

# IMMACULATE CONCEPTION SCHOOL

*Where Faith Meets Academic Excellence*



## *Parent & Student Handbook*

2021 - 2022

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# Immaculate Conception Catholic School

## 1. Parent/Student Handbook

Welcome to Immaculate Conception School. In choosing Immaculate Conception, you have demonstrated your support and commitment to Catholic education. As parents, faculty, staff, and students, we work together as a community to provide a Christ-centered and virtue-based school. This handbook has been prepared to outline the activities, procedures, and rules for the successful daily operation of Immaculate Conception School. We believe that following these handbook policies will help us to have an orderly school conducive to learning. May God bless our many endeavors this year!

*The spirit of an IHM (Immaculate Heart of Mary) school  
calls each person to a life of ... Prayer, Love, Service, Courtesy, and Hospitality.  
In Immaculate Conception School, Jesus is the Center and Mary, the Model.  
Let it be known to all who enter here that Christ is the reason for this school,  
the unseen, but ever-present Teacher in its classes,  
the Model of its faculty, the Inspiration of its students.*

**Prior to the first week of school, please take time at home to read and discuss the contents of this handbook. All families will be asked to sign the ICS school contract, which is an agreement to abide by the policies and expectations stated in this handbook, as a requirement for student enrollment.**

## 2. Accreditation, History, Introduction, Mission, Philosophy, Student Pledge

**Accreditation** - Immaculate Conception School is fully accredited by AdvancEd and the New Jersey Department of Education and is also a member of the National Catholic Education Association.

**History** - Immaculate Conception School is a Catholic parish coeducational school for students in grades pre-kindergarten through eight. The school was established in 1957 and until 2019 was administered by the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Today, the leadership of the school is a collaboration with lay faculty, staff and Immaculate Conception Parish.

**Introduction** - Immaculate Conception School, with its proud Roman Catholic heritage, is committed to promoting spiritual awareness, academic excellence, and individual responsibility among its students so that they may live more fully in relationship with God and others. To ensure that the educational ministry nourishes the spiritual, intellectual, and social aspect of the school community, a positive spirit of hope and dedication to the mission of Catholic education should pervade the school. Staff, students, and parents alike should be appreciated, respected, and experience an “at home” feeling.

**Mission Statement** - We, the administration, faculty and staff of Immaculate Conception School, believe that our primary mission as Catholic educators is to foster in each student a personal relationship with God. In partnership with the family, we are committed to developing the spiritual, academic and emotional dimensions of all students, thus enabling them to live responsibly and creatively in a global society.

**Philosophy** - Rooted in Catholic values, Immaculate Conception School integrates academic excellence with the spiritual and moral formation of

each student, with the support of dedicated teachers and committed parents. This dedication results in an education that challenges each student to develop his or her full potential in an atmosphere where children care for and respect one another.

**Student Pledge** - As a student of Immaculate Conception School, I will develop my personal friendship with God. I will cooperate with my parents, teachers and fellow students to grow in faith and knowledge. I will care about others and take care of the world.

### **3. Parents' Role in Education**

Immaculate Conception School considers it a privilege to work with parents because we believe parents are the primary educators of their children. Therefore, it is the parents' right and duty to become the primary role models for the development of their child's life – physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally, morally, and psychologically. Parents' choice of Immaculate Conception School involves a commitment and exhibits a concern for helping your child to recognize God as the greatest good in his/her life.

Parents' personal relationship with God, with each other, and with the Church community and regular reception of the sacraments will affect the way their child/ren relates to God and others. Ideals taught in school become rooted in children when they are nurtured by the example of good Catholic morality and by a personal relationship with God in their family life. During these formative years at Immaculate Conception School, children need constant support from both parents and faculty in order to develop to their fullest potential. As educational partners, we cannot doubt the sincerity of the efforts we are each making. It is vital that everyone work together to nurture respect for authority and achieve the positive results needed. Evidence of mutual respect between parents and teachers will model good mature behavior and relationships.

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, a child may perceive discipline as restrictive. However, boundaries and limits provide a young person with both guidance and security. It is essential that a child take responsibility for grades he/she has earned and be accountable for homework, long-term assignments, major tests, service projects, and any other assignments. 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 the children fulfill God's plan for them.

### **4. Parents as Partners - As partners in the educational process at Immaculate Conception School, we ask parents:**

- To support the religious and educational goals of the school.
- To support and cooperate with the discipline policy of the school.
- To treat teachers with respect and courtesy in discussing student problems.
- To provide legal documents regarding custodial issues.
- To participate actively in school activities, such as Parent-Teacher Conferences, Home and School meetings, and fund-raising activities.
- To set rules, times, and limits so that your child receives the age-appropriate rest required for school success.
- To make sure your child arrives to school on time and is picked up on time at the end of the day.
- To make sure your child is dressed according to the school dress code.
- To make sure your child completes class assignments on time.
- To provide lunch money or prepared lunch every day.
- To notify the school with a written note or email when your child has been absent or tardy.
- To notify the school office of any changes of address or important phone numbers.
- To meet all financial obligations to the school.

- To inform the school of any special situation regarding your child's well-being, safety, and health.
- To read school notices and newsletters and to show interest in your child's total education.

*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 you to withdraw your child. The best way for parents to deal with concerns is to first approach the person with whom there is a problem. For example, if the concern is about something a teacher has done, approach the teacher first. Only after efforts to deal with the teacher have failed should the principal or other administrators be contacted. If the difficulty is with the principal, the parent should contact the principal and try to achieve a solution that is acceptable to all concerned. If a good faith resolution with the principal cannot be reached, the pastor can be contacted in the parish setting or the principal's superior in a non-parish setting. In serious cases, if these efforts fail, the school or diocesan grievance procedure can provide an avenue for appeal.*

## **ACADEMIC INFORMATION**

### **5. Curriculum**

The Curriculum policies and procedures of Immaculate Conception School are established by the Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Metuchen with the advice and assistance of local school administrators, various curriculum committees, and religious community supervisors. Guidelines for specific curriculum areas are available for the use of teachers, and for the review of parents of students attending Immaculate Conception School. The curriculum guidelines can be found at the Diocese of Metuchen website:

<http://diometuchen.org/schools/our-schools/curriculum/>

The curriculum in place at Immaculate Conception School is solidly based in skills and competencies within the following subject areas: religion, mathematics, reading, language arts, social studies and science. In addition, students attend weekly art, music, library (PreK-3), computer (PreK-6) and physical education classes. An instrumental program is available to students who wish to participate. Weekly Spanish instruction is offered beginning in PreK. Language Arts enrichment and accelerated mathematics classes are provided to qualifying students.

The spiritual and moral formation of each of its students is the primary goal of Immaculate Conception School and the purpose for its existence. Guidance is offered that each child may prayerfully embrace his/her Catholic Christian Faith, develop a personal relationship with Almighty God and His Son, Jesus Christ, and fully develop his/her numerous diverse talents in the service of others. Instruction in the tenets of the Catholic faith is afforded daily, and numerous opportunities for prayer, worship, and service are provided. The traditions of the faith – First Friday Mass, recitation of the rosary, Stations of the Cross, May Procession, etc. – are held sacred.

### **6. Homework**

Homework is an essential part of the total education of the student. It is intended to reinforce concepts presented in class and includes both written and study assignments. Students should have the skills necessary to complete the assignments independently, and will need only to present finished assignments to parents for approval and signature as required by the teacher. In the primary years, it is essential that the parent accept full responsibility for home studies. As the student progresses beyond the primary level, the student should gradually assume greater personal responsibility. Ultimately, the student should assume total responsibility for both written and study homework. Homework should also stimulate originality and creativity, and for this reason, enrichment assignments and projects are given. Failure to complete homework assignments on a daily basis affects the student's grades and indicates a lack of appreciation for our academic standards.

The following are suggested time allotments for homework. This includes both written and study assignments. It should be understood that factors such as attention span, study habits, supplies needed, and a good study environment could cause these time allotments to vary.

Kindergarten.....	10 minutes
Grades 1 and 2 .....	30 minutes
Grades 3 and 4 .....	60 minutes
Grades 5 and 6 .....	90 minutes
Grades 7 and 8 .....	120 minutes

In the event of absence or suspension, all homework and missed assignments are to be made up within the timeframe determined by the teacher (usually three days). If a student is absent, parents may call the school office to request assignments. These can be picked up outside the office after 2:45pm. Homework assigned in the classroom is the official homework. Homework will also be posted on the school web page for each grade on a daily basis. The website is used as a support; computer/server problems may affect this posting.

## PROGRESS/EVALUATION

### 7. Parent-Teacher Conference

A Parent-Teacher Conference is held annually following the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter. Student attendance may be requested. Requests for additional conferences must be made in writing to the teacher so that a convenient time may be arranged. If appointments cannot be kept, please notify the office at least 24 hours ahead of the scheduled conference. Appointments with the administration will be honored after the parent and teacher have met to discuss the child's needs.

### 8. Report Cards

Report Cards are issued four times a year. Each student is responsible for his/her own report card grade by satisfactorily fulfilling the following requirements: major testing (at least 3 tests in the major subjects), quizzes, oral and written reports, independent classroom work, active participation in classroom lessons and activities, and class/individual projects. ***All financial obligations must be current in order for a report card to be issued. Parents are encouraged to view their students' progress often.*** PowerSchool is a web-based student information system which connects the home with the school. PowerSchool's external interface gives parents access to real-time information, such as grades and attendance information. It also provides a secure way to communicate with teachers from home. A private, secure logon passcode is needed, provided at the new parent meeting. Classes that are modified will be designated as such on report cards by having an M next to the grade.

### 9. Curriculum Modifications and Adapted Grading

In an effort to enable students with certain mild learning differences to participate in Immaculate Conception School and to assess fairly their competence, effort, and progress, it is necessary to make certain adaptations in the curriculum and provisions for grading these students. These measures are taken according to specific circumstances so that high expectations are maintained for all students. Only those students who have received designated evaluation requirements are eligible to receive the curriculum modifications and adapted grading on assignments and report cards. Eligibility is determined on a yearly basis. To ensure that parent(s) understand why their child is receiving curriculum modifications and adapted grades, and which modifications and accommodations are being made, a written agreement between the principal, the teacher(s), the parent(s), and the student (when applicable) is discussed and signed.

### 10. Promotion and Retention Policy

Promotion and Retention are based on an evaluation of academic, social, and emotional growth. Promotion to the next grade level depends on successful completion of all subject areas. Advancement is based on the student's daily performance, test results, recommendations of teachers, and his/her ability to complete work successfully. *Eighth grade students who have completed the prescribed course of study and maintained a suitable discipline record are eligible for graduation if all financial obligations have been met.* Careful assessment of a student's performance and ability are undertaken before retention is recommended. The ultimate decision regarding non-promotion is a joint one between the principal and

teacher/s. Parents will be informed in writing of possible retention at the end of the second semester and arrangements will be made for consultation.

Students in grades 3 – 8 who have a failing average in two major subjects will not be considered for promotion to the next grade. A failing average in one subject will require summer classes or tutoring in order to be promoted. In the event a student attends summer school or receives tutoring, documentation must be presented to the administration before the beginning of the next school year. Students who have a failing average after the second quarter will be referred to the Child Study Team. After meeting with teachers, parents, and administration, an academic plan of action will be developed to help ensure academic success. Students who have significant academic problems will be referred for testing. In the event testing is recommended or previous testing has been completed, results must be made available and kept with student records. When testing is recommended, it will be required that this be completed in a timely manner so that the student can be best served at Immaculate Conception School. There will be no special accommodations made for students unless testing results and/or a plan of action is on file in the school office.

### **11. Standardized Testing**

The **MAP** standardized test will be administered three times during the school year to students in Grades 1 through 8. The results are communicated to parents and are utilized by the school for curriculum planning. *Absence during testing is strongly discouraged.*

### **12. Accelerated Mathematics Program**

For qualified students in grades 5-8, mathematics courses are accelerated and cover material in greater depth. Units and lessons follow the diocesan curriculum, but at an accelerated rate. Lessons are developmentally appropriate with emphasis on research, independent learning, and technology integration.

### **13. Child Study Team**

The team meets regularly throughout the year to assist teachers in providing the best learning environment for all students. The team makes suggestions, provides support, and develops plans of action where needed. Parents are a needed and integral part of the process.

### **14. Guidance Counselor**

Immaculate Conception School has a school guidance counselor on staff to assist students and families.

### **15. Reading and Mathematics Remediation**

These services are provided by Educational Services Commission of New Jersey. Designated Immaculate Conception teachers provide support for identified students, and to the classroom teachers.

### **16. Student Recognition / Academic Merit**

**1<sup>st</sup> Honors:** 93 or higher in all subjects and Specials; **2<sup>nd</sup> Honors:** 85 - 92 in all subjects and Specials; **Effort Award** - consistent effort, cooperation, participation, and completion of all home and school assignments both written and studied. To achieve any of the honor awards the student must also have demonstrated appropriate skills in all the Personal and Social Growth Areas. Students who receive 3 or more Xs in any of the personal and social growth categories for a marking period will be ineligible to earn 1st Honors for that marking period. Students who receive detention are also ineligible for 1st Honors.

## DISCIPLINE SYSTEM

### 17. Discipline

Discipline is a necessary reflection of the philosophy of a Catholic school. The school and individual classrooms should nurture a positive sense of self-discipline in order to provide an environment conducive to learning. Effective discipline fosters the development of students who respect themselves, other persons, and those in authority. It is the shared responsibility of the home and school to accomplish this goal. We expect that our students will be instructed by their parents in obedience, honesty, respect for fellow human beings, and respect for property.

At Immaculate Conception School, our aim is to motivate students to develop proper attitudes toward discipline and responsibility. Permissiveness and severity are two extremes we avoid. Discipline is the key to good conduct and proper consideration for other people. Students are expected to exercise self-control and conduct themselves properly at all times. All students are expected to cooperate with the spirit and policies of the school. This requires courtesy in all personal relationships, promptness in fulfilling obligations, concern for the environment, honesty, and appropriate language. Recognizing and encouraging appropriate behavior and taking corrective action when necessary maintains good discipline. Conduct rules and expectations are posted for each classroom. Conduct referrals/notes will be issued to those students who consistently do not follow classroom/school rules. In any school, it is necessary that rules and regulations be established for the safety and well-being of all. It is our belief that, with full cooperation and open communication between the faculty and parents, students will be able to pursue a quality Catholic education in a wholesome, pleasant environment. Any behavior or inappropriate language that causes the learning atmosphere to deteriorate or be disrupted, or which infringes upon the rights of others in the school, will not be tolerated, and may subject the student to corrective measures. In an effort to standardize the conduct protocol at Immaculate Conception School, a demerit system has been implemented for all ICS students. **Refer to ICS Code of Conduct Demerit System.**

Acceptable corrective measures may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Teacher/administrator reminds student of appropriate behavior
2. Issuance of demerits
3. Teacher-student conference
4. Time-out in the classroom or office
5. Detention and communication with parent via email, telephone, or conference
6. Referral to Principal/Dean of Students
7. Denied participation in special school events and/or sports teams
8. In-school suspension or out-of-school suspension

### 18. General Student Regulations

- Appropriate behavior is expected by the students throughout the course of the school day. This includes respect for other students, themselves, their teachers, their workstations and the school building.
- Appropriate behavior during prayer times and in Church is required.
- Polite speech is encouraged; therefore, no foul language will be tolerated in Immaculate Conception School.
- At no time may students show disrespect by either word or action to supervising adults.
- Cheating is a form of stealing, an act of injustice. Copying homework, using notes during a test, receiving answers from another student, sharing homework, or copying information verbatim from the Internet or another source are considered cheating. Cheating will not be tolerated. Students who choose to cheat face a failing grade and possible suspension.
- Students are not to engage in any action that is potentially or actually harmful to other students, such as writing offensive notes, fighting, running in the halls, pushing, shoving, or throwing objects. Students should enter and leave the building quietly.



- Chewing gum is not permitted on the school grounds.
- Students are never to leave the classroom or school property without the knowledge and consent of the teacher and administration. In urgent cases, if a child must leave the premises before dismissal, then a written note from the parent must accompany the request. Parents assume full responsibility and are asked to meet their child in the school office to sign the Early Dismissal Register.
- Students may not enter the school building, nor remain in the classrooms or the school building without proper supervision.
- Students are not to bring sharp or pointed instruments, lighters or matches to school.
- School Property The parent/guardian 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, labor, or replacement.
- Textbooks used by the student must remain properly covered throughout the year. No writing or marking of textbooks is permitted. The student will be responsible for any textbook that is lost or damaged. Final report cards will not be issued to any student who has not returned or paid for lost or damaged books.

## 19. Harassment

The school follows the Diocese of Metuchen Policy prohibiting harassment, including sexual harassment. Sexual harassment refers to any unwelcome sexual attention, sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature. **Sexual harassment** is unacceptable conduct and will not be tolerated. Any student or parent/guardian who is determined to have violated this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal of the student. All teachers, teacher aides, staff members and parent volunteers are required to attend a Safe Environment Program administered through Virtus and the Diocese of Metuchen, and to provide the school/parish with proof of attendance. In addition, all adults who work with students on a regular basis must provide an Identio fingerprint clearance to the school/parish.

## 20. Cafeteria Expectations

All students must remain seated during the lunch period until dismissed by the supervising adults. No student may leave the cafeteria without permission from an adult or a note from a teacher. Conversational voices and good table manners are expected from all students. Students are expected to eat lunches provided and not waste food. Students are responsible for the cleanliness of their table area. Violations of cafeteria rules may result in the loss of cafeteria privileges. The Lunch moderators have the final authority on cafeteria procedures and behavioral management.

During the lunch period students remain seated at all times in their assigned areas. At an indicated time and when the tables are cleaned, students may begin leaving the cafeteria for the schoolyard. All students are expected to go outside unless they have a doctor's note to the contrary. When outside students are to exhibit good sportsmanship at all times. Tackling, fighting, keep away, or any form of rough play is not allowed during recess.

## 21. Physical Education Safety Rules

Student safety is the primary focus during Physical Education while in the gym and outside. Students whose behavior affects the safety of others will be removed from the class. Using self-control and good manners is part of Physical Education. Inappropriate language, bullying, or violence will not be tolerated. No student may leave the designated activity area without permission from a teacher.

## 22. Playground Safety Rules

Students are to listen to the direction of adults and teachers supervising the playground at all times. No tackle football or dodge ball permitted. No jumping off equipment. No throwing of mulch, sticks, rocks, or any other items on the playground. Rough or dangerous

play will result in suspended recess privileges.

### **23. School Protocol for Handling Violence**

School authorities investigate the incident thoroughly and document actions and information obtained. As a protection, a student who allegedly made a threat to another student and/or school personnel, or made a threat to do personal bodily harm is to be removed from the classroom while investigation continues. Principal will notify the pastor, Diocesan Office of Schools, and parent/s of alleged violence and investigation. Student is removed from school until the parent/s seeks professional help for the child/ren. Depending on the seriousness of the violence/crime, the police are notified. The school administrator notifies the local law enforcement authorities, the pastor, and the Office of Schools whenever a weapon is discovered on school grounds, or in the possession of a student under our care. Student discipline for such actions may include expulsion.

\*\*\* It is the policy of Immaculate Conception School to notify the school to which a student transfers if a student is expelled, or withdrawn from our school, and is involved with any of the following infractions:

- An act or offense involving weapons
- Sale or possession of controlled substances
- Willful infliction of injury to another person, or act of violence committed on school property, or while in the custody of the school. (This policy reflects the commitment to the Safe Schools Act.)

### **24. Demerit System**

Disciplinary procedure for all ICS students includes our demerit system, in which a demerit is issued for actions so warranting. When a student receives a demerit, the parent/guardian must sign it on the night issued. It must be returned the following day to the homeroom teacher. A parent/guardian's signature indicates that the parent/guardian has seen the demerit. It does not indicate the parent/guardian's permission for the student to receive the demerit. The teacher/administrator issuing the demerit has already made that decision. Consequences of continued noncompliance with school rules will result in demerit accumulation, potentially resulting in detention, withdrawal from school activities/events, suspension, and expulsion. Please refer to the ICS Code of Conduct Demerit system for infraction point values and generally equivalent consequences. This code should not be considered fully comprehensive.

### **25. Administrators' Plan**

When a student is sent to the administration (Principal/Dean of Students) for disciplinary consequences, it is regarded as a serious matter. The administrator will make a record of the student's visit. Depending on the nature of the infraction, one or multiple of the following consequences may apply, but are not limited to:

- Administrator will have a conference with the student regarding the unacceptable behavior.
- Administrator will contact parent by telephone or in writing.
- A behavioral contract among student/teacher/parent will be established. It is in the best interest of elementary students that home and school work together for the child's education. We will be in close contact with parents concerning the progress of their child/ren in school.
- Issuance of demerits
- In extreme cases, removal of student from school property

### **26. Detention**

A student will receive detention upon the accumulation of 15 demerit points. Parents will be notified either by phone or in writing about these detentions. Serious infractions may result in an immediate detention, suspension or dismissal and apply when students are on campus, on a bus, or at a school-sponsored function.

## 27. Suspensions or Expulsions

It is to be understood that the agreement when a student enters Immaculate Conception School includes the consent to abide by present rules, regulations, customs, and traditions of this school. To any extent that a student brings disrepute to the school, the school has the authority to discipline a student for such conduct. Formal suspension is a serious disciplinary action taken by school authorities against a student whose actions constitute a major disciplinary infraction and are contrary to the good order of the school community.

- Violations of the honor code/conduct failures
- Unauthorized leaving of school grounds or school-sponsored events, skipping classes, truancy

### **Major disciplinary infractions that could incur immediate dismissal include, but are not limited to:**

- Gross defiance - failure to follow any reasonable request or directive by those in authority
- Inappropriate communication or contact with a teacher/student via notes, email, telephone, etc., that is contrary to Catholic beliefs and doctrine
- Fighting on school premises. Physical/verbal threats against the faculty, staff, volunteers, students, or administration
- Verbal, physical, or sexual harassment
- Destruction of school property or vandalism, theft, bomb scares or triggering other false alarms
- Alcohol, smoking, drugs
- Possession and/or use of weapons and/or contraband (Students who raise reasonable suspicion by action, speech, or dress can be questioned). \*\*\* No student may use, possess, sell, or distribute alcohol or other substances, nor use or possess paraphernalia for the purpose of illicit/inappropriate drug use on school grounds or at school-sponsored events. The term "alcohol, drugs, and other substances" shall be construed throughout this policy to refer to the use of all substances including, but not limited to, alcohol, all forms of tobacco, inhalable substances, marijuana, depressant drugs, stimulants, hallucinogenic drugs, and steroids. The inappropriate and/or illegal use of prescription and over-the-counter drugs shall also be prohibited. Prescription medication for personal use shall be allowed under the supervision of school medical personnel, with written orders from a physician. *Safe Schools Act*

Parents will be notified regarding reasons for suspension or expulsion of their child. Students will be responsible for all missed work. Depending on the incident, documentation written and signed by teachers, administration, and parents of the suspension could be included in the student's permanent record. Any out-of-school suspension will result in loss of privileges for the year – field trips, 8th grade graduation, special activities, etc. Any student accused of a serious wrong can be immediately placed on a home study program. Expulsion is resorted to when other means of discipline are insufficient, and the student's conduct is a definite hindrance to the welfare and progress of the school community. How students conduct themselves outside of school can directly influence the school. The administration reserves the right to discipline students for out-of-school conduct that interferes with the school or instructional quality of the school. The school has the right to require the withdrawal of any student who violates the honor code or the regulations of the school, or who fails to maintain the academic standards of the school, or whose continued presence is not in the best interest of the student or the school as determined by the Administration.

Immaculate Conception School reserves the right to impose consequences for inappropriate behavior that takes place off campus and outside school hours. Thus, inappropriate use of technology on a home computer may subject the student to consequences. Inappropriate use includes harassment, use of school name, remarks directed to or about faculty/staff, offensive communications, and safety threats.

The Administration reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of any disciplinary action taken. The Principal and/or Pastor are the final recourse in all disciplinary situations and may waive any and all regulations for just cause at her/his discretion. Parental cooperation is essential for the welfare of students. Normally, a child is not deprived of a Catholic education or otherwise penalized for actions of parents/guardians. However, the Principal may require the dismissal of a student when parents/guardians have been persistently and overtly uncooperative regarding school policies, regulations, or programs. Student dismissal may also be required when parents/guardians have interfered in matters of school administration to the

detriment of the school's ability to serve their own or other children. If, in the opinion of the administration, parent/guardian behavior interferes with the teaching/learning process, the administration may require parents/guardians to withdraw their children and sever the relationship with the school. Harassment of administration, teachers, or students by parents/guardians may result in the dismissal of students. Tuition and fees will not be refunded if student is dismissed.

## **DRESS CODES AND UNIFORMS**

### **28. Neatness and Cleanliness**

Neatness and Cleanliness in personal attire are part of a child's education and the responsibility of the parents. When a child looks and feels good about himself/herself, he/she acts and works accordingly. During the first weeks of school, any student not in compliance with the dress code will first receive a Uniform Violation Notice, then, with non-compliance, a demerit. Refusal to adhere to the dress code could lead to exclusion from school. If at any time during the year an exception in uniform is necessary, a note of explanation must be sent to the child's teacher who will forward it to the principal. This note should indicate the expected date by which the uniform will be complete.

### **29. School Uniform Requirements - BOYS**

#### **Flynn & O'Hara Uniforms (1-800-441-4122)**

##### **Boys Uniform Grades K to 8**

- **BOTTOM:** Regulation dark blue dress trousers; Belt mandatory for Grade 5-8 students
- **TOP:** Regulation short or long sleeve white or blue shirt or white turtleneck with ICS insignia. Navy blue shirt option available for Grade 7-8
- **SWEATER (K-4):** Regulation navy blue cardigan sweater with monogram - mandatory
- **SWEATER (5-8):** Regulation navy blue V-neck sweater with monogram or regulation navy blue sleeveless vest with monogram - mandatory
- **SOCKS:** Navy blue, black, or white socks
- **SHOES:** Solid black or brown, velcro or tie shoes. ALL BLACK sneakers (including black SOLE) may be worn. NO white/color sole, no design, no ankle type, no high tops. No light-ups.

##### **Optional Boys Summer Uniform K to 8**

- (May be worn from first day of school until mid-October; April until the end of the year)
- **BOTTOM:** Regulation navy blue walking shorts; Belt mandatory for Grade 5-8 students
- **TOP:** Regulation white or blue polo with ICS insignia
- **SOCKS:** Navy blue, black, or white socks
- **SHOES:** Solid black or brown, velcro or tie shoes. ALL BLACK sneakers (including black SOLE) may be worn. NO white/color sole, no design, no ankle type, no high tops. No light-ups.

##### **Boys Gym Uniform PreK-8**

- Regulation navy blue sweatsuit with ICS insignia, gray tee shirt with ICS insignia (in 'winter uniform' months)
- Regulation navy blue mesh shorts and gray tee shirt with ICS insignia (in 'summer uniform' months)
- **SHOES:** Mostly black, white, or gray velcro or tie sneakers; some colored trim is acceptable with white, black or gray shoelaces. No light-ups.

##### **Boys General Dress Code & Compliance**

- **HAIRSTYLES & GROOMING:** Boys' hair length is to be above the collar and above the eyebrows. The student's hair is to be neat and clean, and groomed conservatively. No bleaching, colored hair dye, streaking, or colored hair pieces/clips/add-ins. No extreme length or styles. Boys that need to shave should be cleanly shaven at all times. Students are expected to come to school in a state of cleanliness.
- **JEWELRY:** Boys are not permitted to wear earrings, or any other body piercing. Bracelets, both ankle and wrist, pins and buttons are not permitted; this includes all rope, yarn, and beaded neck, wrist and ankle bands. A religious medal or cross on a chain is permitted. However, NO jewelry may be worn to physical education classes.
- **SMART WATCHES** of any brand/capability/functionality are not permitted
- **MISC:** Personal appearance that constitutes a distraction of any kind is not permitted. Examples include face paint, cosmetics, nail polish, tattoos (permanent or temporary), or any other non-uniform accessory.

### 30. School Uniform Requirements - GIRLS

Flynn & O'Hara Uniforms (1-800-441-4122)

#### Girls Uniform Grades K to 4

- **BOTTOM:** Regulation jumper - length must be to the knee. Optional regulation blue slacks
- **TOP:** Regulation short or long sleeve blouse or white turtleneck with ICS insignia
- **SWEATER:** Regulation navy blue cardigan sweater with monogram - mandatory
- **SOCKS:** Navy blue knee socks or tights
- **SHOES:** Navy blue or black tie, buckle, slide/loafer shoes (MUST have a back) or ALL BLACK sneakers (including black SOLE) may be worn. NO white/color soles, no designs, no ankle types, no high tops. \*\*NO backless shoes, moccasins, sandals, slippers, or boots are permitted\*\*. No light-ups.

#### Girls Uniform Grades 5-8

- **BOTTOM:** Regulation navy kilt - length must be just above the knee. Optional regulation navy blue slacks
- **TOP:** Regulation white or blue short or long sleeve banded bottom shirt with ICS insignia. Navy blue shirt available for Grade 7-8
- **SWEATER:** Regulation navy blue V-neck sweater with monogram or regulation navy blue sleeveless vest with monogram - mandatory
- **SOCKS:** Navy blue knee socks or tights
- **SHOES:** Navy blue or black tie, buckle, slide/loafer shoes (MUST have a back) or ALL BLACK sneakers (including black SOLE) may be worn. NO white/color soles, no designs, no ankle types, no high tops. \*\*NO backless shoes, moccasins, sandals, slippers, or boots are permitted\*\*. No light-ups.

#### Optional Girls Summer Uniform K to 8

- (May be worn from first day of school until mid-October; April until the end of the year)
- **BOTTOM:** Regulation navy blue walking shorts. Navy blue, black, or white socks may be worn with shorts.
- **TOP:** Regulation white or blue short sleeve banded bottom shirt with ICS insignia
- **SHOES:** Navy blue or black tie, buckle, slide/loafer shoes (MUST have a back) or ALL BLACK sneakers (including black SOLE) may be worn. NO white/color soles, no designs, no ankle types, no high tops. \*\*NO backless shoes, moccasins, sandals, slippers, or boots are permitted\*\*. No light-ups.

#### Girls Gym Uniform PreK-8

- Regulation navy blue sweatsuit with ICS insignia, gray tee shirt with ICS insignia (in 'winter uniform' months)
- Regulation navy blue mesh shorts and gray tee shirt with ICS insignia (in 'summer uniform' months)
- **SHOES:** Mostly black, white, or gray velcro or tie sneakers; some colored trim is acceptable with white, black or gray shoelaces. No light-ups.

### **Girls General Dress Codes & Compliance**

- **HAIR STYLES / GROOMING** - The student's hair is to be neat and clean, and groomed conservatively. No bleaching, colored hair dye, streaking, or colored hair pieces/clips/add-ins. No extreme length or styles.
- **JEWELRY** - Girls are permitted to wear post earrings of a small and conservative style (no more than two earrings per ear). Any other body piercing is not permitted. One ring is acceptable. Bracelets, both ankle and wrist, pins and buttons are not a part of the school uniform. This includes all rope, yarn, and beaded neck, wrist and ankle bands. A religious medal or cross on a chain is permitted. However, NO jewelry may be worn to physical education classes.
- **SMART WATCHES** of any brand/capability/functionality are not permitted.
- **MISC:** Makeup and colored nail polish are not permitted. Personal appearance that constitutes a distraction of any kind is not permitted. Examples include face paint, tattoos (permanent or temporary), costume-like hair clips/headbands/bows, or non-uniform accessories.

### **31. Free Dress Guidelines -**

- Appropriate fitting, not skin-tight jeans or slacks are acceptable. They should be neat and without any holes. No leggings unless covered by appropriate length skirt, dress, or shorts.
- Skirts must be knee length. Shorts must be no more than 3" above the knee. · Shirts must have sleeves and may not have any inappropriate logos, pictures, or symbols. No tank tops, no tops showing cleavage, no spaghetti straps, bare midriff, or bare shoulders. No dangling earrings or colored nail polish.
- No platform shoes allowed. Due to safety, flip flops and sandals are not allowed. Parents will be notified to bring a change of clothes if a student comes to school dressed inappropriately. These guidelines also apply to after school-sponsored functions, such as middle school dances.

***Dress Code regulations are considered a top priority. Students who repeatedly demonstrate disregard for the Dress Code are liable to receive disciplinary consequences,***

## **SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **32. Admissions**

Immaculate Conception School admits children of any race, color, creed, national or ethnic origin to all of the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to its students. The school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, its admission policy, or in any school-administered program. The school endeavors to accommodate students with special needs, as the school's resources and capabilities reasonably permit. The school reserves the right to decline admission or impose reasonable conditions of attendance where indicated under the circumstances. Students entering grades K – 8 will be required to take an entrance screening in order for the admission process to be complete. Students must successfully complete the screening in order to be placed in the next grade. Low scores on the screening may result in repeating a grade or successful summer remediation. Any student who has been recommended for retention will automatically repeat that grade upon acceptance to Immaculate Conception School. Documentation of any educational and/or psychological testing must be submitted to the school with the application. Although some accommodations/modifications can be made at ICS, students with an active IEP must be able to meet all curriculum standards. The school follows the local school districts' age requirements for admission. The child must be five years old on or before October 1 of his/her kindergarten year or six years old by October 1 of his/her first grade year. The necessary forms for admission are:

- Birth certificate, Baptismal certificate (regardless of home parish)
- A certificate of immunization that must be updated and available for confirmation

- Copy of most recent progress report/report card and standardized test results
- Application fee

### 33. Appointments/Conferences

Appointments should be made whenever a parent wishes to see a teacher or the principal. Visitors may never go directly to a classroom nor meet a teacher for a conference without first stopping in the main office.

### 34. Assemblies

Assemblies of educational value and entertainment are offered. Students are to report to such assemblies as directed and in an orderly and prompt manner. Students are to sit in the assigned area with their class and under the supervision of their teachers. The individuals involved in presenting the assembly are deserving of the students' attention and respect, as are their classmates. School assembly programs are a privilege. Students demonstrating the inability or unwillingness to exercise proper conduct may be restricted from future assemblies.

### 35. Attendance

Regular school attendance impacts positively on the child's academic development. The total number of days that school is in session (180) is prescribed by the State of New Jersey. Should a student exceed 10%, 18 days of absence, retention may be necessary.

**A. Absences** – The policies regarding absences are as follows:

- i. A student who has been absent from school, even for one day, is required to present a written note to the homeroom teacher.
- ii. A doctor's certificate is required for absence of 3+ days.
- iii. If your child is going to be absent or arrive late at school, you are required to call the school's main office at (908 -725-6516) before 8:00am. Leave a message on the voicemail indicating the child's name, homeroom number and reason for absence. If your child's name appears on an attendance report from the homeroom teacher and you have not phoned in, expect a call from the school to verify the absence or check on the child's whereabouts. Your child's safety and welfare are of great importance to us. Parents/Guardians may reach out to the teacher to inform them of their child's absence, however informing the main office of the student's absence will allow for an immediate and more accurate school attendance report.
- iv. In the case of illness occurring during school time, a school official will contact the parents or adult whose name has been submitted to the office with an emergency phone number. If a student is sent home from the nurse due to fever or vomit, the student must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school. If a student has a "pink eye" diagnosis, they can return to school after receiving two doses of medication along with a Doctor's note.
- v. Any child who stays home without his/her parent's knowledge is liable to suspension. Any child who leaves school without permission is liable to suspension.
- vi. Please make requests for assignments for children absent due to illness at the time you report your child absent. This work may be picked up outside the school office after 2:45 p.m. It is the responsibility of the student to complete work and tests that have been missed due to absence.
- vii. If a student is absent for an unexcused reason, illness or disciplinary action, they are not permitted to attend or take part in any extracurricular activity that the school is hosting on that day. If a student is absent for a reason other than illness or disciplinary action, the school reserves the right to make an individual judgement regarding extracurricular participation.

**B. Arrivals** - Children gather in the school yard/parking lot between 7:30-7:45am. Parents are asked not to leave a child at school before 7:30am. On days of inclement weather, children report to the cafeteria.

**C. Dismissals** - Children are dismissed from their classroom by their teachers at 2:40pm according to lines as they are called on the loudspeaker. No child may leave the building prior to dismissal without the Principal's permission

**D. Early Dismissal – Individual Students** No child will be excused early except in cases of emergency. This does not include hair

appointments or sport events. To request an early dismissal, please send a note to the homeroom teacher who will forward it to the office. The student will be dismissed from the school office. The parent or guardian must report to the school office to sign the child out. No parent may go directly to a classroom to request a child.

**E. Emergency Closings** - Early arrival of buses prompted by inclement weather or other emergency is determined by the various school districts. Our school will officially close early in these instances when the majority of buses have left. Unscheduled early dismissals are announced via School Messenger.

**F. Emergency Contact Forms** - The school requires the parent/guardian of each student to complete an emergency contact form provided by the school. It is important the information on this form is accurate and updated so that the school can contact the parent/guardian in the event of an emergency.

**G. Lateness** - A student who arrives late for school must report to the school office for an admission slip, present a note from his/her parent explaining the reason for the lateness, and present the admission slip to the homeroom teacher. Lateness, of course, impacts on a perfect attendance record. Each lateness constitutes a 1 point demerit. Students must be present by 7:50am. Accumulation of lateness demerits can result in detention.

**H. Vacation Policy** - The planning of family vacations is strongly discouraged during the school year. Please contact the principal directly if there is a need for your child to be away from school during the academic year. All work must be made up when the child returns to school.

### **36. Birthdays**

Birthdays are announced after morning prayers. Birthday invitations may not be passed out in school unless every child in the class receives one. The school office will not accept delivery of balloons, flowers, etc. – no exceptions. Edible birthday/party treats are not permitted. However, birthdays may be celebrated in the class and other items may be distributed, such as stickers, pencils, etc. The homeroom teacher will determine all classroom celebrations during the year within the guidelines set by the school.

### **37. Cellular Telephones /Pagers/Handheld electronic games**

Beepers, pagers, handheld electronic games, smart watches, smart devices, and other items that, in the view of the school may be distracting or disruptive to the learning environment are not permitted in the school. Cell phones are collected each morning, held by the homeroom teacher throughout the day, and returned at dismissal time. A cell phone may not be used on school grounds during school time. The school is not responsible for the loss or damage of personal technology devices. The administration will determine the appropriate disciplinary measures to be taken concerning the presence of items in the school. Items that are taken away from students will be returned to the parent/guardian. Any violations to the rules regarding cell phones will result in losing the privilege of bringing them to school.

### **38. Change of Address/Phone Number**

Parents are obliged to inform the school immediately in the event of a change of address, telephone or other pertinent information, specifically that which appears on Power School and/or emergency forms. Students will receive an emergency contact form during the first week of school that is expected to be filled out and handed back to the school by the end of the first week.

### **39. Children Are Receiving Extended Services (CARES) Program**

Extended services are available for students in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 8. The program runs until 6:00pm. Information about this program can be found on the website and is available in the school office. Students must be pre-registered in order to participate.

### **40. Communications/Student Records/Release of Students**

The only or the youngest child in each family enrolled at school is responsible to provide the parents with all written communications. Parents are



asked to check book bags and folders regularly for such communications. Any communications, forms, money, etc. that are brought to school are forwarded to the school office through the homeroom teacher. Students should not be instructed to deliver items directly to the office.

**A. Student Records** - Unless a court or custody agreement specifies otherwise, each parent/guardian with legal custody is entitled to access all school records of the child. Absent a subpoena or court order, school records of the child may be disclosed only upon written consent of the parent/guardian with legal custody.

**B. Release of a Child** - A child will not be released to a parent/guardian that does not have physical custody without the written permission of the custodial parent/guardian. To determine the custodial parent/guardian, all separated or divorced parents of children enrolled in the parish school must provide the school with a copy of the court order or custodial agreement adjudicating that determination of custody.

#### **41. Computers - Acceptable Use Policy**

Computers are a valuable tool for education and one of this school's purposes is to encourage the proper use of computer related technology, including the Internet. Students and all users of computer technology have a responsibility to use these tools properly and in accordance with the policy set forth below:

**A. Goal of Computer Education** - to provide a variety of electronic tools to help students and teachers develop the ability to evaluate and synthesize information from a variety of sources and enable them to work effectively with various computer/communications technology. We aim to encourage critical thinking and problem solving skills which will be needed in this increasingly electronic and global society.

**B. Responsibilities of User** - With the right of access comes the responsibility to use the source both correctly and wisely. Access to the Internet may mean that some material found will not meet guidelines set in our Acceptable Use Policy. Monitoring and controlling all such materials is impossible. The school will make every effort to discourage the appearance of such material; however, the opportunities and information made available by the Internet make it necessary to provide access in order that our students can take advantage of the many resources of information.

##### **C. General Requirements for Use of the Internet**

- Use of the school's computer resources requires that the student and his/her parent(s)/guardians(s) sign the Student Access Contract.
- Only students issued passes or permission may use the school's computers to access the Internet.
- Use of stations is limited to those who have a clear need for research, as assigned by the teacher assignment.
- Transferring copyrighted material to or from the school without express permission of the owner may be a violation of federal law. The user must ensure that this does not occur. Use of electronic mail and other Internet facilities to harass, offend, or annoy other users is forbidden.
- Email accounts through the school may be restricted and/or monitored.
- Any attempt to circumvent system security, guess passwords, or in any way to gain access to secured resources is forbidden.
- Use of the Internet for commercial gain or profit is not allowed from an educational site.
- Users will not move, repair, reconfigure, modify or attach external devices, or load software on the system without the express, prior written consent of the school. The system operator has the right to monitor all computer activity without prior notice to user.
- The School may impose additional rules and restrictions at any time.

**D. Discipline** - Violations of these rules will be handled by the computer faculty/staff and the school administration.

**E. Student Rules** - For reasons of personal safety, students must never post or transmit personal information about themselves or other people. This includes name, address, telephone/fax number, school address, social security number, etc.

- Students must not access material that is profane or obscene or that advocates illegal acts, violence, harassment or discrimination toward other people. They must not use obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude or threatening language. Nor will they harass or annoy other users.
- Students must not plagiarize works they find on the Internet. Plagiarism is taking the ideas/writing of another and presenting them as if they were one's own.
- Students must not knowingly or recklessly post or transmit information about persons or organizations that is false or private.
- Students must not make deliberate attempts to disrupt computer systems or destroy data by spreading computer viruses or by other means. These actions are illegal. The illegal downloading of copyrighted software or other written works for use on home or school computers is prohibited. Violations of any of these rules may result in loss of Internet privileges, disciplinary and/or legal action by the school, law enforcement, or other involved parties.

#### **42. Court Orders**

If there is a court order specifying the rights and responsibilities of individual parents, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order. The custodial parent may wish to supply the Principal with the “custody section” of the divorce decree if it contains information which may be useful to the school in fulfilling its obligation. Immaculate Conception School abides by the provisions of applicable law with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary and upon request, the non-custodial parent will be given access to unofficial copies of the student's records. The school abides by the Buckley Amendment (Family Rights and Privacy Act 1974)

#### **43. Emergency Drills**

Emergency Drills are conducted at least once a month. Immaculate Conception School's Crisis Plan is based on the plan developed by the Diocese of Metuchen. Immaculate Conception School works with the Somerville Police and Fire Department to ensure optimal efficiency in its crisis plan.

**A. Fire Drills** - are conducted on a monthly basis. The students are instructed to leave the building quickly and in silence when the alarm rings according to directions posted in each area. Failure to cooperate is considered a serious matter.

**B. Security Drills** – In addition to fire drills, security drills will be conducted once a month. Examples of security drills include, lock-down, shelter in place and evacuation.

#### **44. Field Trips**

The purpose of every class trip is to broaden the intellectual, cultural, and social experiences of each child. There will be no activities that the school deems to be high risk; there will be no overnight field trips. Each student's parent/guardian must provide written permission for each trip in order for the student to participate by signing the parent consent form provided by the school. Out-of-state field trips require notarization of permission slips. A class trip is a privilege, which can be taken away if a teacher deems it appropriate. If a parent/guardian does not wish a child to attend the trip for any reason, he/she should notify the school. The child must attend school on the day of the trip or be marked absent. Tuition and financial obligations should be up-to-date for a student to participate in class trips.

#### **45. Health Services**

Physical examinations are required of all students entering kindergarten, grades 1, 3, 5 and 7. A student will be permitted to report to the Health Office at the discretion of the teacher or lunchroom moderator. If there is any question concerning a student's health, an accident, or illness, the nurse will contact the parents of the student or a person designated by the parents.

**A. Nurse** - A registered school nurse is provided to Immaculate Conception School by the Educational Services Commission of New Jersey.

The nurse is responsible for checking the height, weight, hearing and vision of every child and for making referrals to parents when problems are found. The nurse maintains all health records. Care given in the school is limited to first aid in accidents or illness until the parents can be reached to take the child home, to the doctor, or to the hospital. In an emergency, the nurse will arrange to have the student transported to the hospital.

If your child has a specific medical condition/ program, please notify the homeroom teacher and the nurse of the problem. Medic-Alert bracelets are strongly recommended for any child with a medical problem. Emergency cards are kept on file for each student. Please be sure we have an up-to-date emergency number on file in case of an emergency during the school day involving your child.

- B. Accident/Illness at School** - is reported immediately to the principal or main office personnel. When a student becomes ill or has an accident, the parent or guardian is contacted. If the parent or guardian cannot be reached, the emergency contact will be called. No medicine of any kind, including aspirin, may be given to the student. Only basic first aid may be administered. Parents will be contacted immediately if there is any question regarding an injury.
- C. Food Allergies** - Children with food allergies must have a food allergy plan from their physician, a medication administration form signed from a physician, and medication brought to the clinic by the parent. Teachers cannot make the decision about what is safe for students to eat when the student is allergic to certain foods. Parents must supply safe snack foods from home in a closed container that will be available for the child during snack time or special occasions. The school makes every effort to provide a safe environment for every student and prevent any allergic reaction; parent support is necessary. Please refer to the school website for the Diocesan Food Allergy Plan. ICS will be nut free for the 2021-2022 school year.
- D. Medications** - It is generally recommended that prescription medicines be given to the student before and/or after school in accordance with the physician's directions. In those rare instances where the medication must be given during the school day, it is housed in the Health Office and taken in the presence of the school nurse. Prescription and non-prescription over-the-counter medications must be in the original container with a note from the parent and physician to include: Name of medicine, dosage, time of administration, dates to be given, and reason for medication. Medications may be sent in by the day or week. It is not recommended that students carry a full prescription bottle to be taken back and forth daily. **No medications should be placed in lunch boxes or school bags for students to self-administer.** Students requiring medical attention must report to the nurse.

#### **46. Home and School Association**

Our HSA strives to enhance the parents' and teachers' roles in education by increasing their mutual understanding of the children and by providing opportunities for parents and teachers to work together for the good of the children. The Association promotes parent-school activities to increase members' interest in education and civic affairs, and conducts fundraising activities. Members of the Home and School Association can be contacted through the school office and the HSA website. The Home and School Association continues to play an important role in raising funds to support school programs, equipment, renovations, and educational materials.

#### **47. Library**

Our Library is staffed by a librarian and volunteer parents and is available to the students during the school day. Books may be taken out once a week. A fine will be levied on overdue books. Damage or loss of books will require the replacement cost of the book. Appropriate conduct is expected at all times in the library.

#### **48. Lunch**

The 40-minute lunch period is divided into 20 minutes for lunch and 20 minutes for recreation. Lunch is provided by Four Seasons Food Service Management, which offers a featured lunch each day as printed on the menu available on the school website. A complete lunch

includes a protein, bread, vegetable, fruit and milk. An alternate lunch is also available every day.

#### **49. Registration**

Registration for kindergarten students and students new to our school generally takes place in February/March. Registration information is communicated through the parish bulletin and the school website. Families enrolled at ICS are required to re-register annually. Re-registration information for the following year is forwarded to each family in January/February prior to the next school year. All financial obligations must be current before re-registration can be processed.

#### **50. Search and Seizure**

In order to protect the safety, health, property, values and welfare of the members of the school community, the school reserves the right to call for a search of the student's book bag, desk, or any other object on the school property or the person. Such searches will be with reasonable cause, in the sole opinion of the school administrator, that contraband, illegal substances, or inappropriate objects are concealed. Any unauthorized items found may be seized. Additionally, student desks which are at all times under the joint control of the school and student to whom the desk or locker is assigned, may be searched by school administrators at any time, for any reason or for no reason at all.

#### **51. Stationary**

At the end of each school year, students will receive a list of all materials and supplies required for the upcoming year. All copybooks and homework assignment books must be purchased through school and will be distributed to students on the first day. All other items may be purchased elsewhere during the summer.

#### **52. Telephone – School Office**

The school office phone is for business only. A student may use the phone only in the case of an emergency with the permission of the administration. Permission will not be given to a student to call home for forgotten supplies or to communicate social plans. Please do not request that a child phone home during or after school for any reason. If a child is detained at school for any reason without prior notification, permission will be granted to use the phone. Urgent messages for students will be relayed to them from the school office. During class time, neither student nor teacher may be called to the phone. Messages can be given to the school secretary when necessary, and they will be given to the appropriate teacher.

#### **53. Transportation**

In the beginning of the school year, parents are asked how their child(ren) will arrive at and leave school. Any change in transportation arrangements must be made in writing, even if it is a change for only one day.

**A. Bus** - The students' safety is a major concern of the school. With the cooperation of the home, it hopes to instill proper safety habits. In compliance with diocesan and state law, the students are to be seated during their bus ride, wear their seatbelt, speak in a moderate tone, and observe the directions given by the driver. When a student does not comply with these regulations, he/she will receive a citation from the bus driver; a school demerit will be issued to this student. Serious or continued misconduct will carry with it a period of suspension from the bus. This will necessitate the parents providing transportation for a period of time. The school does not draw up schedules and pick-up points; therefore, it cannot change them. Please do not request such changes from the school office. The school cannot give permission to transfer to another bus. Any questions regarding the buses can be answered by contacting the appropriate Public School Board of Education. Permission for a student to ride on a bus from another school district to the home of a friend is given by the appropriate school district – not the bus driver, and not by the principal. If a parent finds it necessary to pick up a student who normally takes the bus, the student may not be removed from the bus line, but must instead leave with the carline. Students may be

picked up on Mountain Avenue, Altamont Place (please do not park in driveways or too close to the corners), or on West End Avenue.

**B. Car Pick-up** - Students who are driven to school in the morning must be dropped off in the area marked off in the schoolyard. Please pull all the way forward and make sure students are prepared to exit the car quickly so that traffic does not back up on West End. Please have all the student items in the car, not in the trunk. The speed limit is 5 mph in the school yard. At no time may cars drive into the schoolyard at dismissal time. Students may be picked up on Mountain Avenue Altamont Place or on West End. Please do not park in driveways or too close to corners. Parents may not park in the parking lots of neighboring businesses.

**C. Walkers** - Walkers are dismissed with the car riders.

#### **54. Tuition**

Tuition is determined in March for the following school year. The school also may impose fees for other items, such as extracurricular activities, field trips, and registration. This information is communicated to the school parents/guardians through the website.

Tuition bills are mailed to parents in June for the following school year. In justice to all parents and the parish community, parents are expected to keep tuition payments up to date. Both parents are jointly responsible for tuition and other fees charged by the school. The business manager reviews the tuition records on a periodic basis. The quarterly report card will not be released if the tuition account has an outstanding balance, unless the parent has met and made suitable arrangements with the school finance director. In addition, the school reserves the right to take further action, up to and including dismissal and withholding of school records, if tuition payments are not made in a timely manner.

#### **55. Visitors**

All school visitors must report to the school office and sign the Visitor's Log when entering the school building *before going anywhere else through the building. AT NO TIME MAY A VISITOR GO DIRECTLY TO A CLASSROOM WITHOUT FIRST CHECKING WITH THE MAIN OFFICE.*

#### **56. Volunteers**

The assistance of parent volunteers is greatly appreciated and encouraged. We recognize the invaluable assistance given by our students' families, which helps in building a strong learning community. Volunteers assist in some of the following ways: Library / Computer / Classroom Aides, Lunchtime Aides, Homeroom Parents, Assist with Extracurricular Activities, Copy Center Aides, Front Desk Hosts/Hostesses Communication Aides. All volunteers who work directly with the students must attend a Virtus Safe Environment Program and provide documentation of having done so. They must also undergo a fingerprint check administered through Identio.

#### **57. AHERA Notice**

In accordance with the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) and Federal Regulation 40 CFR Part 763, Immaculate Conception School has an Asbestos management Plan (AMP) currently in place. The AMP file contains all necessary documents ensuring compliance, covering activities such as, periodic surveillance and 3 year re-inspections. The AMP file is available for review in the main office of school at any time. Mr. Milton Ayala, facilities manager is the designated person for all asbestos related issues for ICS.

**A FINAL NOTE** - This handbook is intended as a guide to school policy and procedure for the benefit of the school and its students. The school reserves the right to deviate from literal compliance with the terms hereof, where the school deems it necessary in the interest of the school and its students to change or modify the application of the matter discussed herein.

## ICS CODE OF CONDUCT DEMERIT SYSTEM Grades PreK-8

<b>Lateness by 7:50- (each incident)</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Dress code violation</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Homework (unexcused, incomplete, missing, doing homework in another class)</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chewing gum on school property</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Failure to get a demerit signed</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Inappropriate / Disruptive behavior (class, hallways, church, lunch, bathroom, during dismissal, etc.)</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Unauthorized use of cell phone during school hours</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Cursing / Inappropriate language</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Disrespect towards / Mocking of religious, patriotic, or safety exercises</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Cheating (on tests / copying homework)</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Verbal / mistreatment of others (unacceptable language or gestures)</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Misuse of technology</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Bus conduct / Reported by bus driver or the school district</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Disrespect of teachers, staff, parent volunteers, students</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Forgery</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Vandalism, defacing/misuse of property</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Bullying</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Defiance</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Fighting</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Theft / Taking something that doesn't belong to you</b>	<b>15</b>

## CONSEQUENCES OF POINTS

15 points = detention

25 points = possible in-school suspension with administrator/parent/teacher conference

45 points = possible expulsion with a parent/teacher/administrator/pastor conference

**Detentions will be served the first Tuesday of the month - from after school until 3:30pm**

NB: Accumulation of demerits may prevent a student from participating in class trips. Students who receive detention are ineligible for 1st Honors.

Any student who has merited a detention will serve it on the day assigned.

### **2.5.1 Immunization Requirements**

**Immunizations are required in the Diocese of Metuchen and students cannot be present in a school in the Diocese unless immunized.**

In complying with this Policy, the following Procedures will be observed:

- Schools will comply with and enforce Chapter 14 of the *New Jersey Sanitary Code, Immunization of Pupils in Schools*.
- Chicken Pox immunization is required for admittance to a Catholic school in the Diocese of Metuchen. [NJAC 8:57-4.4(b) allows religious and affiliated schools to grant or withhold enrollment to non-immunized students without challenge by a secular health authority.]
- A student shall not be required to have any immunizations which are medically contraindicated.
  - A written statement must be provided by the child's physician (M.D. or D.O.), who is duly registered and licensed to practice medicine in the United States. The statement must declare that the required vaccine is injurious to the child's health or poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the child.
  - The exemption statement is valid for only one academic year from the date signed by the physician; it must be submitted to the principal prior to the child attending school. It will be reviewed annually.
- Catholic Schools will grant religious exemptions from immunization if the parents state that it is a matter of conscience for them. [See Appendix A.17)
  - Requests for religious exemptions which are not based on religious beliefs and practices shall be denied. The New Jersey legislation and regulations have never recognized nor permitted philosophical or moral objections as reasons for securing a religious exemption. Except for medical and religious exemptions, all children are expected to comply with the school immunization regulations.
  - A parent/guardian may request a religious exemption to the New Jersey mandatory immunization regulations by submitting a written statement to the school which explains how the administration of immunizing agents conflicts with the student's exercise of religious tenets and practices. The pastor will make the final determination on the validity of the request.
  - The request for a religious exemption from immunization will be honored as long as the language mentions the specific religious belief (normally the conscience of the parent) in the letter.
    - Non-immunized students may be excluded from the school, for their own protection, if there is an epidemic situation. The exclusion will be based on the judgement of the principal.
    - Non-immunized students may be excluded from the school if there are concerns about the safety of the pregnancy of a teacher or health issues of staff members.
- Principals who have questions about specific required immunizations should call the local Department of Health or the local Board of Education offices for details and updates.

# Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Policy

## Conflict vs. Bullying

Conflict is different from bullying. Not all disagreements and fights are bullying. Conflict is a normal part of human interaction and arises frequently in our day to day lives. Part of learning to be independent and grown up is learning how to deal with and respond appropriately to conflict at home, at school, and in your community. Recognizing the difference between conflict and bullying will help students, parents and teachers know how to respond.

### Conflict is:

- A disagreement
- All parties have equal power to solve the problem
- All parties have an equal interest in the outcome
- All parties are of relatively equal size, age, or status
- A conflict can be resolved by talking or working things out together or with help from an adult.

### Bullying is:

- Not a disagreement
- A repeated form of mistreatment where the victim cannot defend him/herself
- An imbalance of power – usually one person is either bigger or older than the other or has a higher social standing (is more popular) and uses this against the other person
- Usually involves repeated acts of harassment, harm or humiliation

## Differences in Addressing Conflict and Bullying

**Conflict** is an important part of growing up but bullying is not. Conflict teaches kids how to give and take, how to come to an agreement and how to solve problems. When it comes to conflict, it's good for kids to learn conflict resolution and resiliency skills. These skills promote listening and working together to come to an agreement **or** plan to move forward. Conflict resolution works based on the assumption that both people are in part responsible for the current problem and need to work it out. In this situation, both kids make compromises and the conflict is resolved.

**Bullying** is different. It is about the bully making a choice to intentionally hurt another person. There is nothing to work out. When bullying occurs, the bully is fully responsible for the situation. And the bully bears all the responsibility for change. Bullies usually do not negotiate with others. They want power and they blame others for their actions. Even if an adult can get them to apologize, bullies will often retaliate when no one else is around. As a result, it is crucial to recognize the difference between conflict and bullying.

## 5.16 Sexting Policy

The mission of all Catholic schools is to bring students closer to Jesus Christ by teaching and living the Gospel message in an environment where the unique value of each person is recognized, protected, and respected. Certainly, issues of morality demand a strong partnership between the school and the family to protect students from dangers they do not foresee. The Catholic Church believes and teaches that human bodies are gifts from God and temples of the Holy Spirit. The Church defines chastity as “the successful integration of sexuality within the person and thus the



inner unity of man in his bodily and spiritual being.” (CCC2337)

Educators, when teaching the first, sixth, eighth, and ninth commandments, are called upon to include the use of social media as a significant part of the instruction they give. As our schools partner with families to model Catholic Social Teachings emphasizing the dignity of the human person takes on a new and different meaning while discussing sexting and related issues. In teaching our children about human sexuality within the framework of God’s plan, we provide opportunities for moral decision making based on solid Catholic teachings. The Diocese of Metuchen prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation or exploitation of all students. Each school must ensure a safe environment that reflects the Gospel and is conducive to student learning. With more students having access to phones and social media accounts, it is becoming easier for them to send and receive explicit messages and images. All students are expected to refrain from any and all conduct involving sexting. They are to respect the dignity of others and of themselves at all times. Sexting shall not be tolerated on school property, on the school bus, at any school sponsored function or off school grounds.

In complying with the Sexting Policy, the following must be considered:

- Sexting is the production, possession or dissemination of sexual materials, including sexually suggestive text messages, nude/semi-nude photographs, or videos of themselves or others via cellular telephone or the internet by students on school property or at any school sponsored function. Sexting does not fuel committed, eternal love as God desires for us. It stands in opposition to God’s plan for us, and for that reason it is wrong.
- Pornography consists in removing real or simulated sexual acts from the intimacy of the partners, in order to display them deliberately to third parties. It offends against chastity because it perverts the conjugal act, the intimate giving of spouses to each other. It does grave injury to the dignity of its participants (actors, vendors, and the public), since each one becomes an object of base pleasure and illicit profit for others. It immerses all who are involved in the illusion of a fantasy world. It is a grave offense. (CCC 2354)
- Creating or sharing explicit images of a child is illegal, even if the person doing it is a child. A young person is breaking the law when they take an explicit photo or video of themselves or a friend; share an explicit image or video of a child, even if it is shared between children of the same age; or, possess, download or store an explicit image or video of a child, even if the child gave his/her permission for it to be created. Images covered under the law include, but are not limited to, naked pictures, photos of intimate body parts, including topless photos of girls, any sex act and any sexually suggestive image, which includes photos of a person in undergarments/underwear. If it is found that a child under the age of 18 is in possession of any of these, has been sending them or taking these types of photos, the police can record it as a crime and the offender may be prosecuted.

In complying with the Policy, the following procedures must be observed:

- All reported incidents of sexting shall be dealt with immediately.
- The school will take immediate measures to protect the victim and others involved in the incident.
- Report to the Diocese of Metuchen Diocesan Response Officer
- Report immediately to the Office of Schools, either the Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent
- Report immediately to the local Police Department.
- Secure all cell phones, computers or other electronic devices that may contain or have disseminated sexual materials, including sexually suggestive text messages and nude or semi-nude photographs. Cell phones should be placed in Airplane mode to preserve the evidence.
- Secure all potential witnesses.
- Contact the parents of all students involved in the reported incident.
- Students involved in possession or transmission of inappropriate photos on their cell phones or other electronic devices may face some or all of the listed consequences:

1. Temporary removal from the classroom;
2. In-school or out-of-school suspension;
3. Parent conference;
4. Deprivation of privileges;
5. Suspension from sports participation;
6. Removal from After-School programs;
7. Counseling;
8. Therapy;
9. Expulsion.