



2026-2027 Family Handbook

Please sign the electronic forms via the online forms portal no later than September 15, 2026

1. Technology Acceptable Use Policy Agreement on page 66
2. Family Handbook Agreement on page 75

August 2026

Dear Students & Parents:

Welcome to a new school year at Mater Christi School! As a school founded and sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy, we are proud of our rich history in the heart of Burlington, and our reputation as a truly child-centered and Christ-centered school that is rooted in the charism and values of the Sisters of Mercy. Our school is richly blessed with caring and intelligent students, dedicated faculty and staff, active parents, and committed alumni and friends. It is because of the commitment of our entire community that we have been able to offer the rigorous and mercy-centered education for which we are so thankful and of which we are so proud.

It is our hope and expectation that every student who graduates from Mater Christi School will be prepared intellectually, socially, and spiritually to enter high school and eventually navigate our larger, global society and make a difference in the lives of others.

This handbook has been prepared in order to give you important information about our school. It contains information about our school's philosophy, policies and procedures, as well as other vital information about our school community. We ask that you familiarize yourself with the contents of this handbook and discuss it with your child(ren). Over this past summer, this handbook was revised so you are asked to review this information thoroughly.

Thank you for entrusting your child(ren) to us and we look forward to working in partnership with you during this academic year!

May God bless you and our year to come.

Mr. Tim Loescher
President/Head of School

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MISSION, VALUES & VISION

Mission Statement

Guided by our Catholic faith and inspired by Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy, we educate and form students by promoting academic excellence, moral responsibility, and joyful community in order to prepare students to become courageous and compassionate leaders ready to serve a vulnerable world.

The Mission Statement of the Mercy Education System of the Americas (MESA)

The Mercy Education System of the Americas (MESA) is rooted in the Gospel, through the Catholic faith and the Mercy charism. Inspired by Catherine McAuley, MESA nurtures highly competent and deeply compassionate leaders ready to serve a vulnerable world.

Core Values of Mater Christi School as a member of MESA

Principled Leadership (our focus for this academic year)

Educational Courage

Inspired By Faith

A Voice For Dignity and Respect

Compelled By Mercy

Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy

Earth

Immigration

Nonviolence

Racism

Women

MCS Mercy Pledge

As a Mater Christi student, today I pledge to do my best, to show respect, to forgive, to listen, and to become a courageous and compassionate leader like Catherine McAuley ready to serve a vulnerable world.

MATER CHRISTI SCHOOL FACULTY AND STAFF

President/Head of School: Mr. Timothy Loescher

Asst. Head of School for Spiritual, Religious & Community Life: Mr. Jason Moore

Preschool: Mrs. Andrea Hulsey

Preschool: Ms. Sophie Decker

Prekindergarten: Ms. Emma Cupp & Mrs. Susan Robinson

Preschool/Prekindergarten Teaching Aide: Ms. Emma Jean

Kindergarten: Mrs. Anna Pepin

Kindergarten: Ms. Samantha Serrantonio

Grade 1: Ms. Sarah Bassett

Grade 1: Ms. Ellie Reed

Grade 2: Mrs. Jennifer Coulter

Grade 2: Ms. Miranda McClellan

Grade 3: Mr. Jonathan Gray

Grade 3: Ms. Elizabeth Watkinson

Grades 4 & 5 Religion: Mr. Jason Moore & Mr. James Ulager

Grade 4: Mrs. Denise Boutin

Grade 4: Mrs. Faith Gong

Grade 5: Ms. Megan Shields

Grade 5: Mrs. Glenda Bedard

Grade 6-8 Latin: Ms. Lauren Palmer

Grade 6-8 Religion: Mr. Caleb Kinlaw

Grade 6-8 Social Studies: Ms. Julia Melloni

Grade 6-8 Math: Mrs. Kim Servin

Grade 6 English & Literature; Language Arts Curriculum Coordinator: Mrs. Hilary Carter

Grade 7-8 English: Ms. Kathleen Dean

Grade 7-8 Literature: Mr. James Ulager

Grade 6-8 Science: Mr. Mark Pendergrass

Grade 6 Math & Middle School Math Specialist: Mrs. Kimberly Gravett

Athletic Director & Middle School Student Care Coordinator: Mr. Jeff Vincent

Physical Education, Wellness, Student Support: Mrs. Michelle Donlon

Physical Education: Mr. Ernie Duncan

PS-3 Religion Specialist: Ms. Rachel Lavallee

Grade 2-5 Latin: Mr. Nicholas Rabalais

Art: Mrs. M.C. Baker

PS/PK/K Art: Mrs. Jenny Larkin

PS-8 Music: Mrs. Kara Safer

Chorus & Band: Mrs. Lisa Raatikainen

Director of Support Services: Mrs. Carole McLenithan

Intermediate Support Services: Mrs. Leslie Sem & Mrs. Erin Dahlstrom

Elementary Support Services: Mrs. Megan Mannion

Elementary Literacy Interventionist: Mrs. Colleen O'Connor

Early Education Directors: Ms. Emma Cupp & Ms. Kristen King

Afterschool Program Director: Ms. Sophie O'Neil

School Nurse: Mrs. Liz Hamilton, Dr. Nelly Schottel, Mrs. Leah Macaulay

Technology: Mr. Michael Early & Ms. Renee Compagna

Finance Manager: Mrs. Kate Lafferty

Office Managers: Mrs. Kimberly Price and Mrs. Mary Beth Sartorelli

Development & Communications Manager: Mrs. Jennifer Behr

Director of Admissions & Marketing: Mrs. Melissa Senesac

Librarians: Mrs. Judy Flanagan & Mrs. Kit Olson

Chef: Mr. Dan Phillips

Dishwasher: Mr. Benoit Didjango

Facilities Manager: Mr. Randall Henson

Maintenance: Mr. Mustafa Semic & Mr. Jim Howrigan

Lunchroom Supervisor: Mr. Tim Fitzgerald

TUITION

Tuition at Mater Christi is set on an annual basis, based on the school's operational budget. Tuition pays for approximately 70% of all operating expenses. Gifts to the annual fund are crucial as a means of filling the tuition gap and supporting school programs. Every family is expected to contribute to the annual fund in an amount appropriate for the family's budget. The budget process is undertaken in the late fall and tuition and fees are typically set in December after approval by the Mater Christi Board of Trustees. Tuition and fees are then communicated to parents. If you have any questions, contact Kate Lafferty, Finance Manager 802-658-3992 x113 or klafferty@materchristischool.net

2026-2027 Tuition Rates

- Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten
 - Full Time (5 days/week 7:55 am - 2:50 pm) - \$13,530
 - Part Time (4 days or less, half or full days) - \$11,890
- Elementary & Intermediate (Kindergarten to Grade 5) - \$14,600
- Middle School (Grades 6, 7, 8) - \$15,600

Tuition Payments

Tuition is paid through the FACTS Management Company to help us manage our tuition payment program. There is a fee per family for this service, depending on which payment plan you choose. Through FACTS you can conveniently pay your registration and tuition online, receive email payment reminders before your payment is due, select from one of multiple payment options, and always review your account online. You may also drop off a check to Kate Lafferty, Finance Manager in the main office and she can apply it to your account. To register in FACTS for the first time, please go to <https://online.factsmgmt.com/signin/3JBTW>. You will then have the ability to select a payment plan or apply for financial assistance. Below are the preferred options:

One (1) Installment

Due July 1, 2026

Payment by check

No Fee

Two (2) Installments

Due July 1, 2026 and January 1, 2027

Payment by check

\$25.00 Fee

Ten (10) Installments

Due July 1, 2026 through April 1, 2027
Payment by automatic withdrawal is required
\$55.00 Fee

Ten (10) Installments

Due July 15, 2026 through April 15, 2027
Payment by automatic withdrawal is required
\$55.00 Fee

Twelve (12) Installments

Due July 1, 2026 through June 1, 2027
Payment by automatic withdrawal is required
\$55.00 Fee

Twelve (12) Installments

Due July 15, 2026 through June 15, 2027
Payment by automatic withdrawal is required
\$55.00 Fee

Tuition Assistance

Tuition assistance is available on a limited basis to families unable to afford the full cost of educating their children at Mater Christi. Parents and guardians seeking assistance are required to complete an application using the FACTS system. Determinations are then reviewed by the school's Tuition Assistance Committee and families are notified in writing of the decision. Mater Christi School is committed to its students and their families. If any family encounters financial difficulty in meeting tuition obligations, we strongly encourage them to apply for tuition assistance.

TUITION POLICY

Early Withdrawal* Policy

In addition to the non-refundable registration fee, the following is in effect:

Withdrawal after July 1 and prior to July 31st = One (1) month tuition forfeited.
Withdrawal anytime thereafter = Two (2) months tuition forfeited plus prorated tuition for the time attended.

*"Withdrawal" during the school year refers to the last day on which the student attends. It does NOT refer to the date on which the school is notified that a student will be withdrawing.

The rationale behind this policy is that the school loses the opportunity to place another student in that spot, and finding a replacement is not a guarantee. Students on a waiting list also lose the opportunity to attend Mater Christi School. In addition, the Board of Trustees must make budget decisions early in the winter based on a projected number of students expected to attend Mater Christi. Staffing needs are met and contracts signed, thus cementing Mater Christi's financial obligations for the new school year.

Non-Payment of Tuition

Non-payment of tuition will result in the student's disenrollment from the school. No report card will be issued at the end of the school year for the student(s) whose families have outstanding tuition balances owed. In addition, the school, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to engage collections agencies on its behalf, to collect on any delinquent accounts and to also assess a 1% per month (12% per year) interest rate to accrue on any outstanding balances that are 30 days late or more.

Families Not Returning

Families not returning to the school must provide written notice of withdrawal sent directly to the President/Head of School. The President/Head of School must receive such written notice by July 1st of the coming school year in order for families to avoid their tuition obligations for the coming school year, as described above. If such notice of withdrawal takes place after this date, including withdrawals made during the school year, families are still obligated to pay tuition subject to the terms outlined above.

Books and Supplies

The cost of consumable books, rental fee of hardcover books, science and computer fees, some field trips, paper, and miscellaneous supplies used throughout the school year are covered in the \$350 registration fee.

8th Grade Graduation Fee

The cost of additional graduation expenses is \$125. This is payable by check by October 15th.

DAILY OPERATIONS

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL MAY BE ALTERED DUE TO CONSTRUCTION IN 2025-26.
PLEASE FOLLOW SCHOOL DIRECTIVES, WHICH MAY ALTER FROM
INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN BELOW

Arrival

Students in grades PS-3 are expected to arrive no earlier than 7:40 a.m. Students will be greeted in the early education center or the elementary lobby each morning. Students in grades PS-K may proceed directly to homerooms. Students in grades 1-3 will be allowed to proceed to homerooms no earlier than 7:50 a.m. Any student in grades PS-3 arriving after 8:10 a.m. will be considered tardy.

Students in grades 4-8 are expected to arrive at school no earlier than 7:40 a.m. and may proceed directly to their homerooms. Any student in grades 4-8 arriving after 8:00 a.m. will be considered tardy.

Transitioning from being accompanied by a parent into the classroom to entering on one's own is a healthy developmental process that we seek to facilitate in the early grades.

- PS/PK students may be accompanied to their classrooms. Parking is available in front of the early education center.
- Kindergarten students may be accompanied to their classrooms until October 1, but after that date students are expected to enter school on their own.
- Students in grades 1-3 are to be dropped off on the right hand side of the loop in front of the elementary building and are to enter school on their own. For safety, vehicles must pull over and park on the right hand side of the loop before letting children out of the vehicle.
- Students in grades 4-8 are to be dropped off at the pick-up/drop-off area adjacent to the middle school.
- VEHICLES MUST PULL OVER FULLY TO THE CURB to drop off and pick up students.

Dismissal

Preschool–Grade 5 dismissal is 2:50 p.m. Middle School dismissal (Grades 6-8) is 3:00 p.m. Only those students enrolled in the Mater Christi After School Program, athletics, extra-curricular activities, or those receiving help from teachers should be at school after dismissal. If a child is not in a supervised program and remains on the school grounds beyond 3:10 p.m. (3:15 p.m. for grades 4-8) he/she will be placed in the After School Program at the parent/guardian's expense.

- PS/PK students are to be picked up at 2:50 p.m. from their classroom. Parking is available in front of the early education center.
- Students in grades K-3 are to be picked up on the right hand side of the loop. Kindergarten and first grade students will wait outside on the sidewalk in front of the elementary building. Students in grades 2 and 3 will wait on the ledge in front of the academic wing.
- Students in grades 4-8 are to be picked up at the pick-up/drop-off area adjacent to the middle school.
- The playground is reserved for our After School Program participants only, and is not allowed for use by students after school who are not in the program.

Upon exiting the school driveway during arrival and dismissal times, for safety and traffic flow, it is imperative that vehicles take a **right turn** to exit the school property. Please do not park in the defined pickup/drop-off areas during arrival (7:45 - 8:00 a.m.) and dismissal (2:50 - 3:15 p.m.). In case of inclement weather, students will wait in the lobby areas or in the gymnasium for their rides.

Attendance

A habit of regular and faithful attendance is a prerequisite for a successful school experience. If a student must be absent, parents are asked to notify the Main Office before 8:30 a.m. (658-3992). If a student is absent during the school day, they are not permitted to attend after school events and functions occurring on that same day.

Absence and Tardiness

Families with students who are excessively tardy or absent will be notified by the administration, and are subject to disciplinary action, the need to organize academic support during the school year through tutoring, and/or summer course work, and may be reported to the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

Planned Absences

Mater Christi School **STRONGLY** encourages parents to refrain from taking family vacations while school is in session. It is very difficult for a student to miss school and still keep up with studies. Exceptions to this policy must be cleared with the principal and a note is required from the parent or guardian. Students in grades 4-8 who will be absent for more than one day must obtain a Planned Absence Form and are responsible for completing missed school work within the number of days they were gone. Absences due to vacations and out-of-town sporting events are considered ***UNEXCUSED***

Leaving School Grounds

Leaving the school grounds during the school day is not permitted. The school day begins when students arrive at school and ends when they are picked up, take the bus or walk home. Students at Mater Christi after the end of the school day must be in a supervised school program at all times on school grounds.

School Visitors

Federal Law requires all visitors, including parents, guest speakers, and volunteers to report to the Main Office before entering either building. At Mater Christi, visitors are welcome if they have been properly cleared through the Main Office in advance, signed the visitor log and procured the appropriate name tag and wear it throughout the time they are at school.

Parents are asked not to interrupt classes while they are in session or during dismissal time. If parents need to bring forgotten items or messages to a child, please call or report to the office, and we will arrange to get items and messages to the students. Parents are not to go to classrooms or to enter the building at any time without making arrangements ahead of time for a meeting. Parents with students in K-8 should wait for students outdoors, not in the school lobbies or corridors adjacent to classrooms.

Regular volunteers, chaperones, and drivers for field trips are required to undergo a background check. Forms, which must be signed and notarized, are available at the Main Office. There is no fee for this process. School employees and coaches are required to undergo a criminal background check. Applicants pay for fingerprinting and processing by the Vermont Criminal Information Center. All information is strictly confidential.

Parent Teacher Organization

An essential aspect of successful learning is a healthy partnership between parents and school. The Mater Christi PTO plays an important role in creating this partnership. The primary purpose of the PTO is to facilitate communication between teachers, parents and students through the sponsorship of family oriented school activities, regular informational meetings, fundraising and educational activities that support an excellent learning environment.

Telephone Use

Students may use the school telephone to contact parents when necessary. Students may not use the telephone to call parents for forgotten homework assignments. It is each student's responsibility to arrive at school with everything necessary for their day. Students and teachers will not be called out of class for telephone calls, except in an urgent situation. Arrangements for after school events and activities should be made prior to arrival at school.

Faculty/Staff Communication

Open communication between parents/guardians and faculty/staff is essential to a successful school experience. Please contact your child's teacher directly with questions, comments or issues. During the school week, you may expect a response from your child's teacher within a 48 hour time frame. Teachers are not expected to check school messages and emails during weekends and vacations. If for any reason you do not receive a response within the appropriate time frame, please call the Main Office to verify that your message was received by the teacher.

Parking

Parking is available for visitors and parents behind the elementary building in marked spaces. There is no parking in front of the elementary building or on Mansfield Avenue.

Parking is not allowed for those who do not have business at the school. This includes parents or visitors who may work locally or who have business in the vicinity. This policy must be strictly observed not only out of fairness, but primarily out of concern for health and safety.

School Cancellation

In the event of school cancellation due to weather or other circumstances, announcements will be made beginning at approximately 6:00 a.m. through the school notification network, the Mater Christi website, Facebook page, and local television and radio stations.

Use of Mater Christi Logo

Please contact the Main Office if you need to use the Mater Christi School logo for any reason. We ask that you do not download the logo from the internet, scan it from another document or reproduce it without prior approval.

DRESS CODE AND UNIFORM POLICY

The uniform for students in grades K-8 is established to support a commitment to simplicity, neatness, cleanliness and lack of competition in the area of dress. Mater Christi has a true uniform policy, not a dress code. Land's End is the official supplier of Mater Christi uniforms. Upon arrival at school, administration, faculty and staff pay close attention to adherence to the uniform policy. Students in grades PS & PK are not required to wear the school uniform, however, for safety reasons, they are expected to follow school guidelines pertaining to footwear and hairstyle. Clothing for all grades must be clean and fit properly. Students in grades K-8 must wear the school uniforms each day beginning on the first day of school.

Students not in proper uniform will be provided with uniform clothing that they may borrow and return cleaned. If uniform clothing is not available to borrow, parents may be contacted to bring uniform clothing from home. Repeated uniform infractions may be followed with disciplinary action. It is the parent's responsibility to make sure their child is in uniform before he or she arrives at school. The uniform policy applies to all school sponsored activities and events, including field trips, dances, and community service unless otherwise specified.

- Uniforms should come from Lands End only
- Girls are required to wear the girls' uniforms, and boys are required to wear the boys' uniforms, as outlined and delineated below
- Warm weather uniform options (shorts, skorts) are for the first day of school to October 15th, and April 15th through the last day of school or by administrative discretion
- Cold weather uniform options (pants, turtleneck, leggings and tights) are for October 15th to April 15th or by administrative discretion
- Acceptable outerwear includes a navy fleece jacket or vest with the school logo, and a navy crewneck cardigan or pullover with the school logo
- PE uniforms may not be worn by students reading, serving or otherwise contributing to a liturgical celebration unless approved by administration
- Second layers, such as hooded sweatshirts or non-MCS fleeces, may not be worn with the school uniform during any part of the school day (including recess). Jackets may be worn, but not in classrooms.
- "Hats" (hats, caps, scarf-headwear) are not to be worn indoors. Hats may be retrieved and worn outside at recess but are to be removed when a student enters the building, including the dining room. The exception to this rule is if a hat is worn for religious or medical reasons.
- Undershirts worn beneath the uniform must be white, contain no writing and be tucked in at all times
- Skirts/Skorts must be KNEE LENGTH
- Pants must be of twill or chino material and classic fit only (no wide flares, cargo, skinny, cropped or low rise)
- Makeup should be simple and tasteful. Makeup is approved for middle school girls only.
- Nails should be kept short and clean. Press on or salon acrylic nails are not permitted for health and safety reasons.
- Nail polish is approved for girls only and black nail polish is not acceptable
- Earrings must be no larger than the diameter of a dime and dangling or hoop earrings are not allowed
- Tattoos, body painting and body piercing are not allowed

Footwear

Dress shoes without heels or clean sneakers in good condition are appropriate for both boys and girls. For safety reasons in the science lab, on the playground and in the event of evacuation, high heels, wedges, sandals, flip-flops, Crocs, Tevas, clogs, slippers, open back shoes, and plastic play "princess" shoes are not allowed at any time. Shoes must be tied or fastened properly. Boots are not allowed to be worn inside. Uggs of any kind are not to be worn inside. If a student does not have appropriate shoes for the school day, there may be a pair available for them to borrow, however providing shoes that can be left at school all the time is highly encouraged.

Hair

Hair is to be neat and clean and away from the student's eyes. No "unusual" hairstyles, including hair dying or streaking, will be accepted at school. Students in violation of this policy will be sent to the office. Interpretation of these guidelines is at the discretion of the administration.

Girls Uniform Grades K-3

Navy skirt/skort (knee length only)

Navy shorts

Navy flat front pants

Navy jumper (worn with polo shirt)

White or light blue polo shirt with MCS logo (short or long sleeve)

White turtleneck (worn with navy crewneck cardigan or navy jumper)

Solid white, navy or black socks, tights or leggings (under a jumper or skort)

Girls Uniform Grades 4-8

Navy skirt/skort (knee length only)

Navy box pleat skirt

Navy shorts

Navy flat front pants

White or light blue polo shirt with MCS logo (short or long sleeve)

Solid white or navy socks, tights or leggings (under a skirt or skort)

Boys Uniform Grades K-8

Navy shorts

Navy flat front pants

White or light blue polo shirt with MCS logo (short or long sleeve)

Solid white, navy or black socks

Solid black or brown belt (optional)

Physical Education (PE Class) Uniform (for girls and boys grade K-8)

Navy micromesh shorts with MCS logo

Navy sweatpants with MCS logo

White or light blue polo shirt with MCS logo (short or long sleeve) or

T-shirt with MCS logo (girls: light blue or gray; boys: gray)

Navy sweatshirt with MCS logo

Solid white, navy or black socks

Clean sneakers (tied) in good condition

Dress-up Days

Dress-up days will be called on special occasions at the discretion of the administration. In the event of a dress-up day, the student's appearance must be neat and clothing must fit properly.

Boys must wear collared shirts tucked in with a belt. Ties are encouraged, but not mandatory.

Girls may choose to wear skirts, dresses or classic dress pants. Skirts and shorts must be no more than two inches above the knee. Tops must be modest and cover the midriff and back. Shirts with advertising or other writing, jeans, sweatpants, yoga pants, leggings, wind pants, tank tops and T-shirts are not appropriate. Shirts with straps should be no less than 2 inches to cover the

shoulder and undergarments. Camouflage or military style clothing is not appropriate and may not be worn. Please follow the usual footwear guidelines.

Eighth grade boys are asked to wear a suit or suit jacket for their role in the Honor Guard during May Crowning and for the graduation ceremony. Please plan accordingly. A small number of suit jackets are available to borrow when needed.

Dress-down Days

Dress-down days will be called on special occasions at the discretion of the administration. If we are in the period of warm weather wear guidelines, and in the event of a dress-down day, shorts and skorts must still be appropriate length. Shorts, skirts or tunic-style tops must be worn over any tight-fitting pants such as yoga pants, athletic tights, leggings, or the like. Shirts are not to have inappropriate language, and footwear must still follow our handbook guidelines (i.e. No high heels, wedges, sandals, flip-flops, Crocs, Tevas, clogs, slippers, open back shoes or plastic play “princess” shoes). If we are in the period of cold weather wear, shorts and skorts are not allowed, and legs should be covered and kept warm. In the event of a dress-down day, the student’s appearance must be neat and clothing must fit properly.

INSTRUCTION AND SUPPORT SERVICES

The MCS school community attempts to address student needs in all areas of education - spiritual, emotional, physical and academic. Support Services will be provided based on the needs of the students and with the recommendation of teachers and/or the administration, and contingent upon the availability of staff.

Prayer and Services

The school day at Mater Christi begins and ends with a period of prayer and reflection. Other customary times for prayer may include before lunch and/or at the beginning of each class. Eucharistic celebrations and prayer services take place regularly at Mater Christi. Parents are always welcome to attend these services, which are held in either the Chapel of the Sacred Heart or the gymnasium. All students and faculty members, Catholic and non-Catholic, attend Eucharistic celebrations and prayer services. All students, Catholic and non-Catholic, are expected to attend and participate in religion class from preschool through grade 8.

Homework Assignments

Homework is assigned as an extension and reinforcement of skills and activities introduced in the classroom. Assignments are made to reinforce student understanding of material and to assess student progress and level of mastery. Teachers will make every effort during the school day and/or during call back/homework club to ensure that students know how to complete homework assignments. In the event of an absence, students are responsible for getting work that they may have missed. Teachers will make an effort to coordinate with fellow teachers to monitor the number of tests and assignments. Homework on weekends will occur as necessary. Teachers communicate with each other regarding larger, long-term assignments and tests.

The following time frame should be used as a guideline. The use of Study Hall time in grades 4-8 may cause modifications in these nightly approximations:

- For grades 1-2 approximately 15 minutes nightly, plus an additional 20 minutes of reading
- For grades 3-5 approximately 30-60 minutes nightly, plus an additional 20 minutes of reading
- For grades 6-8 approximately 1-2 hours of homework nightly

Grading System

For students in preschool, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten, written evaluations are issued six times per year. Students in grades 1-3 are evaluated using a letter system measuring each child's personal progress with regard to academic expectations. Numerical grades are used in grades 4-8.

In grades 1-8, an incomplete (INC) may be issued for unfinished assignments due to absences. In order to receive credit for assignments, work must be completed one week from the date that the student returns to school or within one school week after grades have closed for the trimester. Extenuating circumstances will be dealt with at the discretion of the teacher and administration.

Report Cards and Progress Reports

Trimester report cards are issued to students in grades 1-8 electronically approximately every 15 weeks. Final report cards are issued only to students whose parents have met all of their financial obligations to the school. Progress reports for students in grades K-8 will be online halfway through each trimester.

Standardized Testing

Achievement testing is one way to determine students are learning and mastering the curriculum at Mater Christi. Testing is only one aspect of a student's proficiency. The child's daily achievement and successes over the entire school year are more significant and valid indicators of his/her learning experience at Mater Christi. Standardized testing takes place in grades 3-8.

Promotion to the Next Grade

Mater Christi is committed to providing its students with an enriching and successful learning experience at each grade level. When it is apparent that more time is needed at a particular grade level, and that a child would benefit from additional time in the present grade, dialogue among teachers, parents and administrators will commence as early as possible in order to plan an educational program best suited for the child and his/her growth and academic success.

Promotion of middle school students is based upon the recommendation of the Mater Christi faculty and a 60% or higher year's average in all academic subjects. Should this requirement not be met, attendance at an approved summer school and/or successful completion (minimum of 30 hours per failed subject area) of an approved academic plan would then be required. Failure in three or more subject areas would require the student to repeat the grade level.

If a student is absent 20 or more days in the school year, it may result in the need for summer attendance at an approved summer school and/or successful completion of an approved academic plan.

Graduation Requirements

The decision for graduation will be based on the following conditions, taking into consideration the student's academic and social benefits for promotion or retention as mutually agreed upon by the teachers and administration.

1) Satisfactory achievement is a grade of 60% and above in all academic areas

If achievement is not satisfactory by the second trimester progress report

- A notification letter is mailed home.
- The student is placed on academic warning.
- An academic plan is developed.
- Weekly progress reports are required.

If achievement is not satisfactory by the end of the second trimester

- The student is placed on academic probation.
- An academic plan is developed.
- Weekly progress reports are required.
- A parent meeting with the administration is required.

If achievement is not satisfactory by the third trimester progress report

- Parents will receive notification that the student may not graduate.
- The student's academic plan may be amended or revised.

If achievement is not satisfactory by the end of the third trimester

- Parents are notified that their child will not graduate with the class and will be unable to participate in the graduation ceremony.
- Students must attend and successfully complete a Mater Christi approved summer school (minimum of 30 hours per failed subject area) before Fall term begins, to determine academic status.
- Failure in three or more subject areas will automatically require the student to repeat the academic year.

2) Current enrollment status

If a student is suspended from school during the month preceding graduation, he/she may be asked not to attend the graduation ceremony.

3) Financial obligations met

Report cards will be issued for those students whose parents/guardians have met all of their financial obligations to the school.

Recommendation Letters and Forms

All forms or requests must be given to teachers two weeks prior to the institution's deadline. A stamped envelope addressed to the institution or organization must accompany requests.

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM

Our Afterschool program is available for students in all grades PS-5 from dismissal until 5:00PM. Our program provides a safe and caring environment for Mater Christi students during the after school hours. Parents who would like to enroll their child(ren), must complete the Afterschool registration form that is part of the regular school registration package. Enrollment is limited. Any changes to your after school schedule can be made by completing the Change Form located at the Main Office.

The Afterschool program model has three core concepts that research has proven to provide positive youth development in a fun and creative way: achievement, relationships and belonging.

Achievement

Every day we will work with your children at an appropriate developmental level to build skills, such as learning a new sport, completing homework or a creative activity. More importantly we are building life skills and daily living skills. This will include but is not limited to honesty, respect, caring, use of manners, cleanliness and fair play.

Relationships

Building relationships takes time and with our intentional programming we work to make sure all students build positive relationships. These relationships will include fellow students but also parents, school faculty and staff. The skills they learn in relationship building will help them grow and navigate the various personalities your child will encounter in life.

Belonging

A sense of belonging is what sets Mater Christi apart from other communities of caring. We use songs, skits and activities to enhance our programming. These enhancements develop a strong sense of belonging. This is how we make sure students feel that this is *their* school. It is how we build your child up from the inside.

Late Fee Policy

The Afterschool program closes at 5:00PM daily. Prompt arrival for pick-up is mandatory unless prior notice has been given. After one late pick-up, a late fee of \$25 will be added to one's Afterschool bill. This protocol holds in the event of winter weather, as well. In the event of an emergency, arrangements will be made at no additional expense.

The playground is reserved for our Afterschool Program participants only, and is not allowed for use by students after school who are not in the program.

FIELD TRIPS

School field trips are an extension of the Mater Christi educational program and all school rules, policies and procedures apply.

Forms

A consent form for local walking field trips is sent home to each family in the summer information packet along with the yearly Statement of Consent for Medical Treatment form. Signed, school-issued permission slips and money, if necessary, are required for all other field trips and must be returned to the homeroom teacher one day prior to the field trip. Facsimiles or emailed permission slips are acceptable as well. Handwritten notes or phone calls are unacceptable. Children unable to participate in a field trip will remain at school in a supervised area.

Drivers

Drivers for school field trips must be 25 years of age or older. All drivers and chaperones must have completed the Criminal Record Check. Drivers must provide a copy of their driver's license and current automobile insurance card to the student's homeroom teacher or to the Main Office. All students must travel in a properly used child restraint in accordance with Vermont State Law. No student, regardless of age, is permitted to sit in the front seat of a vehicle on a school sponsored trip or as he/she is transported to a school sponsored athletic event. Unauthorized stops are prohibited and drivers may not provide food, snacks or beverages.

Off Campus Safety

A Health Office issued First Aid kit, consent for medical treatment, emergency contacts, individual rescue medicine and EpiPen trained faculty/staff will accompany all field trips.

Safety and Behavioral Threat Assessment Committee

These committees meet weekly and are composed of school administrators, office manager, school nurse, and school therapist. The committee plans egress and safety drills according to response-based safety protocols, and discuss all issues related to improving safety and mitigating safety threats in our school (facility, training, policies, community).

FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES

Lunch

Lunch with milk is served each school day and costs \$5.00 (\$4.50 for PS/PK). Salad Bar is \$2.50 and milk is \$0.50. Deposits to a student's account may be made at any time by writing a check to Mater Christi Hot Lunch or via MealTime Online. The amount deposited should cover several weeks or months' worth of lunches. One check may be written per family. Checks should be mailed to 50 Mansfield Avenue, Burlington, VT, 05401 or sent in with the student. Parents of students whose accounts are in arrears by more than \$16.00 will be reminded that additional funds must be sent to school. School menus are posted in advance on the school website and are published monthly in an emailed parent bulletin.

All students are encouraged to bring lunch or have school lunch each day. Milk is also available for purchase daily for all students. All students in grades 1-8 may bring a lunch from home that includes peanuts or nuts. When eating peanuts or nuts, students must sit at designated tables and use the provided wipes to clean their hands directly after eating. PS/PK and kindergarten students must have peanut-free and nut-free lunches.

Students are expected to be courteous and respectful to their peers, the adults serving them, and those on duty in the dining room. Each student is responsible for composting their food waste and recycling materials and disposing of any trash. Students are expected to leave his or her eating area clean for the next lunch period.

Bottled Water

The Sisters of Mercy have taken a corporate stance against the use of bottled water as part of their ministry in protecting our planet. Therefore, we ask that (plastic) bottled water not be brought to school. A chilled and filtered drinking fountain and bottle filling station is available to all students. Students are encouraged to bring their own water bottle to school every day. Water is the healthiest beverage choice and we are interested in helping establish the lifelong habit of drinking water.

Snacks

Each classroom in preschool through grade 8 may have its own snack time. Snacks must be peanut-free and nut-free and in a separate container from the lunch. Parents are encouraged to provide nutritious snacks such as fresh fruit and vegetables, cheese, yogurt and crackers. Juice at snack time is discouraged as it promotes tooth decay and obesity and makes it difficult to keep classrooms clean.

Candy and Soda

To promote healthy and nutritious choices, candy and soda are not permitted and should never be sent with children for general distribution at any time. Gum is not permitted on school grounds.

HEALTH SERVICES

The Mater Christi Health Office services to protect and promote student health, facilitate optimal development, and support academic success. The Health Office, in coordination with community health services, provides students with health appraisal and supervision, health counseling, emergency and first aid care. The Health Office takes steps to control communicable diseases within the school, manages special health concerns and provides health and wellness education. The Health Office follows written policies and procedures in compliance with state requirements relating to vision and hearing screening, immunization, disability environment and child abuse reporting. Individual cumulative health records are maintained to provide relevant information and advocacy throughout the educational process.

Health information is treated as protected and confidential and will be shared only with those who have a “legitimate educational interest”. Those with whom health information is shared

must be mindful and sensitive to health concerns and the need for confidentiality. Health information is kept in a secure place. (HIPAA, FERPA, Nurse Practice Act)

Please call the School Nurse when your child has been diagnosed with a communicable disease, has had a concussion, a significant injury, has been prescribed medication or has a change in a prescribed medication, has a scheduled surgery or procedure, or requires accommodations due to health concerns.

GUIDELINES FOR KEEPING CHILDREN HOME

The following guidelines serve to reduce the spread of illness and to promote a healthy environment for students attending school. If your child is sick, please keep your student home.

Fever

A fever of 100.4 or higher is generally a sign of illness. Your child should remain at home until fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication containing Acetaminophen (Tylenol) and/or Ibuprofen (Advil).

Vomiting and Diarrhea

If your child is feeling unwell and vomited or experienced 3 or more episodes of watery diarrhea they should be kept home for 24 hours after the last episode.

If there is a reason, other than illness, for vomiting or diarrhea please contact the school nurse and make a plan to return to school.

Coughing and Congestion

If your child has a persistent productive cough that keeps him/her from sleeping or normal activity or is accompanied by thick or constant nasal drainage they should remain at home. Nasal discharge that is green or dark yellow is a sign of infection. Nasal discharge should be clear and decreasing in amount before a student returns to school.

Sore Throat

The sudden onset of a sore throat accompanied by a fever, rash or swollen glands needs evaluation. If strep throat is diagnosed the student may return to school 24 hours after treatment has started, as long as the student is feeling well and able to actively participate in the school day. Please advise the school nurse if your child has been diagnosed with strep throat.

Rash

If your child has a widespread rash with constant itching they will be more comfortable at home. The sudden appearance of pustular eruptions with crust or a rash accompanied by fever warrants evaluation. A rash caused by poison ivy or poison oak is not a reason to miss school. Poison ivy is not contagious but lesions should be covered when at school. If an oozing rash or open sore is not able to be covered, the student should remain at home until all lesions have scabbed over.

Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)

If your child's eyes are markedly red with matted eyelashes, itching, swelling or accompanied by thick yellow discharge or crusted over upon awakening he or she may need evaluation. If

bacterial conjunctivitis is diagnosed, your child may return to school once treatment has begun, symptoms are improving and they feel well enough to actively participate in the school day.

Earaches

Earaches are not contagious. If the earache is mild and your child feels well enough to concentrate and has no other signs or symptoms, they would not need to miss school.

Head Lice

If your child is persistently scratching their head, examine their hair and scalp for lice and nits (small white eggs). If found, your child must be treated with an OTC lice treatment or a prescription treatment. Please advise the school nurse if lice have been found so that appropriate measures can be taken to prevent spread and re-infestation. A student who has had head lice may return to school when live lice are no longer present.

Viruses and COVID-19

Mater Christi does not require COVID-19 testing. If a student is feeling unwell, they should remain home until they are fever free for 24 hours, symptoms have improved and they are feeling well enough to actively participate in the school day. If you choose to test for COVID-19, the same protocol for returning to school should be used regardless of the test result. If a student has come into contact with someone who has COVID-19, they are not required to test. If a student has come into contact with someone who has COVID-19, they are not required to stay home from school unless they have symptoms of illness that require them to miss school.

ALLERGEN SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Mater Christi School provides an allergen safe and supportive school environment through appropriate accommodations, ensuring that each student is provided every opportunity to participate fully in all school programs and activities. An allergen safe environment is an environment in which reasonable precautions have been identified and undertaken to minimize exposure to identified allergens. It does not mean an environment guaranteed to be free of the allergen.

The Individualized Health Plan (IHP) is created by the registered nurse in cooperation with the healthcare provider and the parent/guardian. The purpose of the IHP is to provide clear and simple instructions to faculty and staff in supervision of the student in order to keep the student safe until appropriate medical assistance arrives.

Part of the IHP requires the parent to provide a note from a medical provider indicating the allergies and relative management.

Mater Christi School recognizes and acknowledges it is impossible to completely avoid or control the introduction of allergens into our school environment. Emphasis is placed on reducing a child's risk of exposure to allergens, planning individualized support and accommodations and having an appropriate response plan in the event of an exposure to the allergen. The safety of students with medically documented life threatening allergies or dietary

conditions at Mater Christi School depends upon the cooperation of the entire school community. Below include, but are not limited to, the roles and responsibilities within the school community.

Parent/Guardian

- Teach strategies to avoid allergen contact.
- Teach proper reporting of any possible ingestion or contact with allergen.
- Provide allergy documentation from a primary care provider with protocol/plan for treatment including medication orders, specific care instructions and list of potential symptoms.
- Provide non-expired medication(s) in proper pharmacy labeled packaging.
- Provide pertinent updated information to the Health Office.
- Coordinate with the school nurse to discuss strategies for safety and to review plans annually or as changes occur.
- Accompany a child, particularly a very young child, whenever possible, on school sponsored field trips.

School Nurse

- Prepare a 504 or an IHP for student annually.
- Share plan with parent, administrators and relevant teaching staff.
- Provide staff training in allergy recognition and response.
- Provide training in the use of Epi-Pen (epinephrine) administration.
- Provide peer education for students in the child's classroom/grade.
- Teach proper hand washing.
- Continually monitor school environment for potential allergens.

Classroom Teacher

- A student's medicine, 504 plan or IHP should be easily accessible.
- Encourage frequent hand washing by classmates.
- Monitor food products to assure no allergens enter the classroom.
- Coordinate with homeroom parents prior to holidays and celebrations.
- Delegate supervision of student when appropriate to teachers of specials, dining room staff and all other activity coordinators.

Food Service Personnel

- Establish a safe and supportive environment for students with food allergies or dietary conditions.
- Provide allergy free tables, washed thoroughly prior to contact.
- Provide a peanut-free and nut-free menu.

Prescription and Non-Prescription Drugs

If medication is required during school hours, parents must bring the medication to the Health Office or the front office in the middle school building with the prescription or instructions for use. The nurse or a staff member delegated by the nurse will dispense all prescription and nonprescription medication. For safety reasons, children are not to carry medication on their person, in lunch containers or in book bags with the exception of emergency medications for children with diagnosed life-threatening conditions. By Vermont law, all prescription

medications are to be in the original pharmacy container, and be accompanied by written orders from the prescribing licensed provider and written permission from the parent/guardian.

Immunization Policy

Mater Christi School requires documentary proof of adequate age appropriate immunization, in accordance with the schedule recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and the Vermont Department of Health, be provided for attendance at Mater Christi School.

Philosophical exemption is not permitted at Mater Christi School. Religious exemption is not permitted at Mater Christi School as this is not compatible with Catholic Social Teaching.

Medical exemption is permissible only at the sole discretion of Mater Christi School. A signed document must be received by a Vermont licensed (in good standing), board certified medical doctor ("M.D.") for a student to be considered for a medical exemption by Mater Christi School. Mater Christi School reserves the right to have an independent medical examination ("IME") of the student performed by an M.D. of its choosing, at the expense of the student's parent or guardian, which will include a release of the student's medical records only to the examining M.D. The M.D. will issue a medical opinion to Mater Christi School only on whether or not the exemption request is medically necessary and appropriate and if temporary or permanent with an expiration date. No other specific medical information about the student will be shared with Mater Christi School, absent approval by the parent or legal guardian of the student, or unless otherwise ordered to be provided by a court with jurisdiction or pursuant to applicable Vermont laws.

Students in the process of completing vaccination requirements may be provisionally admitted, at the discretion of Mater Christi School, without an exemption if the student has a scheduled appointment to receive the missing vaccine(s). Alternate or delayed vaccination schedules are not acceptable. The Provisional Admittance section of the Notice of Missing Immunizations form must be signed by a Vermont licensed (in good standing) and board-certified M.D. and submitted by the parent/guardian to Mater Christi School prior to entry. The period of Provisional Admittance must not exceed six months.

Approved by the Board of Trustees

February 21, 2019

Students' immunizations must be up to date prior to the start of school. If requirements are not met, the school reserves the right to excuse this student from class until the vaccinations are complete.

Health Room Nurse Visits

If the nurse's assessment indicates that a student should be picked up for health reasons, the student is to be picked up within the hour. The health room nurse has the right to request a note from a health care provider prior to the student returning to school. If you are being contacted, it is in an effort to keep communicable diseases/colds/flu at a minimum throughout the school.

Safety Drills

The school conducts two types of drills regularly for the purpose of keeping students and adults safe inside and outside the buildings. Fire safety drills will acquaint all members of the school community with a knowledge of exiting the building quietly and orderly in case of a fire or other emergency. Lockdown safety drills will acquaint all students with the procedure for responding to a crisis in a safe manner. It is the expectation of the school that all students comply with the safety directives or receive the logical consequences.

Mental, Social, Emotional and Spiritual Health

Catholic social teaching calls us to honor the life and dignity of all people. In light of the Catholic educational tradition of caring for the whole person (*cura personalis*) our mission compels us to educate and form students as whole people, and to support the interconnectedness of the mind, body and soul. We aim to support students holistically while nurturing all aspects of their lives including: spirituality, relationships, physical health, and personal values.

Under the guidance of the Assistant Head of School, counsel, care, and support for students is provided by a Student Care Team of trained staff members who serve students at every grade level. Our mission is to cultivate meaningful, authentic, supportive relationships with the students we serve, to offer them compassion, guidance, counsel, support, and a listening ear, and to help them grow in learning to healthily manage complex emotions, and the stresses, anxieties, challenges, and struggles of life so that they can learn, grow, flourish, and reach their full potential.

Collaboration and partnership with families is essential for the well-being of students, and families are encouraged to reach out to members of the Student Care Team with questions or concerns.

Mrs. Heather Jarvis, a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor, will serve as a consultant for our Student Care Team, and she will serve Mater Christi students and families for a significant portion of her time through her own private practice, *Renew Clinical Therapy Solutions*, on our campus.

PLAYGROUND RULES

The playground includes the area south of the parking lot that is enclosed by the fence behind and beside the elementary building. Students are supervised by faculty members while on the playground. Activities such as piggyback rides, wrestling, pushing, kicking, and violent themed games are not permitted. Students in grades 1-8 are not allowed in the fenced PS/PK play area. In general, recess is always outdoors except when the temperature is zero, there is a wind chill factor of zero or the playground or field is icy. A physician's note is required to excuse a student from participating in outdoor recess.

Play Structure

The large playground structure is for grades K–8

No climbing on the outside of the structure

No child leaves the playground without informing a Monitor

Walk on the wood chips – Run on the grass

No tag or chasing on the wood chips or on the structure

No throwing wood chips – No wood chips on the play structure

If a suspicious object is found on the playground report it to a Monitor (do not touch)

Slide

No walking up the slide

No jumping off the slide

No hiding in the tunnel slide

Swings

Only one child per swing

Maximum three children on the tire swing

Feet stay inside the tire swing

Winter Conditions

Snow pants, coats, boots, hats, gloves or mittens are worn during winter months

No throwing snowballs

No piling snow on the slide

DISCIPLINE

Philosophy

At Mater Christi School we remember that the words discipline and disciple come from the same root meaning “to follow.” As followers, learners, and companions of Christ, we follow our philosophy statement, which reminds us that developing respectful relationships is one key to living the Gospel. In this way, we will truly be self-disciplined individuals who live Gospel-centered, well-informed lives. We intend to ensure meaningful and effective communication with all appropriate parties.

Standards of Student Behavior

A safe, caring and respectful atmosphere of learning is carefully maintained at Mater Christi School. The teachers and students create classroom rules and guidelines at the start of each school year. Students are clearly educated about these rules and are expected to follow them. The following are guidelines for behavior:

- Students will respect the safety, rights, health, and property of themselves and others.
- Students will respect the rules for specific areas in the school.
- Students have the responsibility to complete educational and work assignments.

Disciplinary Procedure

It is the student's responsibility, appropriate to the student's age and grade level, to maintain appropriate behavior in the classroom and throughout the campus at Mater Christi School. The following levels of discipline are guidelines to follow so that a positive school climate is maintained at all times. The student represents Mater Christi School at all times. A student who engages in conduct, whether inside or outside the school, that is contrary to school values, may be disciplined by the administration. Discipline will involve the student and, in most cases, reflection, conversation and cooperation in the process of making things right. Documentation of behavior infraction will be maintained.

LEVEL ONE

Behavior Infractions

May include but are not limited to:

- Violation of classroom rules/procedures
- Violation of non-classroom space rules/procedures (i.e. lunch, recess)
- Tardy to class
- Violation of the school uniform policy
- Moderate disruption of a class
- Inappropriate verbal interactions (Non-Harassment terms as defined by the State)
- Inattention to classroom work
- Throwing snowballs
- Coming to class unprepared

Logical Consequences

Handled at the classroom level and will merit one or more of the following consequences, but are not limited to:

- Taking a break within the classroom
- Appropriate consequences as determined by the teacher
- Parental notification
- Verbal warning
- Loss of privilege
- Time for self-reflection with a designated Buddy Teacher

LEVEL TWO

Behavior Infractions

May include but are not limited to:

- Repeated Level 1 violations
- Inappropriate language, gestures or defiant behavior
- Inappropriate physical behavior (i.e. rough housing)
- Disrespectful behavior toward other students
- Possession of unacceptable items
- Cheating and plagiarism
- Unexcused absence from school

- Disruptive behavior in a class to the point of removal
- Being in an unauthorized location without permission
- Failure to report to a teacher for detention
- Disruptive behavior in the hallways, stairways or classrooms
- Electronic device usage without permission
- Cell Phone Free Campus violation

Logical Consequences

Handled by classroom teacher and/or the Assistant Head of School and will merit one or more of the following consequences, but are not limited to:

- Take a break with a designated Buddy Teacher
- Removal from class with notification to the Main Office
- Phone conversation with parent/guardian
- Written reflection and action plan for going forward
- Detention (Detentions will most often be service-oriented in nature.) Students will be given a detention notice to be brought home and signed by a parent/guardian and returned to school.
- Suspension, in-school or out of school

LEVEL THREE

Behavior Infractions

May include but are not limited to:

- Repeated Level 2 violations
- Failure to comply with reasonable request/direction of school personnel
- Disrespectful behavior toward a student, faculty or staff member
- Inappropriate touching and/or sexual misconduct toward student, faculty or staff member
- Action that threatens the safety of others or self
- Theft
- Vandalism
- Violation of harassment, hazing or bullying policies (see policies in this Handbook)
- Violation of alcohol, tobacco or drug policy (see policy contained in this Handbook)
- Violation of weapons policy (see policy contained in this Handbook)
- Leaving the school grounds during the school day without permission
- Forgery
- False complaint
- Inappropriate use of technology
- A second suspension in a school year
- Threatening a member of the faculty, staff or student body
- Assaulting another person on school grounds
- Failure to cooperate with the administration
- Making a bomb threat or any other threat of that nature

Logical Consequences

Handled by the Head of School and will merit one or more of the following consequences, but are not limited to:

- Parental notification will occur followed by a parent meeting
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension (up to 10 days)
- Disciplinary probation
In being placed on disciplinary probation, a student and his/her parents need to agree to a behavioral contract as set forth by the administration. If the student does not comply, he/she may be expelled from school.
- Expulsion

In the case that a suspension is warranted, the student is required to have all assigned work completed upon his/her return to school. Students have between 3-5 days from the day of their return to complete all missed tests and/or quizzes. All work not made up within the allotted time will be recorded as a zero. Teachers are not expected to provide any extra help or tutoring to a suspended student.

SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Mater Christi School is committed to providing all of its students with a positive school environment. The following policies and procedures are intended to help all have a positive, productive and successful experience. The goal of the faculty and staff is to support students in developing responsibility, self-reliance and self-discipline.

WELLNESS POLICY ON NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL FITNESS

At Mater Christi, we believe that children need healthy food and opportunities to be physically active in order to learn, grow and thrive. Good health supports student attendance and learning. Healthy eating habits and physical activity are important components in the prevention of illness and disease. This policy outlines Mater Christi's approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day. Specifically, this policy establishes guidelines to ensure that:

- Students have access to healthy foods throughout the school day in accordance with federal and state nutrition standards while accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs
- Students receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors
- Students have opportunities to be physically active during and after school

NUTRITION

Nutritional Quality

- All foods and beverages served or sold at school meets or exceeds the nutrition recommendations of the US Dietary Guidelines for Americans. To the maximum extent practicable, Mater Christi will participate in federal school meal programs. The lunch program is fully accessible to all students.
- Students may provide input on menu development.
- Half of the grains served are whole grains.
- A variety of fruits and vegetables are served in clear, easy to access containers.
- Extra servings of fruits and vegetables are available with all lunches. Fruits and vegetables are promoted using the following techniques
 - Whole fruit is displayed in attractive bowls or baskets
 - Sliced or cut fruit is available daily
 - All available vegetable options are given appealing or descriptive names
 - Servers politely prompt students to select vegetable options with their meal
 - Morning announcements are used to promote menu options
- Only low-fat or non-fat milk and yogurt is offered.
- Foods are moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat and trans fat.
- Fresh, seasonal, locally grown/manufactured products are used whenever possible.
- No vending machines on school grounds.
- Soda and beverages containing caffeine are not sold or served.
- No advertising of low quality foods on school grounds.
- The complete nutrition analysis of foods and beverages is always available to students, staff and parents.
- Menus are posted on the school website.

Water

Free, chilled, filtered drinking water is convenient and available to all students in the dining room. Students are allowed to bring approved water bottles and may be filled with only water throughout the day. All water hydration stations and fountains are maintained on a regular basis to ensure good hygiene and health safety standards.

Snacks

Snacks served during the school day or in the after school program will make a positive contribution to the child's dietary intake and health.

Meal Times and Scheduling

- Students have a safe, clean, pleasant dining room of adequate size.
- Staff provide appropriate supervision in the dining room and serve as role models.
- Restrooms are safe and clean. Non-allergenic hand soap and paper towels along with hand sanitizer dispensers and baby wipes are conveniently located so students, faculty and staff can clean their hands before eating and at other appropriate times.

- Two lines of food service allow for a minimum amount of waiting time. Children will enjoy their food more and may try healthier options if they can relax, eat and socialize without feeling rushed.
- Lunch is scheduled near the middle of the school day. In the younger grades (K, 1, 2 and 3) lunch will follow the recess period to best support healthy eating.
- Meetings or activities are not scheduled during mealtimes unless students may eat during such activities.

Sharing of Foods and Beverages

Students are prohibited from sharing their foods or beverages with one another.

Holidays and Celebrations

Birthdays may be celebrated in a creative and festive manner that does not involve food. Special events involving food, such as religious occasions (e.g. First Holy Communion), holiday parties (e.g. Halloween, Christmas, Kindergarten Mother's Day celebration), dances, or serving foods that connect to classroom learning (e.g. Foreign Language Festival) are permitted under the administration's discretion. Foods served at special occasions are always peanut-free and nut-free and accommodate documented individual student allergies and intolerances. If food is brought to school to be shared at any time other than an approved occasion, it will not be distributed. Invitations to private parties or events may not be distributed within the classes or on the school grounds.

Nutrition Education and Promotion

Nutrition education is incorporated at each grade level whenever possible to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health. Nutrition education includes enjoyable culturally relevant participatory activities such as visits to dairy farms, pumpkin patches, apple orchards and maple sugaring operations and growing seeds. Whenever possible, nutrition education is incorporated into classroom instruction in subjects such as science, math, language arts, art and social sciences. Nutrition education focuses on the development of healthy eating habits and behaviors. Students, faculty and staff are encouraged to improve their health and wellness through promotions and programs, such as influenza vaccination clinics and CPR classes.

Faculty/Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

All school nutrition program directors, managers and staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the USDA Professional Standards for Child Nutrition Professionals. These school nutrition personnel will refer to the USDA's Professional Standards for School Nutrition website for training that meets their learning needs.

Fundraising Activities

Foods sold for the purpose of fundraising consider the importance of healthy foods. Fundraisers that promote positive health habits such as the sale of non-food and nutritious food items as well as physical activity fundraisers are encouraged.

PHYSICAL FITNESS

All students in grades K – 8 will be engaged in at least 30 minutes of physical activity during each school day. Physical activity may include recess and movement built into the curriculum, but does not replace physical education classes. Physical education curriculum will be proficiency-based for development and assessment of knowledge and skills for student literacy. Flexible, alternative pathways for proficiency-based learning in physical education will be made equally accessible to all students. Each student in grades K–8 will have at least one physical education class per week. Physical education is taught and assessed by a licensed physical educator. Physical education will benefit from thoughtful, periodic, content-specific program and professional performance review that drives continuous improvement.

A note from a medical doctor/professional is required for a student to not participate in Physical Education class or a school athletic team.

Implementation

The school nurse along with the Health and Safety committee will monitor the implementation of this policy and review the policy annually. Faculty, staff, students, parents and other community members are encouraged to join and/or contribute to Mater Christi's Wellness Policy.

ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

*The Mater Christi School Athletic Department plays an important role in delivering our Catholic and Mercy values to the community. We strive to offer competitive, challenging, and education-based athletic opportunities for all interested student athletes. We are guided in our athletic endeavors by our core values of being **Compelled by Mercy**, having **Educational Courage**, being **Inspired by Faith**, displaying **Principled Leadership**, and ensuring there is a **Voice for Dignity and Respect**.*

Our ability to deliver on our mission and core values relies on forging an effective partnership between the Athletic Department, coaches, teachers, student-athletes, and parents. Working together, we can establish and maintain a positive athletic culture and tradition that promotes teamwork, character, self-discipline, fitness, and lifelong skills.

The following document establishes guidelines by which all Mater Christi School student-athletes, and their parents, are expected to abide at all times:

I. Student Agreement

I understand the privilege of being a student-athlete at Mater Christi School and will strive to uphold the core values and mission statement of the school.

- I recognize that I represent not only myself but also my teammates, coaches and Mater Christi School. I will display good sportsmanship and treat all players, coaches, officials and fans with respect.
- I understand that a commitment to my team is important and I will attend scheduled practices and games during the season. If I am unable to attend a scheduled practice or game, I will contact my coach as soon as possible to notify them of my pending absence.
- I will care for Mater Christi School facilities, equipment, and uniforms, and I will return any issued equipment/uniforms to the school in good condition at the end of the season.
- I understand that using social media inappropriately can be damaging and I will refrain from using social networks in a way that could reflect negatively on my team, coaches, Mater Christi Athletics or the Mater Christi School. **Please consult MCS's technology acceptable use agreement for more details regarding the use of social networks.*
- I will remain diligent with my schoolwork and my performance in the classroom. I will organize my time and prioritize my studies in a way that allows me to honor my commitment to teammates and coaches.
- I will be a good role model for younger students at Mater Christi School.

A. Academic Requirements for Participation

A player's participation in extracurricular contests and performances will be determined by the following academic guidelines. Each student:

- Must maintain 70% average across all classes.
- Must be passing every class for the year, based on the work completed to date.

Eligibility will be checked periodically by the Athletic Director. The student-athlete will not be able to participate in Mater Christi Athletics until the academic requirements have been met.

If a student is deemed academically ineligible, they must inform their coach directly, and meet with the Athletic Director and teacher to set a plan to regain eligibility and determine a return to play timeline.

B. School Attendance

- Students must be in attendance for the entire school day in order to participate in a practice or contest scheduled for that day.

- Athletes are expected to be present at the start of school the day following competitions.
- If a student is absent and is granted a non-illness related excused absence (funeral, dental appointment, etc.), that student may participate in the practice/game with the permission of administration.
- Any unexcused absence from school, regardless of whether it is only a partial day, will cause the student to be unable to participate in the practice/game.

C. Athletic Attendance

- Student-athletes are expected to be committed to the school and team. Team members should attend all practices and games. The coach is responsible for setting the practice schedule. Only the coach can excuse the athlete from a practice/game. It is possible that emergency situations may arise that cause the athlete to miss a game or practice.
- Excused absences include:
 - Illness
 - Death in the family
 - Family wedding
 - Academic tutoring
- Unexcused absences include:
 - Discipline-related detention or suspension

**It is the responsibility of the student-athlete to notify the coach several days in advance if they know they are going to miss a practice/game. Notifying the coach does not mean that the athlete is automatically excused from the practice/game. If a player misses a practice/game for any reason, it may result in loss of game participation as determined by the coaching staff.*

D. Behavior

The way student-athletes act and communicate with teachers and peers during school matters. Student-athletes are expected to make good decisions, both on the playing surfaces and in the classrooms.

- Student-athletes must not be a disruptive influence on the discipline, good order, moral, spiritual, or educational environment at Mater Christi School.
- Teachers will notify the Athletic Director if there are any problems or incidents during the school day.
- All behavior situations will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis by the Athletic Director and/or school administrators.

II. Parent Agreement

As a parent of a Mater Christi student-athlete I agree to:

- Be a role model by positively representing Mater Christi and displaying good sportsmanship.
- Support my son/daughter in their athletic endeavors and to help them honor their commitment to their teammates, coaches and school.
- Foster the personal growth of my son/daughter by empowering them and encouraging them to take ownership and manage their athletic experience.
- Remain supportive of all athletes, coaches and the Mater Christi Athletic Department.
- Be a supportive fan and resist the urge to coach or officiate from the sidelines.
- Do my best to assist my child's team and coaches when needs arise during the season.
- Treat all athletes, coaches, officials and fans with respect.

As a student-athlete desiring to compete for Mater Christi School, I agree to uphold this agreement and abide by the guidelines outlined herein. I acknowledge and understand that if I do not conduct myself in a way that is consistent with this agreement the result could, at the discretion of my coach and/or the Mater Christi Athletic Department, affect my standing on the team, impact playing time, or my ability to compete for Mater Christi School.

Student's Name: _____

Student's Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/____

I understand and acknowledge the important role that I play as the parent/guardian of a student-athlete at Mater Christi School. I agree to support my son/daughter in their athletic endeavors and to also support the efforts of coaches and the Mater Christi Athletic Department.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/____

PHOTOS AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Mater Christi School produces and distributes a number of publications and electronic communications using photos of students and members of the MCS community. These include but are not limited to:

- Student publications/videos/presentations, including the yearbook and student work including slideshows and videos.
- Materials developed for the enrollment office, including social media, posters, video, and advertisements, digital or print, to inform prospective students and families about MCS.
- Materials developed for the advancement office, either printed, digital or email, which may be distributed to households of alumni, past parents, grandparents, and supporters of the school, including the annual report, appeals, the annual Christmas card, and other advancement materials.
- Social Media like Facebook and the school website is a primary means of communication for the MCS community. Based on the current use of social media, we cannot guarantee that a specific student's image will not appear in group background photos.
- Children are only identified by full name and town of residence in the case of awards and commendations, athletic, academic, or community service, or graduation announcements that are released to the press and greater public.

There are occasions when school administration or news media may be on campus to interview, photograph or videotape students for use in broadcast stories (e.g. author visits or invited speakers). If you would like to withhold authorization for your son/daughter to appear in any of the above, please email Melissa Senesac at msenesac@materchristischool.net.

CONCUSSION ACTION PLAN

In accordance with Act 68, Mater Christi School has developed this plan to address the identification and treatment of concussions at school and when participating in school sports. All coaches are required to certify concussion management training every two years. Parents and students are informed about concussions annually.

A concussion is a brain injury caused by a direct blow to the head, face, neck or elsewhere on the body with an impulsive force transmitted to the head. Concussion typically results in the rapid onset of short-lived impairment of neurological function. However, signs or symptoms may not be noticeable for hours or days. Loss of consciousness only occurs in about ten percent of concussions. It is important to give the brain time to heal before returning to play. Students must inform the school nurse about any concussion sustained outside of school. The greatest risk factor for concussion is a previous concussion. There is increasing concern that

recurrent concussions contribute to long-term neurological impairment. Proper fit and use of equipment, player respect, adherence to sport rules, sport-specific technique and encouragement of symptom reporting reduce the incidence and severity of concussion.

Recognition of Concussion

The following signs and symptoms seen after a witnessed or suspected blow to the head or body indicate a probable concussion.

SIGNS

Appears dazed or stunned
Confusion
Slowed speech
Moves clumsily
Balance problems
Personality change
Forgetful
Loss of consciousness

SYMPTOMS (reported)

Headache
Dizzy
Nausea or vomiting
Double or blurry vision
Sensitive to light or noise
Feels drowsy or sleepy
Numbness or tingling
Difficulty concentrating
Difficulty remembering

Removal From Play

Any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion must be removed from practice or competition. The athlete will not be allowed to practice or compete with a school team until the athlete has been examined by and received written permission to participate in athletic activities from a healthcare provider (per Act 68). The team coach has been designated as the individual who can make the initial decision to remove an athlete from play when a concussion is suspected. The team coach will notify parents/guardians immediately if a student sustains a concussion.

Return to Learn (RTL) Protocol

The following steps are required before the student can return to academic activity. The student is required to complete the RTL protocol and be symptom-free for 24 hours before beginning the return to play protocol. The attending healthcare practitioner will determine school accommodations and time frame for recovery. Examples of accommodations include extra time to complete assignments, lightened homework load, no computer or iPad use, no significant or standardized testing and rest breaks.

1. Home with total rest
2. Home with light mental activity
3. School (part-time) with accommodations
4. School (full-time) with accommodations
5. School (full-time) with full academics and no accommodations

Return to Play (RTP) Protocol

The RTP protocol should start only when the student has been without symptoms for 24 hours. The primary concern with early RTP is decreased reaction time leading to increased risk of injury. The student should not take any over-the-counter pain medications while moving

through this plan. The attending healthcare practitioner will determine athletic accommodations and time frame for recovery and determine full clearance for return to play.

1. Light aerobic conditioning to increase heart rate
2. Sports specific drills to add movement and coordination
3. Sports specific drills to restore confidence
4. Full clearance for return to play

DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY

Philosophy

Education at Mater Christi School is provided for not only the intellectual and spiritual growth of the students, but also for their emotional and physical growth. Mater Christi School expects that students will develop a respect for all life. Ingestion of harmful substances such as drugs or alcohol hinders the growth and development of the individual and is contrary to the philosophy of Mater Christi School. The presence of devices of any kind associated with drug, alcohol or tobacco use by students is prohibited from school premises at all times.

The home has primary responsibility for treating health problems; however, Mater Christi School shares these responsibilities in the areas of education and referral. The school also shares the responsibility of supporting any student who is attempting to change a pattern of use. School administration and support services will work with the family in providing prevention and treatment opportunities.

I. Violation of the Drug and Alcohol Abuse Policy

- A. Violation of the Mater Christi School Drug and Alcohol Abuse Policy is any drug or alcohol related incident which occurs on school premises or at school sponsored functions, and includes the purchase, use, possession, being under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, dealing in alcohol or other drugs, and the possession of devices associated with alcohol or drug use.

II. Reporting Drug or Alcohol Related Incident

All school personnel are expected to immediately confront students verbally to discuss any suspected or actual drug/alcohol incident that occurs on the school premises and/or at school sponsored functions, and to report the incident immediately to the administration.

- A. In all reported instances of actual drug or alcohol policy violation, the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) will be notified immediately by the administration. The administrators will also investigate and evaluate the situation to determine appropriate action.
- B. If, in the opinion of the administrators, an emergency situation exists, an area rescue squad and/or the Burlington Police Department will be called upon for their service. The school nurse will serve in a support capacity in such instances. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) will be notified prior to such action when possible and in all other instances as soon as possible thereafter.

III. Consequences

- A. Disciplinary action for the first reported violation of the Drug and Alcohol Abuse Policy shall involve suspension from school to begin immediately and last for a maximum of ten school days.
 1. Students found to be selling drugs and/or alcohol will be recommended to the Board of Trustees for immediate expulsion.
 2. When the administration has sufficient information as the result of observation or reason to suspect that a probable violation of the Drug and Alcohol Abuse Policy has occurred, the student(s) will be expected to cooperate fully. This may include emptying pockets, pocketbooks and/or backpacks. In such situations, the administration also reserves the right to inspect students' lockers.
 3. The student(s) will meet with the administrators and with an outside professional before re-entering school following suspension. In some instances, sustained professional guidance and treatment may be a condition of continued enrollment in school.
- B. A second violation of the Drug and Alcohol Abuse Policy within a given school year shall result in an automatic 10-day suspension to begin immediately. A recommendation shall also be made for referral to an alcohol and drug treatment program that is approved by the Head of School.
- C. In the event that a third violation of the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Policy occurs within a given school year, a recommendation will be made to the Board of Trustees for expulsion.

IV. Indications of Alcohol or Drug Abuse

In some instances, school personnel may observe over a period of time changes in the academic, social or personal behavior of the student that might be related to alcohol or drug abuse. These are some indications of possible alcohol and drug abuse:

- Drop in class performance
- Frequent tardiness or absences
- Inappropriate behavior in and/or out of class
- Change in family or peer relations
- Change in sleeping and eating patterns

These behaviors are not violations, but, rather, early indicators of a possible problem. School personnel are encouraged to observe student behavior that may signal a need for assessment by appropriate school personnel.

V. Self-Referral

When a student recognizes that he/she has a problem with chemical use, and chooses to report to school personnel that she/he wants to do something about this problem, the school will cooperate as fully as possible with this student, and he/she will receive assistance.

VI. Tobacco Products

Students found to be selling, possessing or using tobacco products on the school grounds and/or at school sponsored activities will be referred to the Administration for disciplinary action up to

and including dismissal. Parents will be notified. Students in the company of persons found to have committed the above offenses will be considered in violation and subject to the same consequences.

The Head of School or his or her designee shall develop procedures, rules and regulations that are in his or her judgment necessary to implement this policy and will include provisions ensuring that tobacco products are confiscated when found in the possession of students and that referrals to law enforcement agencies are made when appropriate.

DEFINITIONS

School Grounds means any property and facilities owned or leased by the school and used at any time for school related activities, including but not limited to school buildings, school buses, areas adjacent to school buildings, athletic fields and parking lots.

School sponsored activity means activities including but not limited to field trips, projects, graduation events, sporting events, work internships and dances.

Tobacco product is defined in 7 V.S.A.1001(4) as cigarettes, cigars, cheroots, stogies, periques, granulated, plug cut crimp cut, ready rubbed, and other smoking tobacco, snuff, snuff flour, Cavendish, plug and twist tobacco, fine-cut and other chewing tobaccos, shorts, refuse scraps, clippings, cuttings and sweepings of tobacco and other forms of tobacco prepared in a manner suitable for chewing or smoking in a pipe or otherwise, or both for chewing and smoking. All vaping products are included in this definition.

Source: South Burlington High School - Updated 7/16/18

POLICY ON THE PREVENTION OF HARASSMENT, HAZING, AND BULLYING OF STUDENTS

I. Statement of Policy

As a Catholic institution, Mater Christi School is committed to providing its students with a safe and supportive school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with respect.

In keeping with the teachings of the Catholic Church, it is the policy of the School to prohibit the unlawful hazing, harassment, and/or bullying of students based on race, color, religion, creed, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. Hazing, harassment, and/or bullying may also constitute a violation of Vermont's Public Accommodations Act, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and/or Title IX of the federal Education Amendments Act of 1972.

Note: Conduct which constitutes unlawful hazing, harassment and/or bullying may be subject to civil penalties.

The school shall address all complaints of harassment, hazing and bullying according to the procedures accompanying this policy, and shall take appropriate action against any person who violates this policy. Nothing herein shall be construed to prohibit punishment of a student for conduct which, although it does not rise to the level of harassment, bullying, and/or hazing as defined herein, otherwise violates one or more provisions of the school's code of conduct.

II. Implementation

The principal or his/her designee shall:

1. Adopt a procedure directing staff, parents and guardians how to report violations of this policy and file complaints under this policy.
2. Annually, select two or more designated employees who are well versed in the teachings of the Catholic Church and the policies of the School to receive complaints of hazing, bullying and/or harassment at each school campus and publicize their availability in any publication of the school that sets forth the comprehensive rules, procedures, and standards of conduct for the school.
3. Designate an Equity Coordinator who is well versed in the teachings of the Catholic Church and the policies of the School to oversee all aspects of the implementation of this policy as it relates to obligations imposed by federal law regarding discrimination. This role may also be assigned to one or both of the Designated Employees.
4. Respond to notifications of possible violations of this policy in order to promptly and effectively address all complaints of hazing, harassment, and/or bullying.

5. Take action on substantiated complaints. In cases where hazing, harassment and/or bullying is substantiated, the school shall take prompt and appropriate remedial action reasonably calculated to stop the hazing, harassment and/or bullying; prevent its recurrence; and to remedy the impact of the offending conduct on the victim(s), where appropriate. Such action may include a wide range of responses from education to serious discipline.

Serious discipline may include termination for employees and, for students, expulsion or removal from school property. It may also involve penalties or sanctions for both organizations and individuals who engage in hazing. Revocation or suspension of an organization's permission to operate or exist within the School's purview may also be considered if that organization knowingly permits, authorizes or condones hazing.

III. Purpose

It is the intent of the school to apply and enforce this policy in a manner consistent with the mission of the school as a Catholic institution. The purpose of this policy is to (1) prohibit conduct or communication that is directed at a person's protected characteristics as defined below and that has the purpose or effect of substantially disrupting the educational learning process and/or access to educational resources or creates a hostile learning environment; (2) prohibit conduct intended to ridicule, humiliate or intimidate students in a manner as defined under this policy.

IV. Definitions. For the purposes of this policy and the accompanying procedures, the following definitions apply:

- A. **"Bullying"** means any overt act or combination of acts, including an act conducted by electronic means, directed against a student by another student or group of students and which:
 1. Is repeated over time;
 2. Is intended to ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate the student; and
 3. (i) occurs during the school day on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored activity, or before or after the school day on a school bus or at a school sponsored activity; or
(ii) does not occur during the school day on school property, on a school bus or at a school sponsored activity and can be shown to pose a clear and substantial interference with another student's right to access educational programs.
- B. **"Complaint"** means an oral or written report of information provided by a student or any person to an employee alleging that a student has been subjected to conduct that may rise to the level of hazing, harassment, and/or bullying.
- C. **"Complainant"** means a student who has provided oral or written information about conduct that may rise to the level of hazing, harassment, and/or bullying, or a student who is the target of alleged hazing, harassment, and/or bullying.
- D. **"Designated employee"** means an employee who has been designated by the school to receive complaints of hazing, harassment and/or bullying pursuant to subdivision 16

V.S.A. 570a(a)(7). The designated employees for each school are identified in Appendix 5152 of each school's regulations for this policy.

- E. **“Employee”** includes any person employed directly by or retained through a contract with Mater Christi School, an agent of the school, a school board member, a student teacher, an intern or a school volunteer. For purposes of this policy, “agent of the school” includes Diocesan personnel associated with Mater Christi School.
- F. **“Equity Coordinator”** is the person responsible for implementation of Title IX (regarding sex-based discrimination) and Title VI (regarding race-based discrimination) for Mater Christi School and for coordinating the School's compliance with Title IX and Title VI in all areas covered by the implementing regulations. The Equity Coordinator is also responsible for overseeing implementation of the School's harassment policy. This role may also be assigned to Designated Employees.
- G. **“Harassment”** means an incident or incidents of verbal, written, visual, or physical conduct, including any incident conducted by electronic means, based on or motivated by a student's or a student's family member's actual or perceived race, creed, color, national origin, marital status, disability, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity, that has the purpose or effect of objectively and substantially undermining and detracting from or interfering with a student's educational performance or access to school resources or creating an objectively intimidating hostile, or offensive environment.

Harassment includes conduct as defined above and may also constitute one or more of the following:

1. Sexual harassment, which means unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, that includes sexual violence/sexual assault, sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, written, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature, and includes situations when one or both of the following occur:
 - (i) Submission to that conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a student's education, academic status, or progress; or
 - (ii) Submission to or rejection of such conduct by a student is used as a component of the basis for decisions affecting that student.

Sexual harassment may also include student-on-student conduct or conduct of a non-employee third party that creates a hostile environment on the basis of sex. A hostile environment exists where the harassing conduct is contrary to the mission of the school as a Catholic institution, severe, persistent and/or so pervasive as to deny or limit the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the educational program.

2. Racial harassment, which means conduct directed at the characteristics of a student's or a student's family member's actual or perceived race or color, and includes the use of epithets, stereotypes, racial slurs, comments, insults, derogatory remarks, gestures, threats, graffiti, display, or circulation of written or

visual material, and taunts on manner of speech and negative references to cultural customs.

3. Harassment of members of other protected categories, means conduct contrary to the mission of the school as a Catholic institution and is directed at the characteristics of a student's or a student's family member's actual or perceived creed, national origin, marital status, disability, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity and includes the use of epithets, stereotypes, slurs, comments, insults, derogatory remarks, gestures, threats, graffiti, display, or circulation of written or visual material, taunts on manner of speech, and negative references to customs related to any of these protected categories.

- H. **"Hazing"** means any intentional, knowing or reckless act committed by a student, whether individually or in concert with others, against another student: In connection with pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization which is affiliated with the educational institution; and
1. Which is intended to have the effect of, or should reasonably be expected to have the effect of, endangering the mental or physical health of the student.

Hazing shall not include any activity or conduct that furthers legitimate curricular, extra-curricular, or military training program goals, provided that:

- (i) the goals are in keeping with the teachings of the Catholic Church;
 - (ii) are approved by the educational institution; and
 - (iii) the activity or conduct furthers the goals in a manner that is appropriate, contemplated by the educational institution, and normal and customary for similar programs at other educational institutions.
2. With respect to Hazing, **"Student"** means any person who:
- (i) is registered in or in attendance at an educational institution;
 - (ii) has been accepted for admission at the educational institution where the hazing incident occurs; or
 - (iii) intends to attend an educational institution during any of its regular sessions after an official academic break.
- I. **"Notice"** means a written complaint or oral information that hazing, harassment, and/or bullying may have occurred which has been provided to a designated employee from another employee, the student allegedly subjected to the hazing, harassment, and/or bullying, another student, a parent or guardian, or any other individual who has reasonable cause to believe the alleged conduct may have occurred. If the school learns of possible hazing, harassment, and/or bullying through other means, for example, if information about hazing, harassment, and/or bullying is received from a third party (such as from a witness to an incident or an anonymous letter or telephone call), different factors will affect the school's response. These factors include the source and nature of the information; the seriousness of the alleged incident; the specificity of the information; the objectivity and credibility of the source of the report; whether any individuals can be identified who were subjected to the alleged harassment; and whether those individuals

want to pursue the matter. In addition, for purposes of violations of federal anti-discrimination laws, notice may occur when an employee of the school, including any individual who a student could reasonably believe has this authority or responsibility, knows or in the exercise of reasonable care should have known about potential unlawful hazing, harassment and/or bullying.

- J. **“Organization”** means a fraternity, sorority, athletic team, association, corporation, order, society, corps, cooperative, club, or other similar group, whose members primarily are students at an educational institution, and which is affiliated with the educational institution.
- K. **“Pledging”** means any action or activity related to becoming a member of an organization.
- L. **“Retaliation”** is any adverse action by any person against any person involved in an alleged or substantiated case of hazing, harassment, and/or bullying. This includes but is not limited to the complainant, the alleged or substantiated perpetrator, any witnesses, and any person who assists or participates in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing related to the hazing, harassment, and/or bullying complaint. Such adverse action may include conduct by a school employee directed at a student in the form of intimidation or reprisal such as diminishment of grades, suspension, expulsion, change in educational conditions, loss of privileges or benefits, or other unwarranted disciplinary action. Retaliation may also include conduct by a student directed at another student or school employee in the form of further and/or newly initiated hazing, harassment, bullying, intimidation, and reprisal.
- M. **“School administrator”** means a superintendent, principal or his/her designee, assistant principal and/or the School’s Equity Coordinator.
- N. **“Complaint Reporting Form”** is a form used by students, staff, or parents, to provide, in written form, information about inappropriate student behaviors that may constitute hazing, harassment and/or bullying.

Approved: September 12, 2019
Bishop of Burlington

Regulation 5152

PROCEDURES ON THE PREVENTION OF HARASSMENT, HAZING, AND BULLYING OF STUDENTS

- I. **Reporting Complaints of Hazing, Harassment and/or Bullying**
 - A. Student Reporting: Any student who believes that s/he has been hazed, harassed and/or bullied under this policy, or who witnesses or has knowledge of conduct that

- s/he reasonably believes might constitute hazing, harassment and or/bullying, should promptly report the conduct to a designated employee or any other school employee.
- B. School employee reporting: Any school employee who **witnesses conduct** that s/he reasonably believes might constitute hazing, harassment and/or bullying shall take reasonable action to stop the conduct and to prevent its recurrence and immediately report it to a designated employee and immediately complete a Student Conduct Form.

Any school employee **who overhears or directly receives information** about conduct that might constitute hazing, harassment and/or bullying shall immediately report the information to a designated employee and immediately complete a Student Conduct Form. If one of the designated employees is a person alleged to be engaged in the conduct complained of, the incident shall be immediately reported to the other designated employee or the school administrator.

- C. Other reporting: Any other person who witnesses conduct that s/he reasonably believes might constitute hazing, harassment and/or bullying under this policy should promptly report the conduct to a designated employee.
- D. Documentation of the report: If the complaint is oral, the designated employee shall promptly reduce the complaint to writing, including the time, place, and nature of the alleged conduct, the identity of the complainant, alleged perpetrator, and any witnesses. Both the complainant and the alleged perpetrator will have the right to present witnesses and other evidence in support of their position.
- E. False complaint: Any person who knowingly makes a false accusation regarding hazing, harassment and/or bullying may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension and expulsion with regard to students, or up to and including discharge with regard to employees. There shall be no adverse action taken against a person for reporting a complaint of hazing, harassment and/or bullying when the person has a good faith belief that hazing, harassment and/or bullying occurred or is occurring.
- F. Rights to Alternative Complaint Process: In addition to, or as an alternative to filing a harassment complaint pursuant to this policy, a person may file a harassment complaint with the Vermont Human Rights Commission or the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education at the addresses noted below:

Vermont Human Rights Commission
14-16 Baldwin Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-6301
(800) 416-2010 or (802) 828-2480 (voice)
(877) 294-9200 (tty)
(802) 828-2481 (fax)
Email: human.rights@state.vt.us

Office for Civil Rights, Boston Office

U.S. Department of Education
8th Floor
5 Post Office Square
Boston, MA 02109-3921 617-289-0111 (voice)
877-521-2172 (tdd)
617-289-0150 (fax)
Email: OCR.Boston@ed.gov

II. **Responding to Notice of Possible Policy Violation(s)**

- A. Upon **notice of information** that hazing, harassment and/or bullying may have occurred the designated employee shall:
- i. Promptly reduce any oral information to writing, including the time, place, and nature of the alleged conduct, the identity of the complainant, alleged perpetrator, and any witnesses;
 - ii. Promptly inform the school administrator(s) of the information;
 - iii. If in the judgment of the school administrator, the information alleges conduct which may constitute harassment, hazing or bullying, the school administrator shall, as soon as reasonably possible, provide a copy of the policy on hazing, harassment and bullying and these procedures to the complainant and accused individual, or if either is a minor, cause a copy to be provided or delivered to their respective parent or guardian.
- B. Upon **initiation of an investigation**, the designated employee shall:
- i. Notify in writing both the complainant and accused individual (or if either is a minor inform their respective parent or guardian) that:
 1. an investigation has been initiated;
 2. retaliation is prohibited;
 3. all parties have certain confidentiality rights; and
 4. they will be informed in writing of the outcome of the investigation.
- C. All notifications shall be subject to state and/or federal laws protecting the confidentiality of personally identifiable student information. Pursuant to 34 CFR Part 99.30, a school administrator may seek the consent of the parent/guardian of the accused student, or the accused eligible student (if 18 or older, the accused student has the ability to consent), in order to inform the complainant of any disciplinary action taken in cases where the school determined that an act(s) of harassment, hazing, and/or bullying, or other misconduct occurred. The parent/guardian or eligible student shall provide a signed and dated written consent before an educational agency or institution discloses personally identifiable information from the student's education records.

III. **Investigating Hazing, Harassment and/or Bullying Complaints**

- A. Initiation of Investigation-Timing. Unless special circumstances are present and documented, such as reports to the Department for Children and Families (“DCF”) or the police, the school administrator shall, no later than one school day after Notice to a designated employee, initiate or cause to be initiated, an investigation of the

allegations, which the school administrator reasonably believes may constitute harassment, hazing or bullying.

- B. Investigator Assignment. The school administrator shall assign a person to conduct the investigation; nothing herein shall be construed to preclude the school administrator from assigning him/herself or a designated employee as the investigator. No person who is the subject of a complaint shall conduct such an investigation.
- C. Interim Measures. It may be appropriate for the school to take interim measures during the investigation of a complaint. For instance, if a student alleges that he or she has been sexually assaulted by another student, the school may decide to place the students immediately in separate classes and/or transportation pending the results of the school's investigation. Similarly, if the alleged harasser is a teacher, allowing the student to transfer to a different class may be appropriate. In all cases, the school will make every effort to prevent disclosure of the names of all parties involved – the complainant, the witnesses, and the accused -- except to the extent necessary to carry out the investigation. In all cases where physical harm has resulted and/or where the targeted student is known to be expressing suicidal ideation, or experiencing serious emotional harm, a safety plan will be put in place. Safety plans must also be considered in cases where the targeted student is known to have difficulty accessing the educational programs at the school as a result of the inappropriate behavior. No contact orders, or their enforcement, may also be appropriate interim measures.
- D. Due Process. The United States Constitution guarantees due process to students and School employees who are accused of certain types of infractions, including but not limited to sexual harassment under Federal Title IX. The rights established under Title IX must be interpreted consistent with any federally guaranteed due process rights involved in a complaint proceeding, including but not limited to the ability of the complainant and the accused to present witnesses and other evidence during an investigation. The School will ensure that steps to accord due process rights do not restrict or unnecessarily delay the protections provided by Title IX to the complainant.
- E. Standard Used to Assess Conduct. In determining whether the conduct constitutes a violation of this policy, the investigator shall be mindful of the mission of the school as a Catholic institution as s/he considers the surrounding circumstances, the nature of the behavior, past incidents or past or continuing patterns of behavior, the relationships between the parties involved and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred. The complainant and accused will be provided the opportunity to present witnesses and other evidence during an investigation. The school has the discretion to consider the impact of relevant off-campus conduct on the school environment where direct harm to the welfare of the school can be demonstrated or the conduct can be shown to pose a clear and substantial interference with another student's equal access to educational programs. Whether a particular action constitutes a violation of this policy requires determination based on all the facts and surrounding circumstances.

- F. Completion of Investigation – Timing. No later than five school days from the filing of the complaint with the designated employee, unless special circumstances are present and documented, the investigator shall submit a written initial determination to the school administrator.
- G. Investigation Report. The investigator shall prepare a written report to include a statement of the findings of the investigator as to whether the allegations have been substantiated, and as to whether the alleged conduct constitutes hazing, harassment and/or bullying. The report, when referencing student conduct, is a student record and therefore confidential. It will be made available to investigators in the context of a review conducted by the Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington, or his designee, or investigations of harassment conducted by the Vermont Human Rights Commission or U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights.
- H. Notice to Students/Parents/Guardians. Within five school days of the conclusion of the investigation, the designated employee shall:
- i. Notify in writing both the complainant and accused individual (or if either is a minor inform their respective parent or guardian) that:
 1. the investigation has been completed;
 2. whether or not the investigation concluded that a policy violation occurred;
 3. that federal privacy law prevents disclosure of any discipline imposed as a result of the investigation unless the parent/guardian of the accused student and/or the accused eligible student consents to such disclosure, pursuant to 34 CFR Part 99.30, as set forth in Section II, Part C, above.
 - ii. Notify the Complainant Student - or if a minor, their parent(s) or guardian - in writing of their rights to:
 1. Request (within 30 days) an internal review by the school of the investigator's determination as to whether hazing, harassment, and/or bullying occurred;
 2. Request (within 30 days of the school's determination after internal review) an additional review by the Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington as to (1) whether hazing, harassment, and/or bullying occurred or (2) if hazing, harassment, and/or bullying was determined to have occurred, whether the school took adequate steps to protect the complainant against further hazing, harassment, and/or bullying;
 3. Request an Independent Review of the school's determination (within 30 days of the school's determination after internal review or, if requested, within 30 days of the review by the Bishop) as to (1) whether harassment occurred or (2) if harassment was determined to have occurred, whether the school took adequate steps to protect the complainant against further hazing, harassment, and/or bullying and correct the problem; and that the review will be conducted by an investigator to be selected by the superintendent from a list developed by the Agency of Education;

4. File complaints of hazing, harassment, and/or bullying with either the Vermont Human Rights Commission and/or the federal Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights.
- iii. Notify the Accused Student – or if a minor, their parent(s) or guardian - in writing of their right to appeal as set forth in Section V of these procedures.
- I. Violations of Other Policies. In cases where the investigation has identified other conduct that may constitute a violation of other school disciplinary policies or codes of conduct, the designated employee shall report such conduct to the school administrator for action in accordance with relevant school policies or codes of conduct.

IV. **Responding to Substantiated Claims**

- A. Scope of Response. After a final determination that an act(s) of hazing, harassment and/or bullying has been committed, the school shall take prompt and appropriate disciplinary and/or remedial action reasonably calculated to stop the hazing, harassment and/or bullying and prevent any recurrence of harassment, hazing and/or bullying, and remedy its effects on the victim(s).

In so doing, the following should be considered:

- i. Potential Remedial Actions. Remedial action may include but not be limited to an age appropriate warning, reprimand, education, training and counseling, transfer, suspension, and/or expulsion of a student, and warning, reprimand, education, training and counseling, transfer, suspension and/or termination of an employee. A series of escalating consequences may be necessary if the initial steps are ineffective in stopping the hazing, harassment and/or bullying. To prevent recurrences counseling for the offender may be appropriate to ensure that he or she understands what constitutes hazing/harassment and/or bullying and the effects it can have. Depending on how widespread the hazing/harassment/bullying was and whether there have been any prior incidents, the school may need to provide training for the larger school community to ensure that students, parents and teachers can recognize hazing/harassment/bullying if it recurs and know how to respond.
- ii. School Access/Environment Considerations. The School will also take efforts to support victims' access to the School's programs, services and activities and consider and implement school-wide remedies, where appropriate. Accordingly, steps will be taken to eliminate any hostile and/or threatening environment that has been created. For example, if a female student has been subjected to harassment/bullying by a group of other students in a class, the school may need to deliver special training or other interventions for that class to repair the educational environment. If the school offers the student the option of withdrawing from a class in which a hostile environment/bullying occurred, the School will assist the student in making program or schedule changes and ensure that none of the changes adversely affect the student's academic record. Other measures may include, if appropriate, directing a bully/harasser to apologize to

the affected student. If a hostile environment has affected the entire school or campus, an effective response may need to include dissemination of information, the issuance of new policy statements or other steps that are designed to clearly communicate the message that the school does not tolerate behaviors contrary to the mission of the school as a Catholic institution; harassment, hazing, and/or bullying and will be responsive to any student who reports that conduct.

- iii. Hazing Case Considerations. Appropriate penalties or sanctions or both for organizations that or individuals who engage in hazing and revocation or suspension of an organization's permission to operate or exist within the institution's purview if that organization knowingly permits, authorizes, or condones hazing.
 - iv. Other Remedies: Other remedies may include providing counseling to the victim(s) and/or the perpetrator(s), and additional safety planning measures for the victim(s).
- B. Retaliation Prevention. It is unlawful for any person to retaliate against a person who has filed a complaint of hazing, harassment, and/or bullying or against a person who assists or participates in an investigation, proceeding or hearing related to the hazing, harassment, and/or bullying complaint, or against a person accused of and/or found responsible for the hazing, harassment, and/or bullying, of another.

A person may not violate this anti-retaliation provision regardless of whether the underlying complaint of hazing, harassment and/or bullying is substantiated.

The school will take reasonable steps to prevent any retaliation against the student who made the complaint (or was the subject of the hazing, harassment and/or bullying), against the person who filed a complaint on behalf of a student, the person who is accused of and/or found responsible for the behavior, or against those who provided information as witnesses. At a minimum, this includes making sure that the students and their parents, and those witnesses involved in the school's investigation, know how to report any subsequent problems and making follow-up inquiries to see if there have been any new incidents or any retaliation.

- C. Alternative Dispute Resolution. At all stages of the investigation and determination process, school officials are encouraged to make available to complainants alternative dispute resolution methods, such as mediation, for resolving complaints. Certain considerations should be made before pursuing alternative dispute resolution methods, including, but not limited to:
- i. the nature of the accusations (for example, face-to-face mediation is not appropriate for sexual violence cases),
 - ii. the age of the complainant and the accused individual,
 - iii. the agreement of the complainant, and
 - iv. other relevant factors such as any disability of the target or accused individual, safety issues, the relationship and relative power differential between the target and accused

individual, or any history of repeated misconduct/harassment by the accused individual.

V. Post Investigative Reviews

Rights of Complainants

A. Request Internal Review of Initial Harassment Determinations.

A complainant or parent of a complainant if complainant is a minor, may request internal review by the school of a designee's initial determination (following investigation) that hazing, harassment and/or bullying has not occurred via written request within 30 days submitted to the superintendent of schools. All levels of internal review of the investigator's initial determination, and the issuance of a decision, shall, unless special circumstances are present and documented by the school, be completed within 30 calendar days after review is requested.

B. Request Additional Review by the Office of the Bishop.

A complainant, or parent of complainant if complainant is a minor, may request in writing and within 30 days of the internal review, an additional review by the Office of the Bishop. All levels of this additional review of the investigator's initial determination and the results of the internal review along with the issuance of a final decision, shall, unless special circumstances are present and documented by the Office of the Bishop, be completed within 30 calendar days after review is requested.

C. Independent Reviews of Final Hazing, Harassment, and/or Bullying Determinations By Complainant.

A complainant may request an independent review within thirty (30) days of a final determination if s/he:

- i. is dissatisfied with the final determination as to whether harassment occurred, or
- ii. if a final determination was made that harassment had occurred, believes the steps taken by the school were inadequate to protect the complainant and prevent further hazing, harassment or bullying.

The complainant shall make such a request in writing to the superintendent of schools within thirty (30) days of a final determination. Upon such request, the superintendent shall promptly initiate an independent review by a neutral person as described under 16 V.S.A. § 570a (b)(1) and shall cooperate with the independent reviewer so that s/he may proceed expeditiously. The review shall consist of an interview of the complainant, the accused, any witnesses, and relevant school officials and a review of the written materials from the school's investigation.

Upon completion of the independent review, the reviewer shall advise the complainant and school officials in writing:

- i. as to the sufficiency of the school's investigation, its determination, and/or the steps taken by the school to correct any harassment found to have occurred, and
- ii. of recommendations of any steps the school might take to prevent further harassment from occurring. A copy of the independent review report shall be

sent to the Superintendent of Schools for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington.

The reviewer shall advise the complainant, or if a minor, the parents of the complainant, of other remedies that may be available if the student remains dissatisfied and, if appropriate, may recommend mediation or other alternative dispute resolution. The independent reviewer shall be considered an agent of the school for the purpose of being able to review confidential student records. The costs of the independent review shall be borne by the School. The School may request an independent review at any stage of the process.

D. Rights to Alternative Process.

In addition to, or as an alternative to filing a hazing, harassment and/or bullying complaint pursuant to this policy, a person may file a hazing, harassment and/or bullying complaint with the Vermont Human Rights Commission or the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education at the addresses noted below:

Vermont Human Rights Commission
14-16 Baldwin Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-6301
(800) 416-2010 or (802) 828-2480 (voice)
(877) 294-9200 (tty)
(802) 828-2481 (fax)
Email: human.rights@state.vt.us

Office for Civil Rights, Boston Office
U.S. Department of Education
8th Floor
5 Post Office Square
Boston, MA 02109-3921
617-289-0111 (voice)
877-521-2172 (tdd) 617-289-0150 (fax)
Email: OCR.Boston@ed.gov

Rights of Accused Students

A. Appeal. Any person determined to have engaged in an act(s) of hazing, harassment and/or bullying may appeal, in writing, the determination and/or any related disciplinary action(s) taken, directly to the superintendent. The superintendent, or his/her designee, shall conduct a review of the record. The standard of review by the superintendent, or his/her designee, shall be whether the finding that an act(s) of hazing, harassment, and/or bullying has been committed constitutes an abuse of discretion by the school level fact finder.

Appeals should be made to the superintendent in writing and within ten (10) calendar days of receiving the determination that an act(s) of hazing, harassment and/or bullying has occurred and/or any announced discipline.

B. Accused Student/Appellant Access to Investigative Reports/Findings. The school shall make available upon request of the Accused Student/Appellant, any relevant

information, documents, materials, etc. related to the investigation and related finding on appeal that can be redacted and de-identified in compliance with the requirements set forth at 34 CFR Part 99. For those documents that cannot be provided due to the requirements set forth at 34 CFR Part 99, when an Accused Student/Appellant seeks a review on the record by the Superintendent, a school administrator may seek the consent of the parent/guardian of the targeted student, or the accused eligible targeted student (if 18 or older, the targeted student has the ability to consent), in order to inform the accused student of the findings which gave rise to the school's determination that an act(s) of harassment, hazing, and/or bullying occurred. The parent/guardian or eligible student shall provide a signed and dated written consent before an educational agency or institution discloses personally identifiable information from the student's education records.

VI. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

- A. Privacy Concerns. The privacy of the complainant, the accused individual, and the witnesses shall be maintained consistent with the School's obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to comply with laws governing the disclosure of student records or other applicable discovery or disclosure obligations.
 - i. Concerns Related to Hazing, Harassment, and/or Bullying Complaints. The scope of appropriate response to a hazing, harassment and/or bullying complaint may depend upon whether a student or parent of a minor student reporting the hazing, harassment and/or bullying asks that the student's name not be disclosed to the accused person or that nothing be done about the alleged hazing, harassment and/or bullying. In all cases, school officials will discuss confidentiality standards and concerns with the complainant initially. The school will inform the student that a confidentiality request may limit the school's ability to respond. The school will remind the student that both federal Title IX and Vermont Title 9 prevent retaliation and that if he or she is afraid of reprisals from the alleged harasser, the school will take steps to prevent retaliation and will take strong action if retaliation occurs. If the student, or if a minor the student's parents, continues to ask that his or her name not be revealed, the school will secure this request in writing and should take all reasonable steps to investigate and respond to the complaint consistent with the student's request as long as doing so does not prevent the school from responding effectively to the hazing, harassment and/or bullying and preventing harassment of other students.

The school will evaluate the confidentiality request in the context of its responsibility to act in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church and to provide a safe and nondiscriminatory environment for all students. The factors the school might consider in this regard include the seriousness of the alleged harassment, the age of the student harassed, whether there have been other complaints or reports of harassment against the alleged harasser, and the rights of the accused individual to receive information about the accuser and the allegations if a formal proceeding with sanctions may result. If information about the incident is

contained in an “education record” of the student alleging the harassment, as defined by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. 1232g, the school will consider whether FERPA prohibits it from disclosing information without the student’s consent.

- B. Document Maintenance. The school administrator shall assure that a record of any complaint, its investigation and disposition, as well as any disciplinary or remedial action taken following the completion of the investigation, is maintained by the School in a confidential file accessible only to authorized persons. All investigation records created in conformance with this model policy and model procedures, including but not limited to, the complaint form, interview notes, additional evidence, and the investigative report, shall be kept by the Equity Coordinator, Designated Employees and the school administrator for at least six years after the investigation is completed.

VII. **Reporting to Other Agencies**

- A. Reports to Department of Children and Families. When a complaint made pursuant to this policy includes allegations of child abuse, any person responsible for reporting suspected child abuse under 33 V.S.A. § 4911, et seq. must report the allegation to the Commissioner of DCF. If the victim is over the age of 18 and a report of abuse is warranted, the report shall be made to Adult Protective Services in accordance with 33 V.S.A. § 6901 et seq.
- B. Reports to Vermont Agency of Education. If a hazing, harassment, and/or bullying complaint is made in an independent school about conduct by a licensed educator that might be grounds under Vermont law for licensing action, the principal will report the alleged conduct to the Superintendent who in turn will report it to the Secretary of Education.

C. Reporting Incidents to Police

- i. FERPA Rights. Information obtained and documented by school administration regarding the school’s response to notice of student conduct that may constitute hazing, harassment and/or bullying may constitute an “educational record” regarding the student or student(s) involved as defined by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act. Accordingly, such information may not be disclosed without prior parent approval to local law enforcement except in response to a lawfully issued subpoena, or in connection with an emergency if disclosure is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.
- ii. First-Hand Reports. Nothing in this policy shall preclude persons from reporting incidents and/or conduct witnessed first- hand that may be considered to be a criminal act to law enforcement officials.
- iii. Hazing Incidents. It is unlawful to (1) engage in hazing; (2) solicit direct, aid, or attempt to aid, or abet another person engaged in hazing; or (3) knowingly fail to take reasonable measures within the scope of the person’s authority to prevent hazing. It is not a defense in an action under this section that the person against whom the hazing was directed consented to or acquiesced in the hazing activity.

Hazing incidents will be reported to the police in a manner consistent with the confidentiality rights set forth above in this section.

- D. **Continuing Obligation to Investigate.** Reports made to either DCF or law enforcement shall not be considered to absolve the school administrators of their obligations under this policy to pursue and complete an investigation upon receipt of notice of conduct which may constitute hazing, harassment and/or bullying.

VIII. Disseminating Information, Training, and Data Reporting

- A. Disseminating Information. Annually, prior to the commencement of curricular and co-curricular activities, the School shall provide notice of this policy and procedures to students, custodial parents or guardians of students, and staff members, including references to the consequences of misbehavior contained in the plan required by 16 V.S.A. 1161a. Notice to students shall be in age-appropriate language and include examples of hazing, harassment and bullying. At a minimum, this notice shall appear in any publication of the school that sets forth the comprehensive rules, procedures and standards of conduct for the school.
- B. Student Training. The school administrator shall use his/her discretion in developing age-appropriate methods of discussing the meaning and substance of this policy with students to help ensure their actions are in keeping with the teachings of the Catholic Church and in an effort to prevent hazing, harassment and/or bullying.
- C. Staff Training. The principal or his/her designee shall ensure that teachers and other staff receive training in preventing, recognizing and responding to hazing, harassment and bullying. This training will occur in a manner consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Legal References:

Title V, Section B, 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. §794 et seq.;
Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. §2000d;
Title IX of the Educational Amendments Act of 1972, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681 et seq.;
Family Education Rights Privacy Act; 20 U.S.C. §1232g;
Public Accommodations Act, 9 V.S.A. §§4500 et seq.;
Education, Classifications and Definitions, 16 V.S.A. §11(26);(30)(A);(32);
Education, 16 V.S.A. §140(a)(1);
Education, 16 V.S.A. §166(e);
Education, Bullying, 16 V.S.A. §570c;
Education, Harassment, Hazing and Bullying, 16 V.S.A. § 570;
Education, Harassment, 16 V.S.A. §570a;
Education, Harassment, 16 V.S.A. §570c;
Education, Harassment, 16 V.S.A. §570f;
Education, Hazing, 16 V.S.A. §570b;
Education, Hazing, 16 V.S.A. §570f
Education, Discipline, 16 V.S.A. §1161a;
Education, Suspension or Expulsion of Pupils, 16 V.S.A. §1162;
Child Abuse, 33 V.S.A. §§4911 et seq.;

Adult Protective Services, 33 V.S.A. §6901 et seq., all as they may be amended from time to time.

Washington v. Pierce, 179 VT 318 (2005).

Promulgated: September 12, 2019

Bishop of Burlington

APPENDIX 5152

Designated Employees

The following employees of Mater Christi School have been designated by the School to receive complaints of hazing, bullying and/or harassment pursuant to this policy and 16 V.S.A. §570a(7) and 16 V.S.A. §570c(7) and under Federal anti-discrimination laws:

Tim Loescher, Head of School
Mater Christi School
50 Mansfield Ave.
Burlington, VT 05401
(802) 658-3992 ext 211
tloescher@materchristischool.net

Jason Moore, Assistant Head of School
Mater Christi School
50 Mansfield Ave.
Burlington, VT 05401
(802) 658-3992 ext 105
jmoore@materchristischool.net

Mary Farley, Project Manager
Mater Christi School
50 Mansfield Ave.
Burlington, VT 05401
(802) 658-3992
mfarley@materchristischool.net

WEAPONS IN SCHOOL POLICY

The Mission and Core Values of Mater Christi School state in part that motivation for maximum learning is supported in a creative and caring environment and that education at Mater Christi involves guiding each child in developing a value system that includes a respect for life. Consistent treatment of each person with dignity and respect at school must be an outstanding characteristic of the school. This mutual dignity and respect must be shared by faculty, staff, board members, students, volunteers, visitors, and any other persons who form the support system of the school.

The school's Mission and Core Values indicate that the education of the whole child will be most successfully accomplished in an atmosphere of caring security. Any action that undermines such an atmosphere is out of place at Mater Christi School including threats of violence whether spoken or written. Students engaging in these threats will be subject to disciplinary action to be determined by the Head of School.

The presence of weapons in school not only creates unacceptable risks of injury or death, but also creates a climate that undermines the educational purposes of Mater Christi. Accordingly, it is the policy of Mater Christi School to forbid the possession, custody and use of weapons by unauthorized persons in or around school property.

Definitions

- 1) Weapon is any firearm, knife, explosive, or other object, even if manufactured for a nonviolent purpose, that has a potentially violent use, if, under the surrounding circumstances, the purpose of keeping or carrying the object is for use, or threat of use, as a weapon.
- 2) Firearm is defined as any weapon, including a starter gun, which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; the frame or receiver of any such weapon; and firearm muffler or firearm silencer, or any destructive device.

Prohibitions

It is the policy of the Mater Christi School that no student shall bring a weapon onto school property, nor carry or keep any weapon on school property or while attending or participating in any school activity, including during transportation to or from such activity.

Enforcement

Any member of the Mater Christi faculty or staff who suspects that a student has brought a weapon to school or to a school event may search for and confiscate such weapon.

Penalties for Violations

- A. Any student, faculty, or staff member found to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to discipline, including long-term suspension and expulsion. Any volunteer, visitor, or other person in violation of this policy shall be subject to immediate expulsion from the premises.
- B. Any student found to be in violation of this policy due to possession of a firearm, as defined in this policy, shall at a minimum, be expelled from school for a period of not less than one year (365 days). The Head of School may impose this discipline after they review the circumstances of the incident. The Head of School also may modify the penalty in appropriate cases at their discretion.

- C. The Head of School will appoint appropriate school personnel to work closely with the student and his/her parents/guardians so that the transition experience either out of or back into school for the student will be a beneficial time for the student.
- D. Faculty or staff members in violation of this policy face discipline up to and including termination. The Head of School may impose discipline after he/she reviews the circumstances surrounding the incident.

Whatever level of discipline the Head of School chooses to impose, the appropriate law enforcement officials will be notified when anyone has brought a weapon to school. The Head of School will also inform the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees that a student, faculty or staff member brought a weapon to school and of the subsequent disciplinary action taken by the Head of School.

TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Digital Learning Vision Statement

Our goals are to enhance opportunities for learning through virtual experiences and to prepare students for the complexities of the twenty-first century, to extend access to learning opportunities and materials and enable students to learn at their own pace, provide a means of making personalized accommodations to meet the needs of all learners, and to foster not only communication and connectivity with the global community but facilitate deeper respect in our students and a sense of responsibility as global citizens.

Creation of this Policy

The Mater Christi School Team has worked collaboratively to craft and implement the following policy. The policy represents our commitment to best practices for the use of digital resources and hardware, administrative regulations, procedures, terms and conditions for use and user agreements consistent with the Catholic mission of Mater Christi School. The policy will be revised at the conclusion of each school year by the School Team of teachers and our Technology Leadership Team.

Introduction

The Technology Acceptable Use Policy for Mater Christi School is enacted by the School Team to provide the parents, students, and staff of the Mater Christi School with a statement of purpose and explanation of the use of technology within the MCS educational community. This policy is reinforced by practice, together with **acceptable** use standards and is required reading before accessing the technology devices, digital resources, and network infrastructure of Mater Christi School. Students, parents/guardians, and all staff members of MCS must read and sign the accompanying Technology Acceptable Use Policy.

Purpose

MCS encourages the judicious use of information technology to assist staff and students with academic success, preparation for the workplace, and lifelong learning. MCS provides access to a wide range of information technologies to support learning, facilitate resource sharing, increase authentic communication, enhance student engagement, and assist staff and students in acquiring innovative skills. The technology devices, digital resources, and network infrastructure will also be utilized to share relevant school information and develop links with the local and global community.

Definitions

“Technology devices, digital resources, and network infrastructure” is defined as the MCS network, the Internet, Google Apps for Education, email, hardware, software, printers, peripheral devices, individual computer devices, and web enabled devices.

“Information technology” is defined as Internet access, blogging, podcasting, email, published and unpublished documents, and various forms of multimedia technology.

“Educational use” is defined as a use that supports communication, research, and learning.

“Devices” refer to MCS owned/leased, staff owned devices, and student/family owned devices.

Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA)

Congress enacted the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, 15 U.S.C. §6501, et seq. (COPPA) in 1998. COPPA required the Federal Trade Commission to issue and enforce regulations concerning children's online privacy. The Commission's original COPPA Rule became effective on April 21, 2000. The Commission issued an amended Rule on December 19, 2012 that became effective on July 1, 2013.

As MCS teachers, students and families work together to advance learning using technology devices, digital resources, and network infrastructure, all parties should work to inform students about the risks of providing personal information for the purpose of creating web based accounts.

Content Filtering

Mater Christi School uses software designed to block access to certain sites and filter content as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, 47 U.S.C. §254 (CIPA). MCS is aware that not all inappropriate information can be filtered, and the school will make an effort to correct any known gaps in the filtering of information without unduly inhibiting the educational use of age appropriate content by staff and students. Users should inform teachers or administrators of any inadvertent access to inappropriate material in order to modify the filtering profile. MCS continually educates students about appropriate online behavior and technology usage.

Monitoring

MCS monitors the use of the school's network to protect the integrity and optimal operation of all computer and system networks. There is no expectation of privacy related to information stored and transmitted over the MCS network. The information on the network in general files, MCS Google domain files, email and third-party devices brought into the school building by students is not private and is subject to review by the network manager at the request of the MCS administration to substantiate inappropriate activity and to comply with requests of law enforcement agencies as part of their investigations.

MCS will cooperate with copyright protection agencies investigating copyright infringement by users of the computer systems and network of MCS.

Technicians and computer system administrators maintain full access rights to all storage devices, and may need to access/manage such storage devices as part of their duties.

Routine system maintenance and monitoring may lead to the discovery of violations of the MCS Technology Acceptable Use Policy, other school policies, state laws, or federal laws.

Search of particular files of a user shall be conducted if there is a reasonable suspicion that a user has violated the law or MCS Policies. The investigation will be reasonable and in the context of the nature of the alleged policy violation.

What are Google Apps for Education?

MCS provides staff and students with a Google Apps for Education account. Google Apps is a free web based suite of programs provided by Google for schools to use.

All of the Google Apps services can be accessed from anywhere you have an Internet connection (school, home, smart phone, etc.) Among the purposes for integrating Google Apps for Education in our school environment are to:

- Address equitable digital access
- Enhance collaborating in the learning environment
- Promote authentic 21st Century learning and teaching

- Provide opportunity to grow as digital citizens
- Enhance the daily educational experience

Uses for Student MCS Domain Gmail

Email can be a powerful communication tool for students to increase communication and collaboration, and serves as a link to the digital classroom. Therefore, students will be encouraged to check their MCS email regularly. Teachers may email students to communicate reminders, course content, pose questions related to class work, and such. Students are encouraged to email other students to collaborate on group projects and assist with school assignments.

Student MCS Domain Gmail Permission

Mater Christi School's Gmail system controls to whom email messages can be sent and from whom they can be received. MCS Students cannot send email to parent accounts or anyone outside of the MCS School domain. All MCS students cannot receive email from outside of the domain. Therefore, students should not use their MCS email for setting up accounts that need to be verified via email or receive notices via email. Exceptions to this policy can be made for academic purposes at the discretion of the School Team and the MCS Administration.

Student MCS Domain Emails to Staff

At teachers' discretion, students may email their teachers with questions or comments regarding class. However, there will be no requirement or expectation for staff to answer student email, although they certainly may if they choose. For example, an unanswered email to a teacher would not excuse a student from turning in an assignment on time.

General Email and On-line Chat Guidelines

Below is a general summary of guidelines related to email and any form of online chat or instant messages:

- All emails to staff and faculty should model proper etiquette and format (which will be taught in class). The content should be specific to school related subjects.
- Email and on-line chat among students is to be used for school-related communication.
- The following actions are prohibited:
 - * Sending harassing email, instant messages or content.
 - * Sending offensive email, instant messages or content.
 - * Sending spam email, instant messages or content.
 - * Sending email or instant messages containing a virus or other malicious content.
 - * Sending or reading email or instant messages at inappropriate times, such as during class instruction time.
 - * Sending email or instant messages to share test answers or promote cheating in any way.
 - * Using the account of another person.

User Access and Explanation of Guidelines

Access to information technology through the Mater Christi domain is a privilege, not a right. Students, parents, and staff shall be required to read the MCS Technology Acceptable Use Policy and

sign and return the Statement of Responsibilities.

The MCS Acceptable Usage Policy shall govern all use of technology devices, digital resources, and network infrastructure. Student use of technology resources, digital resources, web enabled devices, and network infrastructure will be governed by school disciplinary policies as outlined in the policy manual of the MCS school handbook.

Since information technology is constantly changing, not all circumstances can be anticipated or addressed in this policy. All users are expected to understand and comply with both the “letter” and the “spirit” of this policy and show good judgment in their use of these resources. Any questions should be addressed to the Administration.

MCS provides students access to its technology devices, digital resources, and network infrastructure, along with information technology for educational use. Students who have doubts regarding whether a resource has educational merit, should ask a staff member.

Scope of Technology Policies

The scope of the policies includes the MCS domain, MCS network, MCS school grounds or at/during MCS school functions, use of MCS accounts, and MCS school issued devices. School issued devices include but are not limited to the following: tablets, classroom computers, and any other device issued by the school.

Expectation of Privacy

At any time and without prior notice, MCS reserves the right to monitor, inspect, copy, review, and store any and all usage of technology devices, digital resources, and network infrastructure, along with information technology as well as any information sent or received in connection with this usage. Staff and students should not have any expectation of privacy regarding such materials.

Consequences for Violation of Technology Policies

Use of the computer network and Internet is an integral part of research and class work, but abuse of this technology can result in loss of privileges. Students who use technology devices, digital resources, and network infrastructure or any information technology inappropriately may lose their access privileges and may face additional disciplinary or legal action.

The length of time for loss of privileges will be determined by building administrators and/or other staff members. If the user is guilty of multiple violations, privileges can be revoked.

Unacceptable Uses of Technology Resources

Inappropriate technology use includes but is not limited to the following:

- Off-task usage of devices during school and class hours is prohibited.
- Interfering with the normal functioning of devices, computer systems, or computer networks.
- Damaging or theft of devices, computer systems, or computer networks.
- Accessing, modifying, or deleting files/data that do not belong to you.
- Sending or publishing offensive or harassing messages and content.
- Accessing dangerous information that, if acted upon, could cause damage or danger to others.
- Giving your username or password to any other student, or using the username or password of someone else to access any part of the system.
- Sharing and/or distribution of passwords or using another student or faculty member's password.
- Intentional viewing, downloading or distribution of inappropriate and/or offensive materials.

- Gaining unauthorized access to computer and or telecommunications networks and resources.
- Viewing, transmitting or downloading pornographic, obscene, vulgar and/or indecent materials.
- Using obscene language, harassing, insulting or bullying others, posting of private or personal information about another person, spamming of the school email system, violating any federal or state law, local regulation or school policy.
- Violating copyright laws and/or the diocesan policy on plagiarism.
- Copying software or applications from Mater Christi School devices through any electronic means unless the particular licensing agreement in place for the software allows user distribution.
- Intentionally wasting limited network or bandwidth resources.
- Playing non-educational games or watching videos without the teacher's permission.
- Destructions/vandalism of system software, applications, files or other network resources.
- Employing the network for commercial or political purposes.
- Using the network / Internet to buy or sell products.
- “Hacking” and other illegal activities in an attempt to gain unauthorized access to restricted files, other devices or computer systems.
- Uploading any harmful form of programming, bypassing filters; installing any type of server, aliasing / spoofing, peer-to-peer networking or remote-control software.
- Possession of and/or distribution of any software tools designed to facilitate any of the above actions will also be considered an offense.
- Using Artificial Intelligence such as Large Language Models like Chat GPT or Claude to complete any portion of any assignment in which the use of AI has not been specifically assigned.

Saving inappropriate files to any part of the system, including but not limited to:

- *Music files*
- *Movies*
- *Video games of all types, including ROMs and emulators*
- *Offensive images or files*
- *Programs which can be used for malicious purposes*
- *Any files for which you do not have a legal license*
- *Any file which is not needed for school purposes or a class assignment.*

Uses that contribute to the violation of any other student conduct code including but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, hazing or harassment, theft, falsification of records, possession of banned substances/items, etc.

Additional Guidelines for Remote Learning (updated July, 2020)

- Use the chromebook at home following the same rules we have at school
- Do not install additional extensions on it since it only makes it run slower.
- Keep device stored in a cool area
- Nothing should be stacked on top of the device, particularly when storing the device
- Remember to charge it daily on a flat hard surface and not covered by clothes on the floor.
- Devices during virtual class meetings should be set on a clean, open and safe surface and in an area conducive to low distractions and learning. This does not include places such as on a bed or in an area where family members are roaming in the background.

- Do not multitask and have other devices connected while in a classroom.
- Refer to the MCS Technology site for tips and answers to common internet related questions: <https://sites.google.com/materchristischool.net/technology/home>
- Contact Mr. Early with any Chromebook questions and if a replacement or repair is needed.
- The use of Google Hangouts/Chat on MCS devices without faculty permission and supervision at home or at school is forbidden. Any use of these apps on MCS devices must be facilitated and monitored by a teacher.

Progressive Discipline

Mater Christi School will apply progressive discipline for violations of the school policy and signed Acceptable Use Agreement Form which may include revocation of the access to the MCS domain, MCS network, technology use on MCS school grounds or at/during MCS school functions, use of MCS accounts, and MCS school issued devices. Other appropriate disciplinary or legal action may be undertaken by the MCS Administration, including suspension or expulsion.

Mater Christi School Limitations of Liability

Mater Christi School makes no warranties of any kind, implied or expressed, that the services and functions provided through the technology devices, digital resources and network infrastructure, along with information technology will be error free or without defect. MCS will not be responsible for damages users may suffer, including but not limited to loss of data or interruption of service.

MCS, along with any persons or organizations associated with the school department internet connectivity, will not be liable for the actions of anyone connecting to the internet through the school network infrastructure. All users shall assume full liability, legal, financial or otherwise for their actions while connected to the internet.

The MCS School staff assumes no responsibility for any information or materials transferred or accessed from the internet.

Parents/Guardians should read this MCS Technology Acceptable Use Policy. Parents/guardians should discuss the technology use responsibilities with their children. Questions and concerns can be forwarded to the Administration of Mater Christi School.

Parents and guardians agree to accept financial responsibility for any expenses or damages incurred as a result of their student's inappropriate or illegal activities on the Mater Christi School network. Parents and guardians agree to reimburse MCS for any expenses or damages incurred in the use of school owned devices.

Modification

The Mater Christi School team and Administration reserve the right to modify or change this policy and related implementation procedures at any time without prior notification.

Mater Christi School Student/Parent Statement of Responsibilities

Student Expectations

I have read, understand and will follow this Acceptable Use Policy. If I breach this agreement, the consequences could include suspension or revocation of Technology privileges and/or disciplinary action. I also understand the school network, domain and email accounts are owned by Mater Christi School and Mater Christi School has the right to access any of the information used through the

mediums provided through the school at any time.

Parent/Guardian Acceptable Use Signature

Parent collaboration and consent is a crucial focus of Mater Christi School. Through our technology integration, we want to work with parents so they understand the various initiatives that are taking place at school. We encourage you to have your children guide you through their work so you will see their progress as it develops.

As parents, students and teachers working together, we become an ever-stronger learning community, therefore, creating more opportunities for our students to become more successful. As the parent or guardian of this student, I have read the Mater Christi School Responsible Use Policy. I understand that technology is provided for educational purposes in keeping with the educational goals of MCS and that student use for any other purpose is inappropriate. I recognize it is impossible for the school to restrict access to all controversial materials, and I will not hold the school responsible for materials acquired on the school network. **I understand that children's information technology activities at home should be supervised by me as they can affect the academic environment at school.**

I understand the importance of this Responsible Use Policy and will support my student in adhering to it. I am aware that if my child breaches this agreement, the consequences could include suspension or revocation of Technology privileges and/or disciplinary action. I also understand the school network, domain and email accounts are owned by MCS and that MCS has the right to access any of the information used through the mediums provided through the school at any time. I hereby give permission for my child to use technology resources at Mater Christi School.

Parent/Guardian Student Images for Educational Purposes

Mater Christi School attempts to provide students with the best educational practices and resources. Images and videos may be used in the classroom setting to enhance and enrich student learning. Images and videos should be taken and used for educational purposes only. School images and student images should not be used on non-school or non-MCS Domain based sites/apps (i.e. personal accounts). The use of videos and images is used at the discretion of the classroom teacher and the MCS Administration.

Mater Christi School Technology Acceptable Use Policy Agreement

I have read and understand the MCS Technology Acceptable Use Policy. I accept responsibility for any damage, destruction, or loss of any device. I understand that I am responsible for the total cost of replacing a damaged, destroyed, or lost device.

Parent/Guardian Name (please print)

Student Name (please print)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Student Signature

Date

Date

ACCESSIBILITY OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Mater Christi receives federal funds for some of its programs. In recognizing that some areas of the school are inaccessible to disabled individuals, the school adopts the following policy:

All federally funded programs at Mater Christi School are available without discrimination, to disabled individuals as defined by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and/or Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Whenever a disabled individual selects a federally funded program for participation in a program that is inaccessible, the program will be relocated to an accessible area. In no instance will the relocation of the activity be delayed beyond two (2) school days. The Head of School is responsible for implementing this policy by relocating federal programs within the existing building.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS CONCERNING HUMAN SEXUALITY AND SEXUAL IDENTITY, Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington:

Diocesan Position Statement:

Schools within the Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington minister to each of our students as a beloved child of God based on the child's God-given humanity including their God-given, biologically determined sexual identity.

RIGHT TO AMEND HANDBOOK

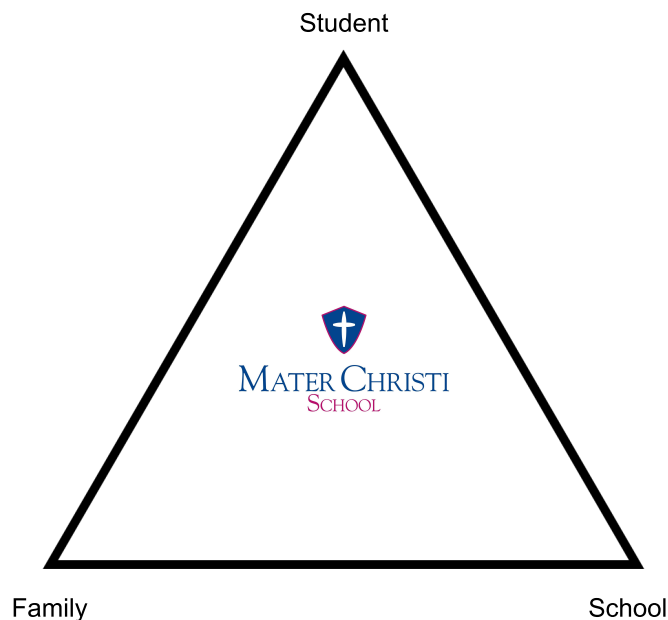
Given the complex nature of education and common purpose, it is impossible to predetermine a policy to cover every situation. Accordingly, the administration, after due consideration may, from time to time, be required to make judgments as to the best course of action in a given circumstance or to make changes to this handbook. When necessary, exceptions or changes will be made with the greatest benefit to the educational purpose in mind. Mater Christi School's administrators retain the right to amend the Student and Parent Handbook at any time and for any reason the schools administrators determine is appropriate. Parents will be given prompt notification if changes are made.

FAMILY-STUDENT-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP & AGREEMENT

“The tender Mercy of God has given us one another.”

--Mother Catherine McAuley, RSM

Mater Christi School is a multifaceted organization comprising a diversity of populations that have distinctive relationships with one another. Relationships are at the very core of who we are as a Catholic, Mercy school. We strive, in fidelity to our mission, to foster and safeguard a living community in relationship with God and others that is rooted in Mercy. It is essential in such a community that all members recognize and respect not only their own rights and responsibilities, but also the rights and responsibilities of other members of the community and those of the school itself. We are all entrusted with the mission of promoting and upholding the values of our school community.



Mater Christi School views the education of a student as a partnership among the student, the family and the school. Parents are the first and primary educators of students. A positive and constructive working relationship between all parties is essential to the development of the whole child and the fulfillment of our school's Mercy mission.

In living out our Catholic and Mercy values, we strive to create a safe and nurturing environment where all can thrive. We seek to cultivate:

- A welcoming, caring environment for all people
- An ability to appreciate the situation and perspective of others
- A collaborative and cooperative attitude in working with others
- Open, positive and honest communication
- Trusting relationships
- Responsible actions
- A commitment to grow in the values that guide our school

Rights of parents, students, guardians, caregivers, volunteers and visitors:

- To be treated with respect, courtesy and care by faculty/staff, students and other MCS families
- To be listened to and clearly communicated with by the school regarding your child/ren's education and development
- To have confidentiality over sensitive issues respected by faculty/staff
- To respond to concerns raised within 48 hours unless it is over a weekend
- To be treated with professionalism by all faculty/staff members

As a parent, guardian, caregiver, volunteer and visitor, we ask that you:

- Support in words and action the philosophy of a Catholic and Mercy education
- Promote the values of our Mercy Pledge
- Respect the decisions made by the administration
- Support the school in its efforts to maintain a positive teaching and learning environment
- Validate that both parents and faculty/staff work together for the benefit of the child/ren
- Work in trust with the school for the common goal of achieving what is best for all
- Communicate with the school in a supportive and constructive manner
- Understand the importance of a healthy parent/teacher/child relationship and communicate any concerns to the school in a constructive and appropriate manner
- Listen to your child/ren, but remember that others may have a different version of an event or interpret an event differently

- Cooperate where your child's behavior has overstepped accepted school standards and follow specified protocol for communication with faculty/staff members
- Understand and help your child(ren) understand that receiving constructive criticism and/or failure is a part of life and a lesson that helps build character
- Sustain a positive and cooperative attitude, interact positively with other parents and community members, and support community building efforts within the school.
- Refrain from engaging in gossip and hearsay by communicating with the school as we collectively strive to model respect and good manners for our children
- Value the school community and its reputation especially when engaging in social media
- Observe the school's policies as outlined in the handbook and endeavor to support them at home

Communication process for a parent, guardian, caregiver, volunteer or visitor:

Communication between parents/guardians and teachers is an essential component of the Mater Christi School educational experience. Should a question or concern arise, the school expects the following steps to be followed:

1. Prior to contacting teachers, parents/guardians should speak with their child/ren to obtain as much information as possible regarding any concerns.
2. Speak to the appropriate school official involved (e.g., class teacher) first and try to resolve the concern with mutual respect and clear communication.* Respect teachers' preparation time before, during and after school and where/if possible, make an appointment with the relevant person.
3. If constructive conversation with the appropriate school official(s) is not possible, please complete the Mater Christi School Dialogue Form (available in the "Forms" tab on the school website). Please send the completed form to the Assistant Head of School and the Head of School and set up an appointment with them using the email address:
dialogue@materchristischool.net
4. The Assistant Head of School and/or Head of School will attempt to mediate and find resolution in the presence of both parties.

*Students and parents/guardians are welcome to respectfully express their concerns about the school operation and its personnel. However, because we are a school that adheres to Mercy values, they may not do so in a manner that is discourteous, scandalous, rumor driven, disruptive, threatening, hostile or divisive. Parents, guardians or other responsible adults who insult or abuse school personnel in the presence of other school personnel, students or parents on or adjacent to school premises or at some other place where school personnel are required to be in connection with their assigned school activities, may be asked to withdraw their student from the school.

Parents and students are expected to comply with the school rules, policies and consequences for inappropriate behavior. Parents and students are expected to accept and support the authority of school officials. Just as the parent reserves the right to withdraw a child, the school has the right to cancel the enrollment of a student if the administration determines that the parent or student demonstrates a refusal to maintain a positive and constructive partnership with the school.

Cell Phone Free Campus - Reason & Rationale

The purpose of this message is to provide a reason and rationale for our plan to facilitate a *Cell Phone Free Campus*, and the course of action we take at our school regarding the use of cell phones and social media. Please note that for the purposes of this document “Cell Phone” includes watches or any other personal devices that allow phone calls, text messages and/or internet access.

As a school, we are committed to the safety, education and formation of our students. To put it simply, we see the presence of cell phones on campus as a deterrent from that goal. We are not unaware of the functions and even conveniences that these devices can perform for young people, but we have experienced the detriment and danger that accompany such devices, simply by being present in school, as far outweighing their function and convenience. It is our deep desire that students have a school experience unencumbered by the vibration of constant contact, the temptation of social media, and the fear of missing out. Rather, we want them to be fully engaged with one another, with learning, and with the physical, social, and spiritual world that is present all around them. We want our students to avoid the disciplinary pitfalls that social media and cell phones almost naturally facilitate, and to learn to relate with one another, even in conflict, in person. We want to avoid danger and predation. We want to facilitate the formation of honesty, integrity, courage, forgiveness and grace. And we want to preserve and nurture, to the best of our ability, the wonder and innocence of youth. We do not see the presence of cell phones in school as contributing to these goals. On the contrary, we see them as detracting from them.

Please partner with us to facilitate the implementation of this program and to provide the best education possible for our students and your children.

CELL PHONE FREE CAMPUS - POLICY

The Mater Christi School community cares deeply for the health, safety and well-being of our students as we seek to form them, help them grow to their full potential, and inspire them to become courageous and compassionate leaders ready to serve our vulnerable world.

Families and educators throughout the country are increasingly concerned about the impact of excessive screen time and cell phones on developing minds, hearts and spirits and on the educational environment¹. Numerous studies and articles suggest the negative correlation between cell phone usage and learning. The article cited below, along with the results from two recent experiments published in the University of Chicago Journal, indicates that the mere presence of cell phones can impair learning and reduce available cognitive capacity.²

We share this concern and are compelled by the findings. Therefore, for the wellness, safety and protection of our students, our school community remains firmly committed to our CELL PHONE* FREE CAMPUS POLICY, and ask that you partner with us in keeping your children focused and safe by ensuring that your children leave their phones at home.

If your child has a legitimate reason to bring a cell phone to school, we ask parents/guardians to write and send a hard copy letter to Mr. Loescher and Mr. Moore explaining why your child needs to bring their cell phone to school. This letter must be written and submitted on an annual basis, and Mr. Loescher and Mr. Moore are the only school officials who can approve a parent letter and grant permission for a child to have a cell phone on campus.

Acceptable reasons for a child bringing their cell phone to school include:

- The child walks home unaccompanied from school
- Current family emergency or situation
- Extenuating circumstances

If a child has been given permission to bring their cell phone to school, they must complete a **student contract**, and the approved parent letter and student contract will be kept on file in the main office. Immediately upon arrival at school, the student must turn their cell phone into the main office. The student will not be allowed access to their cell phone at any time during the school day, but, as always, you may contact the school office at 802-658-3992 should you need to contact your child/children. Students, with permission, may use our school phones when they need to contact you. Cell phones will be returned to the student at dismissal, however, phones must remain off and in backpacks until the student leaves campus. Any cell phone usage without the administration's permission and supervision is a violation of the CELL PHONE FREE CAMPUS POLICY.

¹ <https://healthmatters.nyp.org/what-does-too-much-screen-time-do-to-childrens-brains/>

²

https://www.flipsnack.com/6BA5CBA7C6F/prep-magazine-spring-summer-2021.html?p=14&fbclid=IwAR0TwCsU7BjlxSQISNmdM85mIKDLq6h2MD3Ds_g1FDGvuZg7XeNjt-tlctw and <https://www.psypost.org/2018/05/just-cell-phone-possession-can-impair-learning-study-suggests-51228>

If a student who has completed a student contract violates the CELL PHONE FREE CAMPUS POLICY:

First Offense: The teacher or school staff shall confiscate the cell phone or electronic device and take it to the main office. Parents/guardians will be called and will be required to come to the main office themselves to retrieve the cell phone or device, and the student will receive a detention.

Second Offense: The confiscated cell phone or electronic device must be picked up in the school office by a parent or guardian. The student will lose the privilege of having a cell phone and/or electronic device at school permanently, or for a period of time as determined by the administration, and the student will receive a one-day suspension.

If a student has NOT completed a student contract and he/she violates the CELL PHONE FREE CAMPUS POLICY the cell phone or device will be confiscated, and taken to the main office. Parents/guardians will be called and will be required to come to the main office themselves to retrieve the cell phone or device, and the student will be issued a suspension.

Any serious cell phone or electronic device offense, including but not limited to, repeated violation of school day use, taking or sharing of inappropriate photos, video recordings, and/or cyber-bullying, etc. may result in suspension or expulsion.

Mater Christi School reserves the right to monitor student lockers to protect the safety of the community. If we have reason to believe student(s) are keeping their phones in their lockers in violation of the CELL PHONE FREE CAMPUS POLICY, the school administration may search lockers.

* “Cell Phones,” in this context, include any of the following devices: **iPods/MP3 Players, iPads/Tablets, Apple Watches, and electronic gaming or entertainment devices, etc.**



Student/Family Cell Phone/Electronic Device Contract

- A family letter and completed student contract are necessary before a student will be given permission to have a cell phone on campus.
- Approved students will be permitted to bring their cell phones to school, but must leave them in the main office and in the off position.
- Students must pick up their cell phone and/or electronic device at the end of each day.
- Students may only use their cell phone at school (this includes school-sponsored sports, clubs and activities) with the expressed permission of Mr. Loescher or Mr. Moore.
- The school administration may examine a student's cell phone or electronic device at any time if there is reason to believe that the student is using the mobile device to violate a school or district policy, regulation, guideline or law.
- Mater Christi School is not responsible for any possible damage or theft in connection to the student/family's choice to bring a cell phone or electronic device to school.

MCS STUDENT CONTRACT

I, _____ (student's name) understand that possession of a cell phone and/or electronic device at Mater Christi School is a privilege, and that it may be revoked at any time by the administration for violating this school policy regarding such possession, which I have read and understood. Furthermore, I understand that the school and its employees are in no way responsible for any theft or damage of my cell phone or electronic device while on school grounds. The school is not obligated to investigate the loss or damage of any device.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

MCS PARENT/GUARDIAN CONTRACT

I, _____ (parent/guardian name) understand this contract regarding my student's possession of a cell phone and/or electronic device at Mater Christi School. Furthermore, I understand that the school and its employees are in no way responsible for any theft or damage of my child's cell phone or electronic device while on school grounds. The school is not obligated to investigate the loss or damage of this mobile device. Should my student's cell phone or electronic device be confiscated, I understand that it will only be returned when I come to school to retrieve it. I also release the school and its employees from any and all claims and damages of any nature arising from my child's use of, or inability to use, their cell phone at school.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

FAMILY HANDBOOK AGREEMENT
2026-2027

We have read, understand, and agree to be governed by this document, including and not limited to, the school's policies on Photo and Social Media Use, and Health and Immunization.

Parent/Guardian Name (please print)

Student Name (please print)

Parent or Guardian Signature

Student Signature

Date

Date

Student Homeroom

Families of students in Preschool through grade 8, please return the signed copy to the school office by September 15, 2026.