

PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

2025-2026

St. Mary Nativity Catholic School



702 N. Broadway Street

Joliet, IL 60435

Phone: (815) 722-8518

Pastor:

Father Clive Otieno

Principal:

Administrative Assistant:

Christina Hinojosa

Business Manager:

Mary Nemanich

"If you want to have a good society, we must concentrate all our forces on the Christian education of the young. Experience has taught me that if we wish to sustain civil society, then we should take good care of the young. "- St. John Bosco

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to St. Mary Nativity Catholic School! In choosing St. Mary Nativity Catholic School, you have demonstrated a commitment to the values and philosophy of a Catholic education.

The Parent/Student Handbook reflects the policies of St. Mary Nativity Catholic School for the 2025-2026 school year. Please read this document carefully and sign the attached agreement. This agreement states that you intend to abide by the policies of St. Mary Nativity Catholic School during the 2025 - 2026 school year.

We consider this handbook to be a work in progress dedicated to compliance with DOJ and ISBE standards. St. Mary Nativity Catholic School reserves the right to make changes in policies and procedures as needed throughout the school year. Any changes to the handbook will be made readily available to the parents and students on FACTS®, under the heading "School Links and Files."

The ultimate authority in all school matters lies with the principal and pastor of St. Mary Nativity Catholic School. The decisions made by the administration regarding the implementation of school policy are final. The administration of St. Mary Nativity Catholic School has endeavored to be as explicit as possible regarding the rules and regulations outlined in this handbook; however, new and unusual circumstances may arise during the academic year. The principal and the pastor have the authority to use discretion in making decisions regarding unforeseen circumstances. Policies outlined in this handbook are subject to interpretation by the administration.

The faculty and staff of St. Mary Nativity Catholic School look forward to collaborating with you to promote academic excellence and spiritual growth within the context of the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Together let us pray that God, who has begun this good work in us, may carry it through to completion.

God bless you,
Elias Alonzo Ed D
Principal

A HISTORY OF ST. MARY NATIVITY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Croatian settlers initially attended St. John the Baptist and later St. Joseph Church. However, within a short period, the growing community of 100 Croatian settlers petitioned the bishop to institute a Croatian parish reflecting the language and heritage. Permission was granted, and Rev. George Violich came to Joliet from Croatia in May 1906 to establish the parish, which today is St. Mary Nativity.

The parish school was always an integral part of the life of St. Mary Nativity and began in the Joliet immigrant community. Through the untiring efforts of the Sisters of the Precious Blood from Alton, Illinois, who originally staffed the school, and later the School Sisters of St. Francis of Christ the King from Lemont, the school thrived. In 1914, an addition was built to accommodate the increasing school enrollment, and in 1943, two buses for school use were purchased. The fire that destroyed much of the school on June 27, 1953, proved to be a windfall for the parish because, in the process of rebuilding and updating the structure, a gym was added. Recent additions have provided easy indoor access for students to the church for liturgy and other activities.

The student body reflects a wide range of backgrounds. There are children whose ancestors were among the founding families, as well as those of second and third-generation graduates, along with children whose parents have recently moved to the area, seeking a stable educational environment for their kids.

Today, St. Mary Nativity Catholic School offers Pre-K (3/4) through eighth grade. The school provides students with a solid athletic program that includes fall and winter seasons, clubs, and activities, along with relevant and dynamic Faith Formation programs

OUR PHILOSOPHY

As Catholic Educators of St. Mary Nativity School, we will work with students at their ability level and with each other to fully develop the academic and spiritual potential they possess.

The curriculum stresses academic achievement within a Christian community where the children are loved and respected by their peers as well as the teachers. Word of Life religious curriculum is used so that the St. Mary Nativity Catholic School theology complies with the Diocese standards. United with each other in meaningful liturgy and prayer, our students can further come to an understanding of the Christian life.

The Diocesan curriculum guidelines, consistent with Illinois State Board of Education guidelines, are followed for the teaching of all secular subject areas. The curriculum is marked by current content and fresh approaches to methodology. There is an emphasis on principles rather than facts, on learning through problem-solving rather than by precept. We strive to offer a program that makes use of many sources of reading material, a wide variety of audio-visual and technology tools, and a multi-text approach to the content areas. At St. Mary Nativity Catholic School, literacy is critical, and every student is provided a device to access various resources.

MISSION AND VISION STATEMENT

The mission of St. Mary Nativity Catholic School is to provide a safe and dynamic Catholic environment where faith is nourished, knowledge grows, and mutual respect is evident. We partner with parents and the

parish community to create an inclusive, diverse, and flexible atmosphere for learning that provides for global, responsible lifelong learners.

Our Beliefs

- 1) Instilling a love of God and respect for all His creations fosters Christian attitudes where education is a process that aims to guide people towards a deeper understanding of the Christian gospel and fellowship.
- 2) A Catholic education flourishes when taught in a spiritual and loving environment.
- 3) A student's self-esteem is enhanced by positive relationships and mutual respect between students and staff.
- 4) Each student is a valued individual with unique physical, social, emotional, and intellectual needs.
- 5) Academic standards are met when a school maintains high expectations for student learning.
- 6) Children must be academically challenged to meet the needs of the day and the challenges of tomorrow.
- 7) Parent involvement is vital to the learning process, and children achieve at a higher level.
- 8) A commitment to continuous improvement is critical for our school to enable students to become lifelong learners.
- 9) An emphasis on sharing and association among all members of the school family/community strengthens the students' bonds with the larger Catholic community.

Our Goals

1. To provide an environment where the Catholic Faith and tradition affect personal growth, citizenship, and a future education and vocation.
2. To provide an engaging academic education that promotes critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
3. To prepare students for future academic success through rigorous real-world instruction.
4. To foster an inquiring and curious spirit.

Our Motto: DEEPLY COMMITTED. CHRIST AT HEART.

The Parents' Role in Education

We at St. Mary Nativity Catholic School consider it a privilege to work with parents in the education of children because we believe parents are the primary educators of their children. Therefore, it is your right and your duty to become the primary role models for the development of your child's life---physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally, and psychologically. Your choice of St. Mary Nativity Catholic School involves a commitment and exhibits a commitment to helping your child recognize God as the greatest good in his/her life.

A good example is the strongest teacher. Your relationship with God, with each other, and with the church community will affect the way your child relates to God and others. Ideals taught in school are not well rooted in the child unless these are nurtured by the example of good Catholic/Christian morality and by an honest personal relationship with God in your family life.

Once you have chosen to enter a partnership with us at St. Mary Nativity Catholic School, we trust you will be loyal to this commitment. During these formative years (Pre-K to 8), your child needs constant support from both parents and faculty to develop his/her moral, intellectual, social, cultural, and physical endowment.

Neither parents nor teachers can afford to doubt the sincerity of the efforts of their educational partner in the quest to challenge yet nourish the student to reach his/her potential.

Both parents and teachers must remember that allowing oneself to be caught between the student and the other partner will never have positive results. **To divide authority between school and home or within the home will only teach disrespect to all authority.**

If there is an incident at school, you, as a parent, must work with the administration to understand the complete story. Evidence of mutual respect between parents and teachers will model good, mature behavior and relationships. Talking negatively about a child's teacher at home will only create an attitude of distrust toward the teacher, the school, and the parent.

Students are naturally eager to grow and learn. However, sometimes in the process of maturation, new interests may cause them to lose focus. As this natural process occurs, the student needs both understanding and discipline. At times, your child may perceive discipline as restrictive. However, boundaries and limits provide a young person with both guidance and security.

A child must take responsibility for the grades he/she has earned and be accountable for homework, long-term assignments, major tests, service projects, and all other assignments. Parents are encouraged to let their child experience a logical consequence for an inappropriate action or behavior. This responsibility also extends to times of absence.

Together, let us begin this year with a commitment to partnership as we support one another in helping your child become the best person he/she can become.

Parents As Partners

St. Mary Nativity Catholic School recognizes that parents are the primary educators of their children. It is our desire and expectation that the school and parents work together for the good of the child.

Parental Rights

As partners in the educational process at St. Mary Nativity Catholic School, we respect that parents have the following rights:

- Their child(ren) will receive a Catholic education.
- They will be able to present their concerns and discuss them in a respectful atmosphere.
- They will receive timely responses to written requests, emails, and phone calls.
- They will be allowed to meet with their child(ren)'s teachers at mutually agreed-upon times.
- They will be notified of their child(ren)'s academic and behavioral progress or lack thereof.
- Their child(ren) will be treated fairly.
- They will be promptly informed of any changes in rules and regulations.

Parental Responsibilities

As partners in the educational process at St. Mary Nativity Catholic School, we ask parents to meet these expectations:

- To set rules, times, and limits so that your child:
 - ✓ Gets to bed early on school nights.
 - ✓ Arrives at school on time and is picked up on time at the end of the day.
 - ✓ Is dressed according to the school dress code and is groomed well.
 - ✓ Completes assignments on time.
- To actively participate in school activities and support school fundraising activities.
- To contact the teacher directly and then the administration with questions or concerns.
- To see that the student pays for any damage to schoolbooks or property due to carelessness or neglect on the part of the student.
- To notify the school with a written note when the student has been absent or tardy; these notes are kept for one year.
- To notify the school office of any changes of address or important phone numbers.
- To meet all financial obligations to the school when these obligations are due.
- To inform the school of any special situation regarding the student's well-being, safety, and health.
- To complete and return to school any requested information promptly.
- To read school notes, newsletters, and to utilize FACTS® while showing interest in the student's total education.
- To support the religious and educational goals of the school.
- To attend Mass and teach the Catholic faith by word and example.
- To support and cooperate with the discipline policy of the school.
- To treat teachers with respect and courtesy.
- To not post negative comments about students, teachers, or the administration on social media, but rather to bring questions and/or concerns directly to teachers and administration.

PROFILE OF A ST. MARY NATIVITY CATHOLIC SCHOOL GRADUATE

- 1) Knows of and demonstrates a strong commitment to his/her Catholic faith.
- 2) Shows he/she is a disciple of Christ by following His examples of service, honesty, kindness, and generosity.
- 3) Shows respect and concern for self, others, and all of God's creatures.
- 4) Has been academically challenged to reach his/her potential and confidently awaits the challenges of tomorrow in an ever-changing world.
- 5) Is a role model who leads by example, demands justice, and is courageous enough to stand up for his/her beliefs.

GENERAL SCHOOL POLICY

STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION/DIOCESAN

St. Mary Nativity Catholic School operates under the auspices of the Diocese of Joliet. Therefore, St. Mary Nativity Catholic School adopts in whole all policies set forth in the Handbook of School Policies published by the Diocese of Joliet Catholic Schools Office. The school administrator, faculty, and governance board are

required to follow all policies of the Diocese. Additional local policies may be developed to govern the operation of the school, but may not be contrary to those policies and procedures established by the Diocese of Joliet.

STATE RECOGNITION

NON-PUBLIC STATE RECOGNITION OF DIOCESAN SCHOOLS

All elementary and secondary schools of the Catholic Diocese of Joliet shall be recognized by the Illinois State Board of Education. Schools must be registered with the State of Illinois and be recognized by the State Board of Education. To maintain ISBE recognition, principals must annually comply with requirements which include meeting administrative deadlines as determined by ISBE, thus ensuring compliance and recognition.

All elementary and secondary schools of the Catholic Diocese of Joliet adhere to all applicable sections of the Illinois School Code [105 ILCS 5], relevant case law, including *Plyler v Doe*, 457 U.S. 202, 102 S.Ct. 2382 (1982).

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT IN ADMISSIONS AND EMPLOYMENT

Admissions: Schools operated under the auspices of the Diocese of Joliet admit students of any race, religion, sex, color, national/ethnic origin, citizenship status, physical or mental disability to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally available to students at the school in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal anti-discrimination statutes to the extent that such antidiscrimination statutes do not conflict with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

Employment: The Diocese of Joliet is an equal opportunity employer. In accordance with applicable law, we prohibit discrimination against any applicant or employee based on any legally recognized basis, including, but not limited to, race, color, sex (including pregnancy, lactation, childbirth, or related medical conditions), age (40 and over), national origin, or ancestry, citizenship status, physical or mental disability, veteran status, uniformed service member status or any other status protected by federal, state, or local law.

SCHOOL COUNCILS AND COMMITTEES

Advisory Board: The St. Mary Nativity Catholic School Advisory Board consults and facilitates the policy-making process by formulating, adapting, and recommending policies. The council serves in an advisory capacity to the administration and is without authority to overturn decisions made by the school administration. Membership of the council consists of the pastor of St. Mary Nativity Church parish, the principal of St. Mary Nativity Catholic School, parents of current and former students, alumni of St. Mary Nativity Catholic School, and parish community members. The administration is answerable to both the local church parish and the Diocese of Joliet regarding matters of facility ownership, operation, and finance.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING

Employees of St. Mary Nativity Catholic School, St. Mary Nativity Church parish, and all volunteers who work with or have contact with the children at school at any time, whether volunteering at school activities, chaperoning field trips, or at any other time, must be trained through the Diocesan VIRTUS and CANTS 22 Program. Anyone working with the students in any way must be certified through the program. The school office may be contacted for instructions in completing this process.

ADMINISTRATION

St. Mary Nativity Catholic School is one of over forty-six Catholic schools in the Diocese of Joliet. The Diocesan Board of Education plans and develops policy for the Diocesan educational program. Administrative responsibility for the schools is in the care of the Superintendent of Schools. The Catholic Schools Office is at the Bishop Blanchette Center in Crest Hill. St. Mary Nativity Catholic School wholly adopts the Handbook of School Policies of the Diocese of Joliet as the school's policies. St. Mary Nativity Catholic School, subject to diocesan policy, is under the administration of the pastor, with day-to-day administration by the principal.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ADMISSIONS INFORMATION

ADMISSIONS POLICIES/AGE OF ADMISSION/BIRTH CERTIFICATES OR EQUIVALENTS

A child entering first grade must be six years of age (kindergarten, five years; pre-school, three or four years of age, respectively) on or before September 1 of that year. The verification of age with a birth certificate is presented at application time. The school maintains certified copies of birth certificates for each student enrolled upon enrollment.

Nondiscriminatory Policy

Schools operated under the auspices of the Diocese of Joliet admit students of any race, color, sex, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally available to students at the schools. The names of the elementary and secondary schools can be found in the OFFICIAL CATHOLIC DIRECTORY, published annually. (*Handbook of School Policies. Joliet Diocesan School System, 1995, policy 5110*)

St. Mary Nativity Catholic School adheres to the tenets of Title IX: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

Admissions Policies

Admission of all students will be determined at the time of registration based on the admissions standards. All new students seeking admission to St. Mary Nativity Catholic School are evaluated based on current standardized test scores and report cards.

These will be reviewed to determine whether the program at St. Mary Nativity Catholic School will meet the educational needs of the students. An interview with the student and parents may be part of the admission process. Testing in some academic areas may be held for new applicants in Grades 3-8.

As openings become available, the following priorities will be used to accept students to St. Mary Nativity Catholic School:

1. Members of St. Mary Nativity Church Parish
2. Members of other Catholic church parishes without a Catholic school
3. Members of other Catholic church parishes with Catholic schools
4. Non-Catholic students whose parents accept the mission and vision of St. Mary Nativity Catholic School. **Non-Catholic students are expected to attend and participate in all religious observances.**

Required Documents

Health Records & Immunization Records: All students entering St. Mary Nativity Catholic School must have current immunizations. The only exemption to the policy is for a student with an illness or medical condition that would compromise his/her life if immunized. Documentation of a compromising condition, such as but not limited to leukemia, must be presented before the first day of the school year. Immunization records are required to be kept current.

- Birth Certificate (original)
- Baptismal Certificate (Catholic applicants only)
- Report Cards and transcripts for all grades before application at St. Mary Nativity School
- Standardized Test Results
- Record of IEP/Service Plan if applicable
- If parents are divorced or legally separated, it is the responsibility of the legal guardian to place on file in the office a certified copy of the court order granting legal custody.

New Student Registration

Registration opens in **JANUARY during Catholic Schools Week**. The three-day pre-school students must be 3 years of age by September 1. Three-day or five-day prekindergarten students must be 4 years of age by September 1. Kindergartners must be 5 years of age by September 1. First-grade students must be 6 years of age by September 1.

All students entering school for the first time must present a birth certificate, health record, and social security number. Catholic students must present a baptismal certificate. Parents who wish to register new students may do so in January.

The maximum class size for grades 1-8, as set by the Diocese of Joliet's Office of Catholic Schools, is 33 students.

The State of Illinois requires a physical examination for each child entering school for the first time, for preschool, kindergarten, or first grade, and again before starting the sixth grade. An eye exam is required for children entering kindergarten or those transferring from other schools. The State of Illinois now requires a dental examination for students entering kindergarten, second, and sixth grade. These examinations must be on file at the start of the school year. All immunizations must be up to date. Physical exams are also required for students transferring from other schools if they have not been previously examined as required by Illinois law. The exam records are due on or before the first day of classes.

If the medical and dental records **have not been received by October 15**, the child will be excluded from school until the forms are provided, as mandated by the Illinois State Board of Education.

STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR

TRANSFER AND WITHDRAWAL OF STUDENT

TRANSFER OF STUDENT

When a student who is transferring from one Catholic school in the Joliet Diocese applies for admission to another Catholic school (either during or at the end of the academic year) in the Joliet Diocese, a Student Transfer Form must be completed.

When a student who is transferring *from* a Catholic school in the Joliet Diocese to a public school (or out of state), the receiving school must obtain a parent's signature requesting that records be sent to the receiving school. Similarly, if a student is transferring *to* a Catholic school in the Joliet Diocese, the receiving school must obtain a parent's signature requesting records from the sending school. Records must be sent school-to-school, *not* through a parent.

Transfer students may be admitted following receipt from the transferring school of attendance, health and academic records, etc. Until such records have been received and analyzed, the child's admission status is probationary. Certified copies of transfer students' records must be requested within fourteen (14) days of enrollment.

WITHDRAWAL OF STUDENT

When a student transfers to another school, the student's permanent record card is retained. Records are transferred according to the Illinois School Code. Parents/guardians should be made aware of any financial obligations to the school prior to a transfer or withdrawal. In general, no **official** student records are transferred until all financial accounts with the school have been settled (**including a transfer fee of \$40.00 for the first student and \$75.00 for multiple students, to cover the cost of processing student records**). Unofficial school records are transferred within ten (10) days of request. Unofficial records are minimally defined as copies of the last report card. Health records are transferred along with unofficial records.

Students enrolled for any portion of an academic trimester will be charged tuition for the full trimester. Report cards and transfer of official records will be withheld until all payments are completed.

- A. Provide the name and address of the new school to which the records are to be sent.
- B. Provide the new address and phone number if the family is moving.
- C. Sign an authorization for the release of records (health, scholastic, standardized test scores) at the receiving school. Without this authorization, records will not be forwarded.

Financial Information

Tuition Schedule 2025-2026

<u>Kindergarten-8th grade</u>	<u>Annual</u>	<u>10 Month payment plan</u>	<u>12 Month payment plan</u>
1 Child	\$4,700.00	\$470.00	\$392.00
2 Children	\$7,200.00	\$720.00	\$600.00
3 or More Children	\$9,100.00	\$910.00	\$758.00
4 Children	\$10,420.00	\$1,042.00	\$868.00

Fees Included in the above tuition schedule (Kindergarten -8th Grade)

Registration - Technology - Instructional - Home and School Dues

Please note that any fees paid in advance will be reflected in your 2025-2026 FACTS Agreement.

Additional Fees

\$60.00 - School Supply (Kindergarten Only)

\$50.00 - First Communion (2nd Grade Only)

\$50.00 – Confirmation (8th Grade Only)

\$100.00 – Graduation Fee (8th Grade Only)

Pre-school

Full day, 5 days a week	\$4,700.00	\$470.00	\$392.00
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Fees Included in the above tuition schedule (Pre-school)

Registration - Instructional - School Supply Fee - Home and School Dues

Additional Fees

\$25.00 Nap Mat

Please note that any fees paid in advance will be reflected in your 2025-2026 FACTS Agreement.

*Pre-school is not a part of compulsory attendance in the State of Illinois. Because of this, all preschools in the Diocese of Joliet are required to be self-supporting and do not receive any parish subsidy. We understand the importance of early childhood education; therefore, we do not want the cost to prohibit families from enrolling. Families with a child enrolled in K-8 are extended a 20% discount on pre-school tuition.

Fundraising Obligation

Mandatory: \$500.00 Calendar Raffle or \$600.00 if not participating

Mandatory: \$50.00 (5 Raffle Tickets) Trivia Knight

Highly Encouraged: Picnic Raffle, Grand Sweepstakes Raffle, and March Madness

Volunteer Obligation:

Kitchen Duty – 2 per family or \$100.00 buyout

Volunteer Opportunities – 6 hours per family or \$200.00 buyout

Parish Feasts Day Picnic, Book Fair, Grandparents/Special Person Day, Family Valentine's Dance, Trivia Knight

Tuition Assistance & Scholarship – Must complete an application in FACTS to be eligible for any financial assistance.

Tuition Assistance Scholarships (K-8) are available through the Catholic Education Foundation
To apply for the FACTS Scholarship, register or log in to your account at www.online.factsmgt.com.
Service-based scholarships are to be determined throughout the school year

Tuition Incentive

\$400 referral credit at the end of the school year for each family you bring in who registers and attends our school.

FACTS Business Solutions for Education

Tuition billing and payment may be made by electronic transfer from your bank account, through credit card payments, or by check/money order directly to FACTS.

FACTS Accounts, 2025-26

Family tuition accounts for the 2025-26 school year have been set up to be paid in twelve payments or fewer, due on the first, fifth, tenth, or fifteenth of the month, starting with a first payment in August and a final payment in May. There will be an additional fee if payments need to be extended over twelve. **The \$45.00 FACTS Fee is billed on your first tuition payment.** A late fee of \$40 from **FACTS** will be applied if payment is not made before the due date.

- **Families choosing to make a single payment in August will not be charged the \$45.00 FACTS fee. There is also a 2% discount for single payments.**
- **Families choosing to make two payments (August and January) will not be charged the \$45.00 FACTS fee.**

Contacting FACTS: Parents should contact FACTS directly for any inquiries regarding their tuition payment, fees, balances, etc. *NOT THE SCHOOL OFFICE OR THE RECTORY.*

All school families receive a login and password for access to FACTS. Families can use the FACTS link on the St. Mary Nativity Catholic School website at www.stmarynativity.org. Parents can:

- Print a report of all payments made in a particular calendar year or a particular school year.
- Make tuition payments.
- Review the last payment information.
- Change their method of payment.
- Edit their payment information.
- Edit personal information and more.
- **Print your FACTS payment record from your account for tax purposes. The school office or the rectory has that information.**

Contact FACTS in the following cases:

- To make a payment (by electronic transfer or by credit card).
- To set up automatic ACH payments.
- To review recent payments.

- To change payment account or personal information.
- To check on a mail-in payment that hasn't been processed yet.
- To notify them of an upcoming late payment due to family financial difficulties.
- To inquire about fees posted to your account.

Mail Payments to:

Please include the student's account number on the check or money order payable to:

FACTS

P.O. Box 82527

Lincoln, NE 68501-2527

Re-Enrollment

Unless the school has previously been notified in writing that a student is not returning for the 2026-2027 school year, families currently enrolled at St. Mary Nativity Catholic School will be automatically re-enrolled with FACTS in April 2026 and will be responsible for payment of the \$45.00 FACTS fee and a non-refundable SMN school enrollment fee per family. Families transferring will also be assessed a transfer fee of \$40.00 per student to cover the cost of processing school records. A service fee of \$40.00 will be added to delinquent accounts for each month.

Volunteer & Financial Requirements

Kitchen Duty (grades K—8)

- \$200.00 if not worked per family. Kitchen duty is from 9:00 am until 1:00 PM. Parents are required to work four kitchen duties. One kitchen duty each trimester, plus one floating kitchen duty. For families not fulfilling kitchen duty, a fee of \$50.00 will be posted to tuition accounts at the end of the first two trimesters, and a fee of \$100.00 for the last trimester.
- ***Parents must be signed up for kitchen duty by **May 1, 2026**, to receive credit for the current school year.***
- ***Failure to give any prior notification of inability to work on an assigned day will result in an additional \$50.00 fee being charged to your tuition account.***

Fundraising Requirements (pre-school—grade 8)

- **Between July 1, 2025, and June 2nd, 2026**, families are required to assist St. Mary Nativity Catholic School by participating in two fundraisers **(or pay \$100.00)**.
- ***Parents of currently enrolled students must be signed up for School Events by April 1 of the school year to receive credit for the current school year. Newly enrolled families may sign up at the time of registration/orientation. Parents are required to work four Parish events (or pay \$300.00).***
- Failure to give any prior notification of an inability to work on an assigned day will result in an additional \$50.00 fee for fundraisers and an additional \$100.00 fee for bingo being charged to the tuition account
- ***It is the responsibility of the parents to sign personally, and sign-out out on the designated St. Mary Nativity Catholic School "Sign-in Form" to receive credit for Kitchen Duty, Parish***

Feast Day, or Fundraisers. Chairpersons must return the original (white) “Sign-in Form” to the school office within one week of the event. The chairperson is to keep a duplicate copy for his/her records.

Any questions regarding the completion of kitchen duty, events, fundraising requirements, or fees should be directed to the chairperson or school secretary.

Fees

- **Registration Fee:** All families are required to pay an annual non-refundable registration fee at the time of enrollment at St. Mary Nativity Catholic School.
- **Home & School Association Annual Dues are \$55** per family, covering classroom parties and teacher gifts during the school year, payable in full on Orientation Day.
- **Athletic Association Fees** are payable in full on Orientation Day. A nominal participation fee per athlete will apply before each sporting season.

Billing Procedure in Case of Divorce

Tuition bills will be sent to the custodial parent. **The custodial parent will be responsible for payment of all tuition and fees and communication with the non-custodial parent. St. Mary Nativity Catholic School will not be involved in any family disputes concerning tuition payments.**

Delinquent Accounts and Fees

Any payment returned as a result of a family error, such as “Insufficient Funds,” “Uncollected Funds,” or “Account Closed,” will incur a **\$50.00** returned payment fee. This includes payments made electronically.

- **Student report cards and official school records can be withheld until all tuition and fees are paid in full.**
- **Eighth-grade students will not receive their diplomas, nor be allowed to participate in any graduation exercises, programs, or class trips if tuition and fees have not been paid in full by May 15th.**
- **To avoid assignment of past due balances to our collection agency, final payment of all tuition and fees must be received no later than June 30 unless an arrangement has been made with the administration.**

Financial Suspension

St. Mary Nativity Catholic School families are expected to stay current with outstanding obligations to the school, which include tuition, fees, and fundraising requirements. All family tuition accounts must be paid and up-to-date to avoid financial suspension. If the family tuition account is not up to date, a financial suspension could be imposed.

A financial suspension would mean:

- The student will be unable to attend class

- The student will not be allowed to take exams, submit homework, or receive academic credit during the time of suspension.
- No official school records will be released.
- Any previously awarded financial assistance or tuition grants will be forfeited.

It is your responsibility as a parent to work with the principal and business manager to avoid the financial suspension of your child. We also understand that unforeseen financial difficulties do happen. If you are unable to meet your obligations to St. Mary Catholic School, please ask the principal or business manager to arrange a meeting with the pastor to discuss your situation.

The following consequences will be imposed should your tuition account become one month or more in arrears:

- If accounts are 30 days or greater in arrears: Student report card(s) will be held in the office, and a formal reminder letter will be mailed to the parent(s). Please contact the rectory to discuss this with the pastor.
- If accounts are 60 days or greater in arrears, student(s) will be removed or restricted from all extracurricular activities such as class trips, sports, or club activities and a telephone reminder call will take place. Please contact the rectory to discuss this with the pastor.
- If accounts are 90 days or greater in arrears, the family involved will be required to meet with the pastor to discuss action moving forward.
- The family's account will be sent to a collection agency at the pastor's discretion.

Should a family wish to transfer their child to another school due to financial delinquencies, no official school records will be released until all outstanding financial obligations are satisfied. Furthermore, all textbooks, sports fees or uniforms, and any other items belonging to the school must be returned to the school before records will be released.

Collection Agency

If no prior arrangements have been made, at the end of the current school year, delinquent balances will be transferred from FACTS tuition accounts and assigned to our collection agency, C.A.B. Services, Inc., or Meade & Associates, Inc. for payment:

C.A.B. Services, Inc. Meade & Associates, Inc.
90 Barney Drive 737 Enterprise Drive
Joliet, IL 60435 Westerville, Ohio 43081
(815) 725-1303 614-436-6160

C.A.B. Services, Inc. or Meade & Associates, Inc. will notify credit bureaus of the delinquency, and parents will be responsible for any additional late fees, collection fees, attorney fees, and court costs.

St. Mary Nativity Catholic School is not required to send prior notification of delinquencies assigned to C.A.B. Services, Inc., or Meade & Associates, Inc.

Students will remain on Financial Suspension until full payment of past due tuition and fees are

received from C.A.B. Services, Inc. or Meade by St. Mary Nativity. **ALLOW SIX TO EIGHT WEEKS FOR YOUR PAYMENT TO C.A.B. OR MEADE SERVICES TO CLEAR OUR BANK.**

Tuition Credits & Financial Assistance

Currently, enrolled school families can earn a 10% tuition scholarship for sponsoring new families enrolled for the 2025—2026 school year. The school must be notified of the sponsorship at the time of registration of the new family. The scholarship will be applied toward tuition at the end of the school year. Both sponsoring and incoming families must remain current with their tuition payments throughout the school year to receive this scholarship.

Financial Assistance

Financial assistance is available to any St. Mary Nativity family who finds tuition to be an impossible burden. No student will be denied admission to St. Mary Nativity School solely based on financial need. Families requesting tuition assistance must apply through FACTS, an outside service that evaluates requests for financial assistance.

Tuition Scholarships Awards are available through the Diocese of Joliet Catholic Education Foundation or the St. Mary Nativity Educational Endowment. For both: Apply online through FACTS at www.factsmgt.com. The diocesan deadline is March 1st; the St. Mary Nativity Educational Endowment deadline is June 10th for 2025-2026. FACTS hardcopy applications are available in the spring. An application fee, payable to FACTS, is required to process the application. Families must include supporting documentation with the FACTS application to qualify for tuition assistance.

The deadline for applications for the 2025-2026 school year is June 30. Families will be notified the week of July 10, 2025, of financial awards.

Applications for newly enrolled families should be submitted at the time of registration.

If family financial conditions should change during the school year, parents should notify FACTS Tuition and contact the principal or pastor. Names are kept confidential.

Tuition Refund Policy

Registration fees and activity fees are non-refundable. Kitchen duty and all fundraising fees, such as raffle tickets, dinner dance tickets, etc., are charged for each trimester the student is enrolled.

For students withdrawing from St. Mary Nativity Catholic School during the academic year, families will be assessed tuition for each trimester the student is in attendance. Students enrolled for any portion of an academic trimester will be charged tuition for the full trimester. Report cards and transfer of official records will be withheld until all payments are completed.

Families withdrawing students before the end of the school year will forfeit any financial assistance or tuition grants previously awarded.

Withdrawal: The education of your child is a partnership between you and the school. If, in the opinion of the administration, that partnership is irretrievably broken, the school reserves the right to require the parent(s) to withdraw the child(ren).

All students will be given a probationary period of not less than one semester in which to prove themselves both socially and academically. If, during this trial period, a student or family is unable or unwilling to abide by the conditions of this handbook, the parents may be asked to withdraw their child/children from St. Mary Nativity Catholic School. The recommendation and decision of the school is final.

Student Records and FERPA

St. Mary Nativity Catholic School adheres to the Buckley Amendment (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act/FERPA) regarding access to student records. Records of students transferring to other schools will only be sent through the US Mail or by email between schools. No records will be given to parents to transport to the new school.

Students requesting records/transcripts/recommendations must make a **five-school-day** request to the school Office. All forms should be submitted to the St. Mary Nativity Catholic School Office for distribution. Completed forms will be sent via the U.S. Mail. Special handling will require that all postal fees be paid by the parents.

St. Mary Nativity Catholic School also recognizes the Buckley Amendment (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act) regarding the rights of non-custodial parents. It is the responsibility of the parents to share any official custodial information decided through the courts. Official custodial agreements will be kept in a confidential file in the office of the principal.

In the absence of any court document, the school will view each parent as having full legal custody of his/her child. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, non-custodial parents have the right to receive records about their child's academic progress or lack thereof. The school reserves the right to charge a shipping and processing fee for extra records sent to more than one home address.

Student Records

- **Birth certificates**
- **Emergency Contact Information**
- **Academic Progress Reports**
 - Required Health Examinations (Exemptions/Exclusion Dates)/Physical, PreK, Kdg, Grade 6, Dental, Vision, Hearing
 - Maintenance of Health Records
 - Required Pre-participation Sports Physical
 - Concussion Information and Forms
 - Self-Administration of Medication: Diabetes, Asthma, Allergies
 - Self-Carry Medication Information
 - School Food Service Program (breakfast and/or lunch)
 - Support Services for Students (counseling, social work, etc.)

School Records

- Asbestos Letter to Parents
- Faith's Law Resource Letter to Parents
- Safety/Emergency Drills (Fire, Tornado, Lockdown, Law Enforcement, Evacuation)
- Facilities Safety/Crisis Management Plan
- Building Fire Inspection (annually), Asbestos Inspection (every 3 years)
- Classroom and Lab Safety (non-toxic supplies, lab procedures for chemicals, and eye protection)

MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS

As required by Illinois state law, all children in Catholic schools shall present proof of having had a medical examination and received such immunizations against preventable communicable diseases. These records are to be presented to the school before the first day of school by producing a Certificate of Health Examination form completed by a physician.

If a child is not in compliance with the health and immunization requirements by the first day of school, the principal shall exclude the child from school until the child presents proof of having had the medical examination and presents proof of having received the required immunizations.

State law requires medical examinations:

- Before entrance into any public, private, or parochial preschool or transferring from outside of the State of Illinois.
- Within one year prior to entering preschool, pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, or 1st grade, and upon entering sixth and ninth grades.

All students are immunized according to the Illinois School Code and Department of Public Health regulations. Students are excluded from school (by October 15) for noncompliance with this law.

VISION EXAMINATIONS

Illinois state law requires that all children (except preschool students) enrolling in public, private, or parochial schools for the first time and/or entering kindergarten receive a vision screening. Parents/guardians shall be notified of this requirement at registration.

Proof by a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches or a licensed optometrist shall be submitted to the school. Report cards may be held if the student is not in compliance with this regulation. This requirement may be waived for those families who show an undue burden or a lack of access to a physician licensed to practice medicine or to a licensed optometrist (at the discretion of the principal).

HEARING EXAMINATIONS

Illinois state law requires that, once a child begins school, hearing screenings are required at kindergarten and grades 1, 2, and 3, and with teacher or parent referrals.

DENTAL EXAMINATIONS

Illinois state law requires that all children in kindergarten, grades 2, and 6 complete a dental examination by a licensed dentist. Schools shall remind parents/guardians of this requirement at least sixty (60) days before May 15 of each school year.

If a student in 2nd or 6th grade fails to present proof of a dental exam by May 15, the school principal may exclude the child from school until the student presents proof of the School Dental Examination form or a Dental Examination Waiver Form. School dental examinations must have been completed within the eighteen (18) months before May 15 of the grade 2 or grade 6 school year.

MEDICAL AND RELIGIOUS EXEMPTIONS

Parents/guardians are able to exempt their child from state-required medical examinations in two ways: through either a medical or a religious exemption. Medical immunization Exemption Guidelines can be found at the Illinois Department of Public Health website.

If the physical condition of the child is such that any immunization should not be administered, the examining physician, advanced practice registered nurse, or physician's assistant responsible for performing the health examination shall endorse this fact on the student's

Certificate of Health Examination form.

Religious objections to immunizations shall be provided to the school from the parent/guardian in writing and must set forth the specific religious belief that conflicts with each immunization. The parents' statement of religious objection should be attached to the student's Certificate of Health Examination form. The principal shall determine whether to accept or deny the immunization exemption request. As required by Illinois state law, parents/guardians must be informed by the local school authority of a measles outbreak control exclusion procedure with the Illinois Department of Public Health Guidance and Control of Communicable Diseases at the time such an objection is presented.

Maintenance of Health Records

Each principal is knowledgeable concerning directives and services available from local public health authorities. Each principal cooperates with public health personnel and follows directives as they apply to non-public schools.

Where the local school does not have the services of a public health nurse, a volunteer designated by the principal is available to aid in keeping student health records current.

- **Required Pre-Participation Sports Physical**
- **Concussion Information and Forms**

The purpose of this policy is to safeguard students and student athletes by (1) educating school personnel, parents/guardians, students and student athletes about concussions, (2) requiring that a student (student athlete) be removed from play when a concussion is suspected and requiring a licensed health care professional to provide clearance for the student (student athlete) to return learn and return to play or practice, and (3) implementing the concussion management requirements specified by the Illinois High School Association and Illinois Elementary School Association.

While much of this policy applies to athletic play occurring in Diocese-sponsored sports programs provided by elementary, middle, and high schools, regardless of whether the sports program is intramural, interscholastic, after school or provided during the summer (e.g., summer sports camp), this policy also applies in the case of head injuries during the school day.

MISSING CHILDREN RECORDS ACT

Each school shall follow the provisions of Section 5(a) of the Missing Children Records Act, 325 ILCS 50/5, which requires each school to have a system in place that flags records requests for any current or former student reported as a missing person by the Illinois State Police.

The procedure is as follows: Upon notification by the Illinois State Police of a child's disappearance, a school in which the child is currently (or was previously enrolled) shall flag the record of that child by placing it in an orange file folder so that whenever a copy of or information regarding the record is requested, the school or other entity shall be alerted to the fact that the record is that of a missing child.

The school or other entity shall immediately report to the Illinois State Police any request concerning flagged records or knowledge as to the whereabouts of any missing person.

Upon notification by the Illinois State Police that the missing child has been recovered, the school or other entity shall remove the flag from the child's record.

SIRS/ STUDENT INFORMATION REPORTING SYSTEM

Diocesan elementary schools are required to utilize the FACTS Student Information System (SIRS) for the purposes of reporting student progress and communicating student progress to parents/guardians.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM INFORMATION

CURRICULUM - General Curriculum Overview/Basic Subjects Listed

CURRICULUM RESPONSIBILITY

The Superintendent approves the curriculum of the school in accordance with the standards specified by the Catholic Schools Office. The local principal implements the system's basic curriculum expectations.

Each school shall implement a comprehensive curriculum that is characterized by systematic planning, articulation, and assessment. Cross-curricular integration is encouraged.

CURRICULUM DESIGN

The instructional program reflects the philosophy of the school, responds to students' abilities and needs, and encourages teaching techniques consistent with the child as learner, providing relevant and developmental content.

Each school has a published school philosophy that is identifiably Catholic and is the basis for formulating school goals and objectives.

Each teacher writes daily classroom objectives that reflect the broader school goals and objectives.

CURRICULUM CONTENT

Academic Disciplines

The required subject areas are Fine Arts (Art, Drama, and Music), Health, Language Arts (English, Oral Presentation, Phonics/Word Analysis, Reading/Literature, Spelling/Vocabulary, and Writing), Mathematics, Physical Education, Religion, Science, Social Science, and Technology.

Religious Education (Faith Formation)

The curriculum developed by the Religious Education Office and the Catholic Schools Office is followed by all teachers of religion and integrated into other subjects when possible and appropriate. The General Directory for Catechesis, The Catechism of the Catholic Church, and the National Directory for Catechesis serve as the basic sources for the religion curriculum. Church teaching defines parents' role as the primary educator of their children. The priority given to their faith formation as parents, as well as their direct involvement in the faith formation of their children, is essential to making this role a reality.

The principal has the discretion to permit classroom instruction to be streamed live online, recorded, or both, to provide remote learning for the benefit of students.

Sacramental Program

The sacramental life of the children of the Catholic tradition is an important component of the religion program at St. Mary Nativity Catholic School. Students in grades Kindergarten through eighth grade attend weekly school Mass. Additional class Masses may be offered weekly to Middle School students. Preparations for three sacraments, Reconciliation and Eucharist in Grade 2, and Confirmation in the 8th grade form the core of instruction. Following the diocesan guidelines, candidates for the First Eucharist will receive the sacrament of Reconciliation before the First Eucharist.

Parents are required to be active partners in the preparation of their children for these sacraments. The sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist are only conferred on students baptized in the Roman Catholic tradition.

Graduation requirements/Constitution

Students in schools are promoted to the next grade in accordance with the stated policies and curriculum of the school. Promotion relates to students matriculating to their second (or third) year of preschool or advancing to kindergarten through 8th grade.

Graduation relates to students who are advancing beyond 8th grade. Students may not be promoted or graduate unless they have completed the curricular and behavioral expectations of the school. Curricular expectations must reflect the required curricular time allotments of the Diocese. Students may not graduate without a passing score on the Constitution tests of the United States and the State of Illinois.

No graduation or other exercise that signifies the termination of school sessions may take place earlier than a week before the closing date of the school year.

- American Patriotism (study of American history and recitation of the daily pledge of allegiance). Each school shall recite the Pledge of Allegiance daily.

Field Trips: Field trips are designed to enhance, enrich, and reinforce classroom instruction. Attendance for a field trip is a privilege, not a right. Students with challenges with in-school behavior that have been unsatisfactory may be prohibited from attending a field trip. Parents will be informed in advance of a field trip as to the educational purpose, method of transportation, expense, and other pertinent information related to the field trip.

From time to time, students may participate in activities brought to St. Mary Nativity Catholic School by outside educational sources.

Parental attendance at field trips is subject to space limitations of the field trip venue and the teacher's discretion. Only parents or guardians may serve as chaperones when requested by the teacher. Any person attending such a field trip must be Safe Environment trained and certified.

Academic Probation: A student whose academic performance indicates serious deficiencies may be placed on academic probation. Academic probation is for students who *can* learn but are not achieving up to their capabilities.

Students on academic probation will be placed on a two-week improvement plan. At the end of the two weeks, the student's academic progress will be assessed. Students whose average is an F will not be allowed to participate in any sport or academic competition until the grade has improved to a passing grade of D (70% or higher).

Promotion Policy/Retention/Transfer Policy: Advancement to the next grade in St. Mary Nativity Catholic School is based on a student's daily performance, test results, recommendations of teachers, and the student's ability to complete work successfully on a more advanced level.

Promotion to the next grade depends on successful completion of all subject areas. The student's final grade is based on the numerical average of each 9-week numerical percentage grade. The Administration may recommend the repetition of a grade, tutoring, or summer school classes as a requirement for promotion when, after conferences with teachers and parents, it is believed that such action will better prepare the student academically or emotionally for the next grade.

To pass a subject for the year, a student must have earned at least a D average after averaging the grades of each of the four nine-week periods.

Homework: A formal home study is assigned to help students become self-reliant and self-directed. Assignments are designed to reinforce daily lessons, to supplement and enrich class work, and to prepare for certain lessons through various experiences. Homework may sometimes be submitted digitally.

FAILURE TO COMPLETE HOMEWORK will also result in a deduction from the subject matter grade for which the homework was due. The amount of deduction will depend on the point value of the particular missed homework.

GRADING AND REPORTING PROCEDURES

Grading Scale

A	94 – 100
B	86 – 93
C	78 - 85
D	70 – 77
F	Below 70

Report Cards/Progress Reports

Report Cards are important tools for communication. Report Cards will be issued four times during the academic school year, or every nine weeks.

Progress Reports are always available on FACTS SIS®. No student will be given a Progress Report or Report Card if tuition, library fines, or Before- or After-School Care program fees are in arrears.

SCHOOL CALENDAR/REQUIRED INSTRUCTIONAL DAYS

The school day and school calendars shall be scheduled by the administration, within the requirements of state law and regulations, to offer the greatest educational advantage and reflect at least 180 full instructional days. Of the 180 full instructional days, four (4) days can be used for local Staff Development. A school calendar should have at a minimum 176 total student attendance days. This may also be counted as 968 hours. Hours are allowed per the Illinois School Code.

A full day of instruction for grades 1-8 shall consist of at least five and one-half (5 ½) hours per day, excluding time for lunch, recess periods, class bathroom breaks, announcements, etc. In the Diocese of Joliet, this accounts for the five (5) hour requirement from the Illinois State Board of Education, plus an additional one-half (½) hour for daily religion instruction.

All members of the professional staff shall be expected to be on duty before and after regular school hours to plan and to carry out their individual professional responsibilities.

Student attendance days totaling less than five and one-half hours (5 ½) may be taken but will only count for a half day of the 176-day student attendance total.

E-LEARNING DAYS

The health and safety of students and staff are a primary concern for every school principal. Occasionally, conditions beyond the control of the principal that pose a hazardous threat to the health and safety of students and staff, including adverse weather such as snow, ice, extreme heat, or extreme cold etc., may result in a school closure.

If schools can provide e-learning instruction for students, then that day can count as a day of instruction and does not need to be made up. In accordance with the Illinois State Board of Education, the Catholic Schools Office will allow up to five (5) e-learning days to be used per school year.

SCHOOL HOURS

Students not in classrooms at 8:00 a.m. are considered tardy. Students who arrive by carline at the gym entrance must be dropped off between 7:30 and 8:00 a.m. Students arriving late must enter through the main office door.

At St. Mary Nativity Catholic School, we work in partnership with parents to enable each child to develop as an independent learner. Parents must allow their child(ren) to enter the school building on their own each morning.

It is the responsibility of the parent to contact the school when a child is absent or needs other transportation arrangements to be made. **Except for emergency changes to a child's normal pickup, the school office must be notified of transportation changes by a note to the child's homeroom teacher during morning attendance or a call to the main office. Changes in afternoon transportation will only be made in emergencies.**

Teachers are on duty at 7:15 a.m. to supervise arrivals and at 2:45 p.m. to supervise departures.

Prayer and afternoon announcements begin at 2:45 p.m. each day. Dismissal immediately follows. Please check the school calendar, School Website, or FACTS® for early dismissal dates.

SCHOOL AFTER CARE

St. Mary Nativity Catholic School offers an after-care program for an additional monthly fee. Except in emergency circumstances, students must be registered in the After Care program before attending. Please call the school office during business hours for additional information.

Students not picked up by the end of the afternoon carpool will be sent immediately to the After Care program, and parents may be required to register and be charged a fee.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Absences: St. Mary Nativity Catholic School follows applicable state laws regarding mandatory school attendance as required by the Diocese of Joliet and Illinois. All absences are designated as either excused or unexcused.

The St. Mary Nativity Catholic School Day begins at 8:00 a.m. and concludes at 2:45 p.m. Except on the first Wednesday of the month, that is an early release day (dismissal is at 1:30 pm).

REQUIRED DAILY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE (ABSENTEEISM AND TRUANCY POLICY)

COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE

A daily student attendance record must be kept in each school. Attendance in class is an essential aspect of our educational program. Illinois law requires that whoever has custody or control of any child between the ages of six (6) and nineteen (19) (and in high school) must ensure that the child attends school the entire time school is in session during the regular school term, except as otherwise provided by law. Parents and/or

guardians having legal custody of school-age children are responsible for ensuring the regular attendance of their children in school.

The Catholic Schools Office requires that parents/guardians ensure the regular attendance of their children, consistent with the Illinois School Code, and inform the school of any absences and the causes of such absences. A telephone call by the parent or guardian is required on the first day and each subsequent day of absence or tardiness. A written excuse signed by the parent/guardian may also be required upon the child's return to school.

ABSENTEEISM

Each building principal is responsible for maintaining an effective system for recording student absences and for encouraging students to be prompt and to attend class on a regular basis. Absences are categorized as excused or unexcused. Valid causes of absenteeism (excused), as listed in the Illinois School Code, are:

- Illness (including mental or behavioral health of the student).
- Observance of a religious holiday.
- Death in the immediate family.
- Family emergency.
- Circumstances that cause reasonable concern to the parent or guardian for the student's mental, emotional, or physical health or safety.
- Other situations beyond the control of the student, as determined by the principal and pastor.

Additionally, a student will be excused for up to five (5) days in cases where the student's parent/guardian is an active-duty member of the uniformed services and has been called to duty, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat-support postings.

To reduce or prevent excessive absenteeism, the school maintains a procedure to:

- Track and provide early identification of potentially harmful attendance practices.
- Provide a progressive, multi-level plan toward remediation of the problem.
- Provide supportive services to truant or chronically truant students, including parent conferences, student counseling, family counseling, and information about existing community services.

TRUANCY

The Catholic Schools Office considers a student who is subject to compulsory school attendance truant if he/she is absent for the school day or a portion of the school day without an excused absence. The Illinois State Board of Education provides additional resources and guidelines for truancy.

CHRONIC TRUANCY

The Catholic Schools Office considers a student who is subject to compulsory school attendance a chronic or habitual truant if he/she is absent for 10% or more of regular attendance days without proper permission. Students who are chronic truants will be offered support services and resources aimed at correcting the truancy issue.

When a student misses school, they miss learning. Absences from school are not conducive to the mission of the Diocese of Joliet Schools or St. Mary Nativity Catholic School's educational program.

Absence Calls – In case of an absence or tardiness, the parent/guardian is required to report the absence between 7:30 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. by calling (815) 722-8518. A call by the parent/guardian is required on every day of the absence. If a student is absent from school and the school has not been notified by 9:00 a.m., we are required by law to contact the student's parent or guardian.

Parents/guardians will be contacted by the school office. Parents/guardians must provide and maintain at least one valid, current telephone number where the parent/guardian or another responsible adult can be reached in the event of an emergency.

Absence Notes – If a parent or guardian does not report the absence and our office fails to make contact with the parent/guardian, a written excuse signed by the parent/guardian must be brought to school upon the student's return to school. If a student has been absent for three or more days, a doctor's note may be required.

Students should be fever-free without the assistance of medication for 24 hours before returning to school. Parents of students who are ill (persistent runny nose not due to allergy, vomiting, persistent coughing, etc.) will be called to check their child out of school. Students who are sent home during the school day with a fever or other symptoms of illness will not be allowed to return to school the next day, as this would not allow for the 24-hour protection of the entire school community.

St. Mary Nativity Catholic School has a strict **no-nit policy**. Any student suspected of having head lice will be sent home.

A written statement giving reasons for the absence or tardiness **must** be brought to the student's teacher upon the student's return. These notes/letters will be retained in the office for one year. Should absence for any reason other than illness seem imperative, parents are requested to consult with the principal and present a written reason for the absence.

Students who are absent due to illness have one day for each day of absence to make up the missed assignments, quizzes, or tests. For example, a student who was absent for three days would be given three school days to complete the missed work.

Students who are absent on the day of scheduled tests and/or quizzes are expected to take the tests and/or quizzes the day they return to school. Students who are absent on the date of a pre-scheduled project, essay, etc., are still expected to turn in the assignment on the **original due date**. They may be submitted digitally if allowed by the teacher.

When a student is absent due to illness or quarantine, the teacher will post the assignment online, and if the student is able, he/she can submit the assignment digitally.

Unexcused Absences: Arrangements for regular classroom tests missed because of an unexcused absence are to be made with the individual teachers. In most cases, tests must be taken on the date of return. There should be no expectation of receiving assignments before an unexcused absence.

The school calendar provides for extended weekends throughout the school year. Parents are encouraged to schedule trips or family outings during these times to eliminate the need to interrupt a child's learning

process. Missed assignments are the student's responsibility. If allowed by the teacher, homework may be submitted digitally.

The teacher will not be expected to reteach a lesson or missed concepts. Students who are absent during the regular school day may not participate in after-school sports or clubs on that day.

Absence During the School Day: If possible, parents should avoid medical appointments during the school day. Students who miss three and a half hours of the school day will receive a half-day credit. Students must be present for more than three and a half hours of the school day to receive a full day's credit.

Tardy Arrivals: St. Mary Nativity Catholic School begins its school day at 8:00 a.m. promptly. Instructional time begins immediately following the morning bell. Failure to arrive on time may result in disciplinary actions being taken.

WEATHER EMERGENCIES: If it should be necessary to close the school because of weather conditions, a message will be sent to the home phone, cell phone, and e-mail account listed on a student's file via the Admin Notify emergency notification system. All parental and emergency contacts of a student must remain current and updated as needed.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Bus Transportation: Our bus schedule is determined and coordinated with the District 86 Transportation Office. Bus drivers have the right to refuse extra students who are not on their regularly scheduled route.

Students of St. Mary Nativity Catholic School will not be allowed to leave the campus or church grounds through rented or professional driving services such as limousines or party buses.

Morning Drop Off and Afternoon Pick Up: Parents are asked to cooperate with teachers and essential volunteers who will be on duty at the car line. Parents are asked to pay close attention during the carline process. **By law, cell phones may not be used at this time.** Please follow the traffic directions given by the teachers on duty.

Drop Off: Any student not arriving at school via a District 86 school bus is required to arrive by 8:00 a.m. The District 86 bus takes precedence over personal vehicles. Please pull to the right and allow buses to proceed to the front of the line when needed. Drop off is at the school gym entrance.

Pick Up: All cars should park in the NW Parish parking lot. Initial signs will be provided by the school. Parents are asked to line up in front of their parked vehicles by the set cones and follow the duty teacher's instructions to proceed to the pickup area. When dismissing, students are not allowed to walk to a parked car without a teacher or administrator escort.

SCHOOL OFFICE HOURS: The school office is open on all school days from **7:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

All parents are to fill out and return a Student Information Card, which lists persons who are authorized to sign students out of school. An ID will be required to be shown by any individual who requests to check a student out of school. Visitors to the school must report to the school office to sign in and receive a Visitor badge.

Visitors are asked, when possible, to make arrangements with the school before coming to campus. No one other than faculty and staff members is allowed to go to or enter a classroom without a Visitor badge.

CRISIS PLAN

St. Mary Nativity Catholic School has implemented a “crisis plan” in case of a lockdown emergency. Our Emergency Notification System will be activated as soon as safely possible to keep all parents informed during the event. **During a lockdown, no student will be admitted or released from campus.** All teachers and staff are aware of the procedure to follow to keep your children safe.

In the event of an emergency, circumstances permitting, the building will be evacuated, and students will be moved to a designated secure location. If an off-campus evacuation is necessary, parents will be notified and advised as the situation is resolved. Students will not be released until the administration deems the circumstances safe.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

State Law requires that **fire drills** be held monthly. During the fire drills, students should follow these regulations:

1. Rise in silence when the alarm sounds;
2. Walk to the assigned place briskly, in single file at all times, and in silence;
3. Stand facing away from the building;
4. Return to the building when the all-clear signal is given.

Tornado drills are held periodically. The procedures are:

1. Rise in silence when the alarm sounds;
2. Walk briskly to the assigned place in a single file;
3. Sit, face the wall, and put your hands over your head;
4. Return to the classroom when the all-signal is given.

Lockdown drills are held periodically. The procedures are:

1. Classroom doors are locked, and all windows are covered.
2. Classroom lights are extinguished.
3. Absolute silence is maintained.
4. No students or adults are allowed to leave the classrooms for any reason until the all-clear signal is given.

Parents will be notified as soon as possible when an actual emergency has occurred. Emergency procedures may be modified if updated guidance is provided by the diocesan or civil authorities.

DRUGS, WEAPONS, ATTACKS ON SCHOOL PERSONNEL & REPORTING DRUG VIOLATIONS TO AUTHORITIES

Each school shall follow the provisions of the School Reporting of Drug Violations Act, 105 ILCS 127, which provides that the superintendent, principal of the school, or their designee shall report all instances of “drug violations” to local law enforcement officials or to the office of the county sheriff of the municipality or county where the school is located. In such an instance, a Diocesan incident form must be completed and sent to The Catholic Schools Office.

A “drug violation” is when any of the following occurs on school property, on a public way within 1,000 feet of a school, or on any property owned, leased, or contracted by a school to transport students to or from school or to or from a school-related activity:

- A person knowingly manufactures, delivers, or possesses with intent to deliver, or manufacture, cannabis in a school, in violation of the Cannabis Control Act, 720 ILCS 550, Section 5.2; or
- A person delivers a controlled, counterfeit or look-alike substance to a person under 18 years of age, in violation of the Illinois Controlled Substances Act, 720 ILCS 570, Sections 401(b) and or 407; or
- A person knowingly possesses, procures, transports, stores, or delivers any methamphetamine precursor or substance containing any methamphetamine precursor in standard dosage form with the intent that it be used to manufacture methamphetamine or a substance containing methamphetamine, in violation of the Methamphetamine Control and Community Protection Act, 720 ILCS 646 et seq.

Reporting: Upon receiving any report from any school personnel regarding a verified incident involving drugs in a school or on school-owned or leased property, the superintendent or his or her designee shall report such drug-related incident occurring in a school or school property to the local law enforcement authorities immediately and to the Illinois State Police. Reports to the Illinois State Police can be made through the School Incident Reporting System (“SIRS”), a web-based application used by schools to report incidents electronically. Note that reporting through SIRS does not satisfy the requirement to report the incident to local law enforcement authorities as well. 105 ILCS 5/10-27.1B The school notifies the parents or guardians of students in possession of drug violations.

REPORTING FIREARMS ON SCHOOL PROPERTY TO AUTHORITIES

Upon receiving any report from any school personnel regarding a known or suspected incident involving a firearm in a school or on school-owned or leased property, the principal shall immediately notify the superintendent or their designee and shall report such firearm-related incident to the local law enforcement and the Illinois State Police no later than 24 hours after the occurrence of the incident. . The school will immediately notify the parents or guardians of students in possession of firearms on property or within 48 hours of becoming aware of the incident if off-property. In such an instance, a Diocesan incident form must be completed and sent to the Catholic Schools Office.

REPORTING ATTACKS ON SCHOOL PERSONNEL TO AUTHORITIES

Upon receipt of a written complaint from any school personnel, the school is required to report all incidents of battery committed against any school employee (e.g., principals, teachers, aides, secretaries, custodians) to the local law enforcement authorities immediately after the occurrence of the attack and to the Illinois State Police’s Illinois Uniform Crime Reporting Program no later than 3 days after the occurrence of the attack. Additionally, all incidents of battery should be reported to the superintendent. In such an instance, a Diocesan incident form must be completed and sent to the Catholic Schools Office.

Students are not permitted to use the teacher's cell phone at any time.

CELL PHONES/ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Students needing cell phones, tablets, e-readers, and/or any electronic devices for after-school hours must bring the cell phone or electronic device to the drop-off locker upon arrival in the morning and must place the cell phone in the off position for the day. These devices may be picked up by the student at dismissal. At no time during the day can a cell phone be used or be in a student’s possession. AirPods/headphones are also not allowed. St. Mary Nativity Catholic School is not responsible for any damaged or lost devices.

Confiscated items will be returned at the end of the school day. If a second offense occurs, confiscated items will be held until picked up by a parent or guardian.

Child Abuse Laws

St. Mary Nativity Catholic School abides by the Child Abuse laws of the State of Illinois. Administration, faculty, and staff members of St. Mary's Nativity School are mandated reporters. This law mandates that all cases of **suspected** abuse and/or neglect be reported to Child Protective Services.

CHILD ABUSE/EMPLOYEE MANDATED REPORTING

According to the revised Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, all employees are mandated to report suspicion of abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Family Services. According to the Illinois School Code, licenses/certificates may be suspended and/or revoked if there is proof that professional school personnel had knowledge of suspected child abuse and/or neglect and did not report it.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

No student shall be disciplined corporally or corrected with abusive, demeaning language.

DISCIPLINARY POLICIES

Following the stated philosophy of the school, which emphasizes deep respect for the human dignity and uniqueness of every individual, each student will be considerate of the rights of others in all interactions. All students are expected to cooperate with the spirit and policies of the school, which are designed to foster mature development and personal responsibility. This requires courtesy in all personal relationships, promptness in fulfilling obligations, concern for the environment, and many other factors that the students' sense of appropriateness will indicate to them.

The principal or pastor reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of an action if any doubt arises.

Items such as, but not limited to, e-cigarettes, questionable books and pictures, knives, guns, matches, cigarettes, toys, hand sanitizers, trading cards, laser lights, CDs, cameras, or anything that would detract from a learning situation are not allowed at school at any time. Key chains and toys should not be attached to student backpacks.

The school administration, per state laws, will determine the appropriate disciplinary measures to be taken concerning the presence of these items in the school. **Items taken away from students will be returned to the parent(s)/guardian(s) after a conference with the administration.**

St. Mary Nativity Catholic School uses a virtue-based disciplinary policy when undesirable behavior initially occurs. This form of discipline frequently involves reflection periods and restoration for the harm. When these attempts have failed, each homeroom teacher has designed his/her method of classroom discipline policy, which affects the students' conduct grade per 9-week period.

Any member of the St. Mary Nativity Catholic School faculty and staff can record a disciplinary infraction against a student. When the disciplinary infraction is of a serious nature that requires corrective action, the staff member will record the student's disciplinary infraction on an office referral and will forward the form to the administrative office for review. The issuance of a referral form will result in disciplinary actions as

determined by the administration. Completed disciplinary infraction forms will be maintained in the student's records.

Cheating

Cheating of any type will not be tolerated. Students who choose to cheat face a failing grade of zero, detention, suspension, and/or expulsion. A student-athlete or student involved in extra-curricular activities who is involved in cheating will also be unable to participate in sports/extra-curricular competitions.

Detention

Detention may be issued for a breach of classroom and/or school rules. Parents are provided with a Referral Form with written notification of the detention. The day, date, and time of the detention are at the discretion of the principal, who monitors the detention. **Detention takes precedence over appointments, practices, lessons, tutoring, ballgames, etc.**

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Suspension

Students who are given an in-school suspension will be required to report to school each day and work in a separate classroom under teacher supervision. Students who receive an out-of-school suspension will not be allowed on campus or to participate in any extra-curricular activities during the time of their suspension. Students must complete and turn in all missed classwork and take tests from the days of suspension on the day following the suspension.

Expulsion

Expulsion is an extremely serious matter. Students who pose a threat to themselves or others may be expelled from St. Mary Nativity Catholic School. Students who have been expelled will not be allowed to return to the school for any reason without prior permission from the principal.

Students whose parents have violated the Parents as Partners agreement in this handbook may also be excluded from St. Mary Nativity Catholic School.

Prohibited Substances

Smoking in any form is not allowed on campus. This includes the use of e-cigarettes, cigars, cigarettes, pipes, tobacco of any type, marijuana, or vapors.

Students who possess drugs and/or alcohol at school or any school function face suspension and/or expulsion.

Students who possess any object that could reasonably be considered a weapon at school or any school function face suspension or expulsion.

Off-Campus Conduct

The administration of St. Mary Nativity Catholic School reserves the right to discipline its students not only for disruptions during the academic day but also for off-campus behavior that is not in line with the behavioral expectations of its students during the school day. This off-campus behavior includes but is not limited to cyberbullying.

ANTI-BULLYING/HARASSMENT ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

All elementary and secondary schools in the Diocese of Joliet shall actively seek to provide a supportive, caring environment in which all persons are safe from all forms of intimidation, including bullying, which is unacceptable, un-Christian, and strictly prohibited. For the purpose of this policy, bullying is defined in conformity with Illinois law as follows: “Any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

- Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student’s or students’ person or property.
- Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student’s or students’ physical or mental health.
- Substantially interfering with the student’s or students’ academic performance; or
- Substantially interfering with the student’s or students’ ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

BULLYING CONDUCT

Bullying conduct covered by this policy is conduct that occurs on school property or at school-sponsored activities or events; while students are being transported or walking to or from school or school-sponsored activities or events; while students are waiting at school bus stops; or cyberbullying as defined hereinafter.

CYBER BULLYING

This policy prohibits bullying and intimidation of students through the use of the internet and social media sites on any electronic device (private, public, or school-owned), whether on or off the school campus, or during non-school hours.

Any student who engages in bullying will be subject to appropriate discipline, up to and including suspension or expulsion and referral to local law enforcement. Behavioral interventions may be included as a component of the disciplinary actions. This may include, but is not limited to, mandatory counseling.

Retaliatory behavior by a student accused of bullying will also incur consequences. False accusations of bullying will result in disciplinary action taken against the accuser.

Any reported bullying issue will be promptly brought to the attention of the appropriate party (the pastor or the principal, or designee) and thereafter investigated.

St. Mary Nativity Catholic School attempts to provide a safe environment for all individuals. Verbal or written threats made against the physical or emotional well-being of any person are taken very seriously.

TECHNOLOGY USE OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

Schools are encouraged to utilize the latest instructional technology to benefit student learning. Each school shall develop a local technology plan that details how technology is purchased, maintained, upgraded, and leveraged to support instruction. No software or technological materials shall be used unless licensed in accordance with the manufacturer and provider requirements.

The use of technology and the internet in education carries both great promise and great responsibility. Therefore:

- Students have access to and practical experience with technology, including the internet.

- Technology is integrated into areas of the school curriculum.
- Social justice implications of an increasingly technological society are taught; and
- Moral and legal issues concerning internet access and related technology use are taught to students and respected by each school community.

The Diocesan document, Acceptable Use Agreement, must be utilized by each local school. Each student and parent(s)/guardian(s) sign the document annually. Students and their parents or guardians are advised that the Diocese of Joliet Catholic schools may not request or require a student to provide a password or other related account information in order to gain access to a student's account or profile on a social networking website. The school principal may conduct an investigation if there is reasonable cause to believe the content of a student's social media account has violated a disciplinary rule or policy of the school. The law allows that in the course of an investigation, the student may be required to share the content that is reported in order to make a factual determination.

Students are not allowed to use phones or other devices to take photos or make videos of other students in class or anywhere on the school campus. Students involved in possession or transmission of any photos/videos, including inappropriate photos on their cell phones or other electronic devices, face suspension and/or expulsion. Following the law, Authorities will be notified of inappropriate photos or videos.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Employees shall not initiate text messaging with individual students and should restrict any text exchanges to professional purposes only. Employees should exercise extreme care when interacting with students through social media; it is highly recommended that employees not engage in such communication. Employees should be aware that electronic communications and social media can affect their employment status if used inappropriately with students.

Employees shall not be on their phones or any other personal electronic devices while engaged in professional responsibilities.

Social Media

Engagement in online social media, such as, but not limited to Facebook®, Instagram®, Snapchat®, etc., or any student or parent-created groups may result in disciplinary actions if the content of the student's or parent's post defamatory comments regarding the school, the faculty, the administration, other students, other parents, or the parish.

Unless **written** permission is granted, a student may not record either teachers or administrators.

No parent or student should open a Facebook®, Instagram®, Snapchat®, Group Me, etc. account under the name of the school or in reference to the school, faculty, or administration. The **only official** St. Mary Nativity Catholic School Facebook® page or Instagram is the one created and monitored by the St. Mary Nativity Catholic School administration. Group informational apps such as GroupMe® or Remind® are allowed only if established by the classroom teacher who will remain the administrator of the account. A parent who chooses to create such an account may subject his/her child(ren) to separation from the school.

PHOTOS AND VIDEOS OF STUDENTS

School employees may take pictures of students with personal cell phones or cameras, provided photos are not posted on social media until approval is obtained from administration. Photos with school-owned devices are permissible for official reasons, 9 CSO 2025, and if the permission of the parent/guardian has been granted through a Photo/Video Release Form.

Social Media Postings of Student Photographs

St. Mary Nativity Catholic School works to protect the confidentiality rights of all students. The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1973 (FERPA) and the Child Protection Act of 2012 (CPA) were designed to protect personally identifiable information of minors. St. Mary Nativity Catholic School adheres to these laws in its attempt to protect the privacy rights of all students. As a result, the parents of students enrolled at St. Mary Nativity Catholic School are forbidden from posting photographs taken at school-sponsored events that include images of **students other than their own** on their personal Facebook®, Instagram®, Snapchat®, etc. pages. Such postings are a violation of St. Mary Nativity Catholic School's adherence to FERPA and the Child Protection Act. The students of parents who post such photos may be separated from St. Mary Nativity Catholic School.

HOME SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

To maintain effective communication between home and school, a weekly Parent Bulletin and monthly calendars are sent to parents by email through the school's administrative program. When necessary, reminders or announcements are sent by text message. Your contact information must be kept current and on file in the school office at all times.

The preferred method of electronic communication between parents and teachers is through the teacher's official diocesan email or via FACTS. Teachers should always be contacted first in academic or classroom disciplinary matters before administrative assistance is sought. Other than in emergencies, replies to phone messages or emails should be received within two school days. The use of class "Group Me" or Class Dojo is at the teacher's discretion and is not to be considered as a primary source of communication.

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SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

St. Mary Nativity Catholic School offers a hot/cold breakfast and lunch, which is provided by the Archdiocese each day. Students are encouraged to eat these meals daily.

For 2025-2026, students are not required to bring a medical verification to bring lunches from home. When lunch is brought from home, it must be in a sealed container free of packaging labels. These meals should reflect the student's dietary needs. Restaurant meals, soda, and candy are prohibited.

Students in Prek-3, Prek-4, and Kindergarten will eat breakfast in their classrooms.

STUDENT RECORDS

Parents/Guardians are requested to notify the School Office in writing of any changes in address, custody arrangements, home telephone numbers, cell phone numbers, business phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and/or phone numbers of emergency contacts. This will guarantee that office records are accurate, complete, and up-to-date **in case of any kind of emergency.**

ITEMS BROUGHT TO SCHOOL

St. Mary Nativity Catholic School is not responsible for loss or damage to any items brought to school by a student, including all electronic devices.

LIBRARY

St. Mary Nativity Catholic School students visit the library as a class once per week. At this time, students may check out books for a specified period of time. It is preferred that students check out books on the school's Reader list when available.

DAMAGE TO SCHOOL PROPERTY

The parent of a child who carelessly destroys or damages any furniture, equipment, buildings, or anyone's personal property will be obligated to pay the full amount of repairs and labor or replacement. Writing in textbooks is not permitted. The student will pay a fine or replacement for damaged or lost texts or library books before any final reports, transcripts, or grades are presented. A separate technology use and liability contract is sent home at the beginning of the school year.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

The school reserves the right to search personal property brought on school grounds or at school functions if reasonable suspicion exists that prohibited material is present. This includes cell phones and other electronic devices.

SERVICE PROJECTS

The purpose of the stewardship program for students in pre-K through 8th grade is to provide students with the opportunity to make a difference in our church and surrounding communities through various service and support programs. Each grade will have the opportunity to participate in pre-planned service projects benefiting various community organizations throughout the school year. Additionally, some grades may be required to seek additional service opportunities per nine-week period.

UNIFORM POLICY

St. Mary's Nativity School students must wear the school-approved uniforms. All uniform items must be labeled with the student's name.

Pre-K3 & Pre-K4 Uniforms

Boys:

- light blue knit or Oxford long or short sleeve uniform shirt with the St. Mary Nativity Catholic School official logo
- Khaki shorts or long pants without a belt or button closure
- solid white or navy crew socks
- solid black or navy-blue athletic shoes with Velcro® fasteners

Girls:

- light blue Peter Pan-type collar or Oxford long or short sleeve uniform shirt with the St. Mary Nativity Catholic School official logo
- plaid uniform jumper with the St. Mary Nativity Catholic School official logo
- Khaki or plaid uniform shorts or navy pants without a belt or button closure

- solid black or navy-blue athletic shoes with Velcro® fasteners
- solid white or navy crew socks – no lace
- solid white or navy tights – no leggings
- socks must be worn with tights

Kindergarten through 4th Grade Uniforms

Boys:

- light blue knit or Oxford long or short sleeve uniform shirt with the St. Mary Nativity Catholic School official logo
- Khaki uniform, short or long pants with belt loops
- plain black or navy belt, solid white or navy crew socks
- solid black or navy athletic shoes
- Kindergarten shoes must have Velcro®. First-grade through 4th grade must have laces.

Girls:

- light blue Peter Pan-type collar or Oxford long or short sleeve uniform shirt with the St. Mary Nativity Catholic School official school logo
- plaid uniform jumper with the St. Mary Nativity Catholic School official logo
- plaid shorts
- Khaki shorts or long pants
- plain black or navy belt
- solid black or navy athletic shoes – no Mary Janes
- solid white or navy crew socks – no lace
- solid white or navy tights – no leggings
- socks must be worn with tights
- Kindergarten shoes must have Velcro®. First-grade through 4th grade must have laces.

5th through 8th Grade Uniforms

Boys:

- light blue knit or Oxford long or short sleeve uniform shirt with the St. Mary Nativity Catholic School official logo
- Khaki uniform, short or long pants with belt loops
- plain black or navy belt, solid white or navy crew socks
- solid black or navy athletic shoes with laces

Girls:

- blue Oxford long or short sleeve uniform shirt with the St. Mary Nativity Catholic School official logo
- school plaid skirts
- plaid or navy shorts with a belt
- Khaki pants with a belt
- solid black or navy-blue athletic shoes
- solid white or navy crew socks – no lace
- solid white or navy tights – no leggings
- socks must be worn with tights

- solid black or navy-blue athletic shoes with laces

Please note that all uniform skirts, jumpers, and shorts are to be no shorter than two inches above the crease of the back of the knee. Shorts worn under the skirt or jumper are to be no shorter than four inches above the crease at the back of the knee.

Cold Weather Outerwear

Tommy Hilfiger is the sole online provider of St. Mary Nativity Catholic School outerwear. Coey's Closet is our local vendor. Therefore, ALL outerwear items must be purchased through *our vendors*. Used outerwear can be purchased through the school's uniform shop when available. In extremely cold temperatures, students may wear heavier coats over their sweatshirts.

Students in all grades may wear only the outerwear described below:

Accessories such as hats, gloves, scarves, etc., can be purchased elsewhere. However, all items must be the uniform colors of navy, maroon, gray, light blue, or white.

Additional Uniform Rules

1. On Mass days after October 1, students are not allowed to wear shorts.
2. Students may wear solid white, short-sleeved under-shirts under the uniform shirt.
3. Solid navy athletic, uniform plaid, or specific PE shorts **must** be worn under jumpers and skirts. Shorts should be no shorter than **four** inches above the crease on the back of the knee.
4. Undergarments must not be visible through the uniform.
5. No ankle socks or socks with logos or decorations are allowed.
6. Students are not allowed to write on body parts at any time.
7. All school uniforms must be maintained throughout the school year. This **includes** condition and length.

Spirit Shirts may be worn on Fridays only. The current year's Spirit Shirt and previous years' Spirit Shirts in good condition may be worn.

NOTE: Special T-shirts and sweatshirts will be worn by eighth-grade students beginning in 2025 – 2026.

STUDENT CULTURAL HAIRSTYLES

Illinois Public Act 102-0360PDF Document, known as the Jett Hawkins Law, prevents school boards, local school councils, charter schools, and non-public elementary and secondary schools from creating hairstyle-based dress code requirements. Specifically, the Public Act prohibits discriminating against hairstyles historically associated with race, ethnicity, or hair texture, including, but not limited to, protective hairstyles such as braids, locks, and twists.

MODIFICATION OF ATHLETIC/PE UNIFORMS

The school may allow student athletes to modify their athletic or team uniform for the purpose of modesty in clothing or attire that is in accordance with the requirements of the student's religion, cultural values, or modesty preferences.

BIRTHDAY OBSERVANCES

Students in Grades Pre-K through Grade 8 may come to school dressed out of uniform on their birthday or half-birthday (if their birthday falls during the summer months). Invitations for personal parties may only be distributed at school if an invitation is extended to ALL students, all girls, or all boys in the student's class. Special treats (donuts, cupcakes, etc.) may only be brought to school on the student's birthday or the school day before or after a weekend birthday with the teacher's permission.

SPECIAL DRESS-DOWN DAYS

When students are allowed to dress out of uniform, the following guidelines must be adhered to:

- no jeans with holes
- no jeggings or leggings
- no sleeveless shirts
- no hats in class or church
- no boots, open-toe, or sandals
- **shorts should be no shorter than four inches above the crease on the back of the knee**
- Athletic shoes must be worn on scheduled PE days
- Administration reserves the right to amend this policy at any time

JEWELRY AND GROOMING

Hair must always be worn off the face. No fad or disruptive hairstyles/ hair ornaments are allowed. Ribbons, bows, and headbands must be in the school colors of navy, maroon, white, gray, school plaid, and/or light blue.

Boys' hair must be above the eyebrows, not longer than mid-ear, and off the collar.

Jewelry

- A watch and one religious bracelet may be worn.
- Apple Watches, FitBits, or any other watches or jewelry that connect to the internet are not allowed.
- One religious medal or necklace may be worn.
- No chokers are allowed.
- One set of non-dangling earrings is allowed.

Nails

- Only clear nail polish may be worn.
- No artificial nails of any kind are allowed.

Makeup

Girls in grades 6th through 8th are permitted to wear flesh-colored foundation, light blush, finishing powder, and clear lip balm only.

Good Rule: If you think you shouldn't wear it, you shouldn't.

All uniform regulations and guidelines are subject to the discretion of the principal.

The school's official uniform is an important part of the image of St. Mary Nativity Catholic School and should be treated as such. Any infraction Of the uniform policy will result in disciplinary actions.

INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS

Interscholastic Athletics are a part of the educational process and are consistent with the philosophy and goals of the Diocese and local school. The athletic program is an outgrowth of a sound physical education program and emphasizes good sportsmanship, teamwork, and personal development.

Each local school develops its own specific athletic philosophy, rules, regulations, and eligibility standards for interscholastic sports for boys and girls under direction provided by the Catholic Schools Office. This philosophy and its accompanying policies, rules, and regulations are developed under the direction of the principal in collaboration with the local school board and athletic personnel.

Eligibility standards are developed according to a school's athletic philosophy. When possible, regional consultation is sought before enacting such standards. Behavioral and academic criteria are considered in setting standards. Students who play on school teams should be students of the school, so that other eligibility standards can be maintained.

Every effort should be made to schedule athletic events so that they do not interfere with a family's attendance at liturgy. No games or practices are scheduled in a parish facility before the last Sunday morning or early afternoon liturgy has been completed.

The superintendent, in collaboration with the principals, develops administrative regulations general to the interscholastic athletic program and specific to the various sports.

Schools comply with these regulations or discontinue sports programs that repeatedly do not comply. All athletes in grades 4-8 must show proof of an annual sports physical. 6th-grade physicals, as well as sports physicals, are a requirement of the Diocese of Joliet. Students will not participate in practices or games if the physical requirement has not been met.

This information is required by law on the first day of school, with an extension time of October 1st for students who begin school on the first day. Any students entering school after the first day will be allowed 30 days from their entrance date to comply with this policy. Children may be excluded from school if they are not in compliance with the requirements.

In consideration of the philosophy outlined above, the following regulations shall govern participation in interscholastic athletics in the Catholic elementary schools:

CONCUSSION SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

A concussion is a traumatic brain injury that interferes with normal brain function. A student athlete does not have to lose consciousness to have suffered a concussion. Signs and symptoms of a concussion include the following:

Signs Observed by Others

Appears dazed or stunned
Appears confused
Forgets sports plays
Is unsure of game, score, opponent
Moves clumsily

Symptoms Reported by Athlete

Headache or "pressure in head"
Nausea
Balance problems or dizziness
Sensitivity to light or noise
Double or fuzzy vision

Answers questions slowly	Feeling sluggish or slowed down
Loses consciousness (even briefly)	Feeling foggy or groggy
Shows behavior or personality changes	Does not “feel right”
Can’t recall events prior to hit or fall	Concentration or memory problems
Can’t recall events after hit or fall	Confusion

REMOVAL AND RETURN TO PLAY

Any player who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion shall be immediately removed from the game or practice and shall not return to play until cleared in writing by a licensed health care professional. If a health care professional is not immediately available at the athletic event or practice and an injured student athlete has any of the described signs, symptoms or behaviors of a concussion, s/he shall be promptly taken to a facility for appropriate medical evaluation and care.

A player must be removed from an interscholastic athletics practice or competition immediately if one of the following persons believes the player might have sustained a concussion during the practice or competition:

- a coach;
- a physician;
- a game official;
- an athletic trainer
- the school administrator
- the student's parent or guardian or another person with legal authority to make medical decisions for the student;
- the student; or
- any other person deemed appropriate under the school's return-to-play protocol.

A student removed from an interscholastic athletics practice or competition may not be permitted to practice or compete again following the force or impact believed to have caused the concussion until:

- the student has been evaluated by a treating physician (chosen by the student or the student's parent or guardian) or an athletic trainer working under the supervision of a physician;
- the student has completed each requirement of the "return-to-play" and "return to learn" protocols established for the student to return to play;
- the treating physician or athletic trainer working under the supervision of a physician has provided a written statement indicating that, in the physician's professional judgment, it is safe for the student to return to play and return to learn; and
- the student and the student's parent or guardian have acknowledged that the student has completed the requirements of the "return-to-play" and "return-to-learn" protocols necessary for the student to return to play; have provided the treating physician's or athletic trainer's written statement and have signed a consent form indicating that the person signing has been informed and consents to the student participating in returning to play under the "return-to-play" and "return-to-learn" protocols and understands the risks associated with the student returning to play and returning to learn and will comply with any ongoing requirements in the "return-to-play" and "return-to-learn" protocols. A sample acknowledgement is found in the link below:

[http://www.ihsa.org/documents/forms/current/Post-concussion%20Consent%20Form%20\(RPT-RTL\).pdf](http://www.ihsa.org/documents/forms/current/Post-concussion%20Consent%20Form%20(RPT-RTL).pdf)

- A coach of an interscholastic athletics team may not authorize a student's return to play or return to learn.

LICENSED HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL

For purposes of this policy, licensed health care professional means physicians licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois and certified athletic trainers.

CONCUSSION POLICY/FACT SHEET

Information on the school's concussion and head injury policy must be a part of any agreement, contract, code, or other written instrument that a school requires a student-athlete and his/her parents or guardian to sign before participating in practice or interscholastic competition. The IHSA/IESA has provided a Concussion Information Sheet and Sign-Off Form that schools may use to notify athletes and their parents/guardians about the dangers of concussions and head injuries.

<http://www.iesa.org/documents/general/IESA-ConcussionSign-Off.pdf>

The parent/guardian of each student athlete and the student athlete shall receive annually a concussion information sheet, and they shall submit written verification(s) that they have read the information. A student athlete may not participate in practice or competition before the school's receipt of this written verification.

Each school shall also use education materials provided by the Illinois High School Association and Illinois Elementary School Association (see links below) to educate coaches, student-athletes, and parents/guardians of student-athletes about the nature and risk of concussions and head injuries, including continuing play after a concussion or head injury.

<http://www.ihsa.org/Resources/SportsMedicine/ConcussionManagement/ConcussionResources.aspx>

<https://www.iesa.org/activities/concussion.asp>

<https://www.ihsa.org/Resources/Sports-Medicine/Concussion-Management/Concussion-Resources>

CONCUSSION OVERSIGHT TEAMS (COT)

Each school shall form a Concussion Oversight Team (COT). The COT's primary function will be to develop return-to-play and return-to-learn protocols for students believed to have experienced a concussion. The protocols should be based on peer-reviewed scientific evidence consistent with guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. These teams can contain a range of individuals based on the resources available to the school in their community or neighborhood, but must include one person who is responsible for implementing and complying with the return-to-play and return-to-learn protocols.

Per the law, each concussion oversight team must include, to the extent practicable, at least one physician. If a school employs an athletic trainer, the athletic trainer must be a member of the school concussion oversight team to the extent practicable. If a school employs a nurse, the nurse must be a member of the school concussion oversight team to the extent practicable. At a minimum, a school shall appoint a person who is responsible for implementing and complying with the return-to-play and return-to-learn protocols adopted by the concussion oversight team. A school may appoint other licensed healthcare professionals to serve on the concussion oversight team. A coach may not serve on the COT. A School Administrator should be on the Concussion Oversight Team.

COACHES TRAINING

All interscholastic coaches and licensed officials will need to complete a training program of at least two hours on concussions. Coaches, nurses, and game officials must provide the school with proof of successful completion of the training. Training must be completed every two years. Head coaches and assistant coaches must complete the required training. Compliant courses are available on the IHSA and IESA websites. (A certificate of completion is required of each coach.) IESA member schools may access the course through the IESA Member Center. It is recommended that all elementary schools with athletics join the IESA for \$75 dues to allow access to these materials.

Each school must also develop a school-specific emergency action plan for interscholastic athletic activities to address the serious injuries and acute medical conditions in which the condition of the student may deteriorate rapidly. There are certain provisions the plan must include, and it must be reviewed by the COT before being approved by the school. The plan must be distributed to appropriate personnel, posted at the school, and reviewed annually. Links to sample information may be found below on the IESA website and the IHSA website.

http://www.ihsa.org/documents/forms/current/Emergency_Action_Plan_Form.pdf

GUIDELINES

The Superintendent or designee is authorized to issue Guidelines for the effective implementation of the requirements of this Policy.

COMPLIANCE

Failure to abide by this Policy or Guidelines will subject employees to discipline up to and including dismissal.

SOME ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

<http://www.ihsa.org/documents/sportsMedicine/Concussion%20Protocols.pdf>

<http://www.iesa.org/documents/general/IESA-ConcussionInfo.pdf>

http://www.cdc.gov/headsup/pdfs/schools/tbi_returning_to_school-a.pdf

http://www.cdc.gov/headsup/pdfs/policy/rtp_implementation-a.pdf

<http://www.ihsa.org/multimedia/articulate/2015-16/concussion/presentation.html>

<http://www.catholicmutual.org/Portals/0/Docs/Risk%20Mgmt/CARES/Healthcare/Concussion%20CARES.pdf>

Self-Administration of Medication: Diabetes, Asthma, Allergies, etc.

DISPENSATION OF MEDICINE

The administration of medication to students during school hours and school-related activities is discouraged unless necessary for the critical health and well-being of the student. Ordinarily, local school personnel do not administer medication to students. Parents sign the Parental Consent form for student self-medication. Doctor authorization is attached to this parental consent form.

PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION

Students should not be permitted to possess or take prescription medication on school grounds or at any school-sponsored activities. If it is medically necessary for a student to ingest non-prescription or prescription medication during the school day or at any school-sponsored activities in the opinion of his/her authorized/treating physician, the student may be permitted to so at the discretion of the principal. The

parents/guardians must request that the school dispense the medication to the child and follow the procedures for dispensing medication.

Parents/guardians shall provide documentation from a licensed medical practitioner on the type, dosage and frequency of the prescription or treatment, and emergency action plan, if required. It is recommended that all prescriptions be kept in a secure, central area of the school (rather than retained by the individual student or their teacher). The principal shall ensure that appropriate, approved school personnel are properly trained in administering the prescription or medical treatment. This policy should not prohibit any school employee from providing emergency assistance to students. Parents will be asked to sign a hold harmless agreement, understanding that school staff are not held liable in the case of accident/injury.

ALLERGIES

Parents/guardians shall notify the school in writing of any diagnosed allergies and the necessity to self-administer and to self-carry an epinephrine auto-injector. A signed parent permission notification and a signed physician authorization must be provided to the local Catholic school either at the start of a new school year, upon enrollment, or immediately following diagnosis of such requirement. Both the parental permission and physician authorization will be held on file at the school where the student attends.

For serious allergies, the principal (or designee) shall meet with the parent/guardian to develop a written set of procedures, as well as an allergy emergency action plan, to ensure a safe environment for the child. A template Individual Health Care Plan can be found through the Illinois State Board of Education. School personnel may administer epinephrine auto-injectors (“epi- pens”) with the approval of the parent/guardian, and with proper authorization from the principal and training.

Accommodation requests are initiated by a parent/guardian to the local Catholic school and include a physician’s report outlining the severity of the allergy and the recommended actions by the physician that are medically necessary to avoid any reaction. Administration explains to parents/guardians what reasonable accommodations they can make. Allergy-free is not a credible accommodation that schools make; however, effective practices to reduce the chance of exposure to allergens may include, but are not limited to:

- Designating a separate table/area for students with an allergy.
- Allowing the allergic student to eat at his/her own desk, keeping the same desk year-round to reduce possible contaminants if there is no common lunchroom.
- Limiting/prohibiting food in classrooms.
- Removing food as a reward in classrooms or for celebrations.
- Regular cleaning of classrooms and the lunchroom.
- Educating school personnel on the management of students with allergies.

ASTHMA

A school, whether public or nonpublic, must permit the self-administration of medication by a pupil with asthma or the use of an epinephrine auto-injector by a pupil, provided that:

- The parents/guardians of the pupil provide to the school written authorization for the student to self-administer medication or for use of an epinephrine auto-injector.
- Written authorization from the pupil’s physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse.

- The parents/guardians of the pupil provide to the school the prescription label (which must contain the name of the medication, the prescribed dosage, and the time at which or circumstances under which the medication is administered).

If a student has been diagnosed by a physician to have asthma and is required due to this diagnosis to self-administer and self-carry asthma medication of any type, a signed parent permission notification and a copy of the prescription must be provided to the local Catholic school either at the start of a new school year, upon enrollment or immediately following diagnosis of such requirement. Both the parent permission and the copy of the prescription will be held on file at the school where the student attends. Parents/guardians should be informed that the school and its employees and agents incur no liability, except for willful and wanton conduct, as a result of any injury arising from the self-administration of medication or the use of an epinephrine auto-injector by the student.

DIABETES

Students are allowed to self-manage their diabetes in the school setting if they are authorized to do so by their diabetes care plan. The diabetes care plan should specify the nature of the student's self-management and may include:

- Allowing students to check blood glucose levels when and wherever needed.
- Self-administration of insulin.
- Self-treatment of hyperglycemia or hypoglycemia; and
- Allowing the student to possess, at all times, supplies and equipment necessary for diabetes management, including, but not limited to, syringes, food, and drink.

If a student has been diagnosed by a physician to have diabetes, to self-administer and self-carry diabetes medication, a signed parent permission notification and a signed physician diabetes care plan must be provided to the local Catholic school either at the start of a new school year, upon enrollment, or immediately following diagnosis. Both the signed parent notification and the physician's diabetes care plan will be held on file at the school where the student attends.

DIABETES CARE PLAN REQUIREMENTS

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to share health care provider instructions concerning the student's diabetes management during the school day.

The diabetes care plan shall include the treating health care provider's instructions concerning the student's diabetes management during the school day, including a copy of the signed prescription and the methods of insulin administration.

The services and accommodations specified in the diabetes care plan shall be reasonable, reflect the current standard of diabetes care, include appropriate safeguards to ensure that syringes and lancets are disposed of properly, and include requirements for diet, glucose testing, insulin administration, and treatment for hypoglycemia, hyperglycemia and emergency situations.

A diabetes care plan shall include a uniform record of glucometer readings and insulin administered by the school nurse or delegated care aide during the school day using a standardized format. The Illinois State Board of Education Nursing Division has several resources regarding diabetes care on a school campus.

A diabetes care plan shall include procedures regarding when a delegated care aide shall consult with the parent or legal guardian, school nurse, where available, or health care provider to confirm that an insulin dosage is appropriate.

A diabetes care plan shall be submitted to the local Catholic school at the beginning of the school year, upon enrollment, immediately after a student's diagnosis or when a student's care needs change during any given school year. Parents shall be responsible for informing the local Catholic school in a timely manner of any changes to the diabetes care plan and their emergency contact numbers.

A school or a school employee is not subject to discipline and not liable for civil or other damages as a result of conduct, other than willful or wanton misconduct, related to the care of a student with diabetes.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICAL CANNABIS

Students are not to be permitted to use or possess medical cannabis infused products in our schools except in accordance with the law and school policy. School policy should provide that if a parent/guardian of an elementary/secondary student demonstrates his/her son or daughter is a "registered qualifying patient," has an individual who is a "registered designated caregiver," and both of whom hold medical cannabis registry identification cards, then the parent/guardian or registered designated caregiver must be permitted to administer a medical cannabis infused product to the student (non-smoking/non-vaping form) at school. The school may not deny a student attendance solely because he or she requires administration of medical cannabis during school hours.

A parent/guardian or other individual may not administer a medical cannabis product in a manner that, in the opinion of the school, would create a disruption to the school's educational environment or would cause exposure of the product to other students.

OPIOID ANTAGONIST

Public Act 103-348 requires schools to maintain a supply of an opioid antagonist on campus. An opioid antagonist such as over-the-counter Narcan will suffice.

- Diocesan Hold Harmless statement (see below)
- Undesignated Medication (all medication needs a doctor note and signed forms—found in FACTS space for elementary schools—high schools, please reach out with questions or forms)
- School Food Service Program (breakfast and/or lunch)
- Support Services for Students (counseling, social work, etc.)

Diocesan Hold Harmless Statement Template

I hereby release and indemnify St. Mary Nativity Catholic School, its staff, volunteers, and the Joliet Diocese from any and all liability arising from claims of any kind or nature whatsoever from my student's participation in this event.

RELEASE: If emergency treatment is required, and the parents or legal guardian cannot be reached immediately, your signature in the space provided below empowers the school authorities to exercise their judgment to transport the child to a hospital emergency room.

The administration of St. Mary Nativity Catholic School reserves the right to revise this handbook at any time. Notification of changes to the handbook will be sent to parents through the regular Parent Bulletin/FACTS.