 - **The vehicle must have sufficient seat belts and proof of current liability insurance
 - **Parents must provide Child Safety Car Seats is appropriate

****Drivers are to drive directly to the destination and return directly to School. Absolutely NO side trips or personal stops can be made while driving for a School sponsored/approved Field Trip**

RECESS GUIDELINES

Students have two regularly scheduled outdoor recess periods as indicated in this daily class schedule.

Classroom Teachers for Grades K – 4 are to assign Equipment Monitors for play equipment; a Yard Duty Supervisor should watch as equipment is chosen

- ✓ Kindergarten students play in the area in front of their classrooms and are monitored by Teachers and Classroom Instructional Aides
- ✓ Grades 1 – 4 play in the Upper Playground between classroom buildings and are monitored by 3 Instructional Aides from Grades 1 – 4
- ✓ Students play in designated areas: Grades 1&2 are on one half of the upper yard in front of grades 2, 3 & 4 homerooms and Grades 3 &4 are in front of the first grade homerooms.
- ✓ Games include basketball, tag, hopscotch, jump rope, and 4 Square, etc..
- ✓ Recess is intended to be an activity time; therefore students are encouraged to be actively engaged in play.
- ✓ Students who are benched must be in clear view of a Yard Duty Supervisor – Benching is usually done to correct playground behavior problems up to five minutes only.
- ✓ Any physical contact or fighting must be reported to the Office immediately.

The Play Equipment Cabinets in the Lower and Upper Yards will be available to students ONLY when adult supervision / guidance is available. Students should line up before choosing equipment. A Supervisor will do “crowd control” around the equipment container.

- ✓ Students playing in the Lower Court areas and are monitored by 3 school personnel.
- ✓ Students may not go down the hill until directed by a Yard Duty Supervisor.
- ✓ Students are to play in front of the Library; the areas beside and behind the Library are off limits during all Recess Periods.
- ✓ Games include basketball – on courts; kick ball – played in Southgate Avenue Corner area; volleyball; touch football along the grid area.
- ✓ Students are to be respectful of other games; no contact and no rough play are permitted.
- ✓ Students who have misbehaved can be “benched” by having them stand beside the Yard Duty Supervisor no longer than five minutes.
- ✓ Any physical contact or fighting must be reported to the Office immediately.

GENERAL RECESS STANDARDS

*Students who ask to go to the Restroom should go with another student and report back to the Yard Duty Supervisor when they return to the playground.

There is no eating of snacks or lunches on the playground by the students however, teachers may supervise eating outside at their own discretion.

*When the closing bell rings all students are to freeze, the Yard Duty Supervisor blows a whistle for students to move towards classroom lines

*Students are to walk up the hill or line up quietly at the stairs.

*All equipment is to be collected and returned to the cabinets.

PLAY STRUCTURE GUIDELINES

***Do not use any part of the structure that is wet.

***Students may not enter the Park Area without permission; they must wait for supervision

***A Yard Duty Supervisor must be near the park when students are playing in the park.

***SLIDES:**

#1 Sliding is one person at a time and always on their bottoms – feet first!

#2 No climbing up the slide

#3 No hanging on the sides of the slides

#4 Keep the top and bottom areas of the slide clear

***BARS:**

#1 Area under any bar apparatus must be clear

#2 Students should not hang by their legs from highest bars

#3 Students are not to sit on the bars or flip off the bars

***BALANCE BEAMS**

These beams are to be traversed carefully – students should not to shake them loose or move them while others are walking across them.

CODES OF CONDUCT – STUDENTS and PARENTS

PARENT CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

In the spirit of the faith community of Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School it is expected that Parents and/or Guardians place a high priority on modeling Christian attitudes and an open respect for the process of the school's discipline program. Adults are expected to use appropriate language, proper tones of voice, and always show respect for every member of the school staff and all duly appointed coaches and volunteers presiding over authorized school events.

STUDENT CONDUCT/DISCIPLINE PROGRAM

Discipline is an orderly method of learning and practicing appropriate behaviors in a particular environment. When the general order of schedule is interrupted by a violation, corrective methods are utilized. If a disciplinary event occurs, students will be treated with respect for their person and concern for the situation. Each event will be handled individually and in an age-appropriate manner.

Consequences and corrections will reflect the age of the student(s) and the severity of the event. Most behaviors are measured according to the school's *Disciplinary /Attendance Report* that directly models OLM's Schoolwide Learning Expectations. Classroom Teachers present their classroom conduct codes at the beginning of the school year. Parents are informed when a student's conduct does not meet classroom or school standards and often the *Disciplinary/Attendance Report* will be sent home to be signed and returned to the teacher the next day. Reasonable attempts are made to remediate disciplinary needs efficiently and quickly. *The School handles all matters as they happen or when incidents are clearly reported to the appropriate school personnel or School Administration.*

Consequences, which vary based on the infraction, include the following:

- conference with pupil
- conference with parents
- assignment of special tasks
- denial of privileges excluding those that directly impact curricular programming (exclusion from an academically-related field trip, for example, may not be used as a consequence)
- Removal from a free-choice activity in the classroom
- Defined detention period
- Parent Shadowing
- Special Behavior Contract

Specific misbehaviors and their possible consequences (including suspension, probation, or even expulsion) are outlined and further described in the *Administrative Handbook for Elementary and Secondary Schools of the Archdiocese of San Francisco*.

The Administration holds the final decision in disciplinary matters and situations.

The following Code of Christian Conduct comes directly from the guidelines set in the *Administrative Handbook for the Department of Catholic Schools, Archdiocese of San Francisco*.

Parents are the primary role models for their children. The Parents and adult family members of Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School students are held to a high standard of behavior at all time – on campus, at sporting events, on field trips, or any school-sponsored event. Parents are the primary role models for their children.

**ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO
DEPARTMENT OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
CODE OF CHRISTIAN CONDUCT
COVERING STUDENTS AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

The students' interest in receiving a quality, morally based education can be served if students, parents, and school officials work together. Normally, differences between these individuals can be resolved. In some rare instances, however, the school may find it necessary, in its discretion, to require parents/guardians to withdraw their child.

It shall be an express condition of enrollment that the student behave in a manner, both on and off campus, that is consistent with the Christian principles of the school as determined by the school in its discretion. These principles include, but are not limited to, any policies, principles or procedures set forth in any student/parent handbook of the school.

It shall be an expressed condition of enrollment that the parents/guardians of a student shall also conform themselves to standards of conduct that are consistent with the Christian principles of the school, as determined by the school in its discretion. These principles include, but are not limited to any policies, principles, or procedures set forth in any student/parent handbook of the school.

These Christian principles further include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Parents/guardians are expected to work courteously and cooperatively with the school to assist the student in meeting the academic, moral and behavioral expectations of the school.
2. Students and parents may respectfully express their concerns about the school operation and its personnel. However, they may not do so in a manner that is discourteous, scandalous, rumor driven, disruptive, threatening, hostile, or divisive.
3. These expectations for students and parents/guardians include, but are not limited to, all school-sponsored programs and events (e.g., extended care, athletics, field trips, etc.)

The school reserves the right to determine, in its discretion, which actions fall short of meeting the Christian principles of the school. Failure to follow these principles will normally result in a verbal or written warning to the student and/or parent/guardian and normally will first result in disciplinary action short of a requirement to withdraw from the school (e.g. suspension of student or suspension of parent/guardian's privilege to come on the campus grounds and/or participate in parish/school activities, volunteer work, etc.)

The school reserves the right to determine, in its discretion, when conduct is of such a severe nature as to warrant immediate action without a warning and/or without an intermediate step short of withdrawal.

ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO HARASSMENT POLICY

In 1992 the Archbishop of San Francisco promulgated a comprehensive set of policies and procedures covering all forms of unlawful harassment, with particular emphasis on sexual misconduct in the workplace and in ministerial relationships, as well as highlighting the unique respect and responsibility which is owed by adults to children. In 1996 a supplement to that policy was added specifically focusing on student-to-student harassment. The policy serves as a tangible witness to the Catholic commitment to live, love and respect as Jesus did.

The Archdiocese of San Francisco affirms the Christian dignity of every student. It is the policy of the Archdiocese to provide an educational environment in which all students are treated with respect. Harassment is unacceptable conduct that is severe, pervasive and deliberate. Harassment occurs when an individual is subjected to treatment in a school environment, which is hostile, offensive or intimidating because of the individual's race, creed, color, national origin, physical ability or gender. Harassment of any student by any other student is prohibited and will not be tolerated.

A charge of harassment shall not, in and of itself, create the presumption of wrongdoing. However, substantiated acts of harassment will result in disciplinary action up to, and including, expulsion. Students found to have filed knowingly false or frivolous charges will also be subject to disciplinary action up to, and including expulsion. Depending on the nature and extent of the charge, if reasonable suspicion of misconduct is determined, the alleged harasser may be sent home pending conclusion of the investigation by the Administration.

GENERAL DEFINITIONS: HARASSMENT – BULLYING – CYBERBULLYING-ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

***HARASSMENT** refers to the persistent mistreatment of a person, often but not always, related to gender, size, race, creed, ethnicity, intelligence, or ability. Mistreatment can include but is not limited to verbal/written remarks, intimidation, gestures, and/or physical contact.*

***BULLYING** is defined as any intentional act that instigates harm to another person. Bullying presents its damage through verbal harassment, verbal and/or non-verbal threats, physical attacks, or stalking. These actions can occur in a variety of contexts, including but not limited to: verbal confrontation, written expressions, electronic/digital communications, or physical/sexual intimidations. (Definitions are based on information from USLegal.com)*

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School has chosen for the purpose of this School Handbook to clearly state: Bullying will be defined as any demonstration, expression, or gesture that has been conveyed physically, socially, or electronically/digitally that:

- disrupts the school's orderly operations and routines or the school's instructional program
- places a student in a feeling of reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or to his/her property
- physically harms a student
- causes damage to one's property

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School recognizes the presence of easy access to the Internet to conduct social interactions. Therefore, the School puts forth the definition of *CYBERBULLYING* as defined by the National Crime Prevention Council.

CYBERBULLYING is the process of using the Internet, cell phones, or other devices to send or to post text or images with the intention to hurt or embarrass another person. It follows that students who participate in such actions may have to face consequences at school because the effects of such behaviors do carry over into the school environment or school-sanctioned activities on or off the physical campus.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS refer to all devices and actions that engage the Internet or cellular network and any digital programs available to the user. This includes the new Apple Watch.

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY REGARDING THE INTERNET – ELECTRONIC OR DIGITAL INFORMATION RESOURCES

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School supports the educational use of and value of integrated technology in the learning process. OLM recognizes that digital services have the capacity to stimulate and encourage student achievement. It is most important to note that the incorporation of technological systems is handled professionally and with care so as to protect the whole school community from the possible misuse and abuse of such systems. Every effort is made to control the Internet sites and content that can be opened by the students during academic sessions. All student use is designed to be carefully moderated; professional and volunteer staff is bound by professional guidelines when using school wide technology devices and programs.

The overarching expectation concerning these programs and devices is that each individual, student or adult, is held accountable and responsible for any use of technology on school property, during school hours, at school-sponsored events, school-sanctioned activities, or for events that may affect School programs or operations. Misuse or abuse of technology, Internet access, or other digital programs at school will incur immediate disciplinary action. Disciplinary consultation and action will take place with anyone involved in cyberbullying* issues off campus that revert back to the School, reflect on any school programs, or identify any school personnel.

**Cyber-bullying is defined as posting or publishing remarks, information, or materials that defame, humiliate, or embarrass another person. Cyber-bullying includes posting of rumors or gossip intended to bring about dislike of or hatred for another person or group of persons. (USLegal.com)*

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School will not tolerate these actions on any level. The School Administration will work immediately and directly with the students and families identified as participating in or advocating such behaviors. Consequences will be appropriately identified to the individual event. Consequences can vary from detentions, suspensions – away from School or “in-house” – to expulsion. The School Administration maintains the authority to handle the disposition of all reported cyber-bullying events and any misuse of technology that touches the School, its programs, or its population.

Note: Unauthorized digital devices found on School property during School hours will be confiscated and held in the School Office until an administrative decision is made for its return. Students using personal digital devices on campus will be asked to surrender the device, which in turn will remain in the School Office until the parents meet with the Principal.

**ADMINISTRATION'S RIGHT TO AMEND
THE ADMINISTRATION RESERVES THE RIGHT TO AMEND POLICIES, PROCEDURES
AND REQUIREMENTS. ALL AMENDMENTS WOULD BE FOR JUST CAUSE AND
PARENTS WOULD BE NOTIFIED.**