PARENT - STUDENT HANDBOOK
2016-2017

OUR LADY OF SORROWS CATHOLIC SCHOOL
1946-2016

A Tradition of Excellence for 70 years

1100 Gumwood Ave
McAllen, TX 78501
Olssnet.org

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MCALLEN, TX 78501

PHONE: (956) 686-3651 FAX: (956) 686-1996

OUR LADY OF SORROWS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

www.olsschool.org

"What greater work is there than training the mind and forming the habits of the young?" St. John Chrysostom

Dear Students and Parents,

Our hearts fill with pride as Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School marks its 70th year of providing students with a quality education. Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church established the school in September of 1946. Holy Cross sisters with the help of a few dedicated lay teachers staffed the school until 1982. In 1983 the Sisters withdrew from the school and were replaced with a lay principal and lay staff. As McAllen grew so did the demand for admission to Our Lady of Sorrows School. A new educational facility was built in 1985, and in 1986 enrollment increased to 500 students. The school has since maintained a yearly enrollment of over 500 students that come from diverse backgrounds.

We never forget those who came before us. It is they who set a strong foundation for our school community and trusted that we would create a greater future for OLSS. We honor their memory, and build on their legacy.

We take pride in recognizing our alumni who can be found throughout the world. They strive to make a difference in the business, medical, technological, educational, religious, and fine arts professions they chose to follow. Always remembering that OLS School helped formed their spiritual and moral foundation and was the place they developed life-long friendships.

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School remains committed to providing an excellent academic education based on the teachings of Jesus Christ. It is through His love for us that all things are possible and our students are able to face the future with faith and strength of character.

Yours in Christ,

Mrs. Luisa DeLeon, Principal

1100 GUMWOOD AVE.
MCALLEN, TX 78501

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OUR LADY OF SORROWS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

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Welcome to Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School! In choosing OLSS, you have demonstrated a commitment to the values and philosophy of a quality Catholic education.

The Parent/Student Handbook reflects the policies of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School for the 2016-2017 school year. It is a resource for students and parents that outlines important details in regards to academics, discipline, and student life.

Please read this document carefully and sign the attached agreement at the end of this handbook. This agreement states that you have read, understood, and intend to abide by the policies of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School during the 2016-2017 school year.

The priests, administrators, faculty, and staff of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School look forward to working in partnership with you to promote academic excellence and spiritual development in 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.

Mrs. L. DeLeon, Principal
Mr. M. Nava, Assistant Principal

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School | 2016-2017 PARENT/STUDENT CALENDAR

Aug 15 1st day of school

1st quarter
Aug 15-Oct 21

AUGUST 2016						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	**15**	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Sept 5-6 Labor Day
No School
Sept 6 Diocesan In-service (1PD)

Sept 16 No School
OLSS Anniversary

SEPTEMBER 2016						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	NS	NS	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	NS	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Oct 7 Early Dismissal
Oct 8 Church/School Octoberfest
2nd quarter
Oct 24-Jan11

Oct 28 Early Dismissal
Parent/Teacher Conferences

OCTOBER 2016						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	ED	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Nov 21-25 Thanksgiving Break

NOVEMBER 2016						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	26
27	28	29	30			

Dec.19-Jan 3 Christmas Break

DECEMBER 2016						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	24
25	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	31

Jan 2-3 no school
Jan 3 (1 PD)
Jan 4 Classes Resume
27 Early Dismissal
Diocessan Spirit Awards
3rd quarter
Jan 12-Mar 28

JANUARY 2017						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	NS	NS	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	ED	28
29	30	31				

FEBRUARY 2017						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	NS	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

Feb 3 Walkathon
Feb 10 Diocesan In-service
No School

MARCH 2017						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

PSIA March 3-4
Mar 13-17 Spring Break
4th quarter
Mar 29-June 1

APRIL 2017						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	ED	NS	15
16	NS	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

Apri 13 Early Dismissal
April 14-17 Easter Break
No School
April 29 PSIA State Meet

MAY 2017						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	ED	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

May 5-7 Fishing Tournament
May 24 8th Grade Graduation
May 30 Last day for Montessori
May 31 Kinder Celebration

JUNE 2017						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

June 1 Last Day of School
(Full Day)
5-6th Weather make-up

JULY 2017						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

PD/Professional Dev. Staff
ED/Early Dismissal
NS/No School

Calendar subject to changes as needed.

Revised 8/22/16

OUR LADY OF SORROWS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School's mission is to embrace Catholic faith, respect diversity, promote community, provide a quality education for all, and prepare us for a lifetime of service centered on Jesus Christ.

VISION STATEMENT

We catechize the community of Our Lady of Sorrows to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ through a Catholic education to ultimately share in God's everlasting happiness in heaven.

GOALS

-To empower each community member to become a living example of Jesus Christ through prayer and worship, scripture, and the authentic teachings of the Catholic Church.

-To provide a caring, loving environment built on trust, justice and peace where each individual is valued

-To foster a partnership based on mutual respect and understanding among the civic community, church, school and home

-To develop life skills that will encourage each community member to become a mature, responsible, and caring citizen of the world

-To increase each person's level of awareness, sense of responsibility and respect for global ecology

-To challenge each person to develop an open, inquiring mind that allows an appreciation and acceptance of each person's uniqueness as a precious child of God

-To provide a balanced teaching environment that ensures educational excellence while nurturing each person's creativity, spontaneity, emotional stability and self-worth

-To create a safe and pleasant learning environment

-To provide opportunities for each person's total physical development and good health

Our hope is that each member of our school community will be sent forth to love and serve God and neighbor in imitation of Jesus Christ.

PHILOSOPHY

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School prepares students spiritually, intellectually, physically, and socially to meet the challenges of the 21st century. With Christian values as the cornerstone, OLSS provides a learning environment that builds self-directed learners, collaborative workers, and community contributors.

OLSS parents, students, and faculty work in partnership to provide a strong Catholic community as the platform from which all learning takes place. This community recognizes the importance of all its members as teachers and models of Catholic education. OLSS develops students to take their places in society with strong Catholic values.

OLSS students pursue academic excellence within their individual potential and are guided to make decisions grounded in their Catholic faith. Guided by the above philosophy, OLSS supports and follows the Vatican Council Declaration on Christian Education:

> *"Catholic schools are no less zealous than other schools in the promotion of culture and in the human formation of young people. It is, however, the special function of Catholic Schools to develop in the school community an atmosphere animated by the spirit of liberty and charity based on the Gospel. It enables young people, while developing their own personality, to grow at the same time in the new life which has been given to them at baptism."*

II Vatican Council Declaration on
Christian Education, Section 8

ACCREDITATION

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School is fully accredited by the Texas Catholic Conference Education Department (TCCED) in conjunction with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Diocese of Brownsville. The school also has dual accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools on Accreditation and School Improvements (SAC-CASI). This accreditation is given by AdvancED Accreditation Commission.

The last full TCCED state accreditation visit was held in February 2015. Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School received an excellent rating in all seven domains and was accredited without reservation.

The quality of the education offered at OLSS is enriched through membership in the Texas Catholic Conference (TCCED), the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA), the United States Catholic Conference (USCC), and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

Pastor

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School is an integral part of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church Parish. The chief executive officer of the school is the Pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows Church. The pastor is responsible to the Bishop and has the final authority in school matters.

Principal

The Principal is the Chief Administrator of OLS School, and is appointed by and answers directly to the pastor. The principal administers policies set by the Diocesan Catholic Schools Office and the accrediting agencies.

The Principal works with the School Advisory Council and all other Councils and Boards of the school to achieve the Mission of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School. The Principal has final responsibility for the educational and religious programs of the school, long-range planning, as well as all aspects of the school's general operation, financial management and institutional advancement. The Principal has primary responsibility for articulating the mission of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School to the public.

Assistant Principal

The Assistant Principal assists the Principal in the day-to-day operations of the school, which may include curriculum and instruction, technology, scheduling, discipline, and plant and facilities operations.

Faculty

The faculty is responsible for the academic instruction of the students, the evaluation and grading of scholastic achievement, and the classroom management under the guidance of the school administration, in accordance with the requirements of accrediting agencies, the Diocesan school office, and the policies of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School.

Councils

The **OLS School Advisory Council** is an appointed advisory body to the Pastor and Principal for operating the facilities of OLSS. Its duties are to develop local school policies, provide long range planning, oversee the school budget, and promote the merits of Catholic Education. In order to be placed on Our Lady of Sorrows School Advisory Council agenda, requests must be submitted in writing two (2) weeks prior to the meeting.

The **OLSS Development Counci**l is an organization established to advance and enhance Catholic educational opportunities at OLSS. Its duties are to sponsor a major spring fundraiser, cultivate an alumni association, and promote public relations to supplement present revenues and increase Our Lady of Sorrows School's Endowment Fund.

The **OLSS Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO)** provides a vehicle for communication and support among parents, teachers, and students. The PTO sponsors a major fall fundraiser, social events, and programs throughout the year.

The **OLS School Endowment Fund Board** oversees the investments for the Endowment Fund. The members of this board include the Pastor, Principal, Advisory Council President, Development Council President, PTO President, and Financial Advisor.

General Hours Information

School Business Office Hours

The school business office, which include the Bookkeeper, Registrar, and Assistant Bookkeeper/Registrar, is responsible for student applications, registration, student transcripts, tuition and other fee collections. It is located in the main entry of the school lobby. **Their hours are 7:15 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

Daily School Hours

7:05-7:45 a.m.	Supervision available
7:42 a.m.	First bell rings
7:45 a.m.	**Second bell rings - school day officially begins for all students**
3:00 p.m.	Final dismissal bell rings
3:00 p.m.-5:30 p.m.	Afterschool care program & extracurricular activities begin
5:30 p.m.	School offices locked

PARENTS ATTENDING MORNING ASSEMBLY MUST ENTER THROUGH THE FRONT OFFICE ENTRANCE AND OBTAIN A VISITORS PASS.

School Holy Mass

The entire school community attends Holy Mass at Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church **every Friday at 8:00 a.m.** It is important that students be at school on time on Mass days. The students gather in their classrooms with their teachers and then proceed to the church at least 15-20 minutes before the start of the liturgy. Students sit with their classes in designated areas but parents are welcome to join parishioners in any available side pews. Students arriving to school late after their class has already left for church must be taken to the church by their parents. Please do not walk your student to their class's designated seating area after Holy Mass has begun. They may sit in the back with parents or with school support staff. There may be a few times when Holy Mass will be held on Thursday due to no school on Friday. The same requirements apply.

Admissions & Enrollment Requirements

NONDISCRIMINATORY POLICY

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School exists primarily for Catholic students, and secondarily for students of any other denomination who choose a Catholic School. Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School will not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its admission, athletic, or tuition assistance programs.

The application process begins with an application form and a deposit of $255.00 (registration fee). If a student is not accepted and/or a space is not available at Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School, the $200.00 deposit is refunded. After enrollment is completed and the student is officially accepted, the registration fee and tuition payments are non-refundable. Most student supplies and books are included in the tuition payment.

The criteria for enrollment are as follows:

Montessori Program: Pre-Kinder and Kinder (3, 4 5 yrs.)

a. Submission of all required documents
b. The child must be toilet-trained (Pre-Kinder 3-4)
c. Child is emotionally and socially ready for a school environment
One (1) evaluation form from previous Preschool, Day Care Director, or parent must be provided
d. Child has some understanding of the English language
e. Admission is subject to space availability and interview process
f. Approval by school Principal

Grades 1-8

a. Standardized test scores of "50 percentile" or better on Reading Total, Math Total, Language Total, and Battery Composite
OR Successful completion of entrance exam (cost of the exam is $10.00)
b. Submission of all required documents
c. Passing grades of C or better in all subjects
d. Behavior ratings of satisfactory or better
e. Two (2) recommendations from current school
f. Admission is subject to space availability and interview process
g. Approval by school Principal
(OLS School does not accept new 8th graders *unless* they are coming from a diocesan school or have attended Catholic schools in 6th & 7th grades and have requisite credits. Approval by Principal and Superintendent required.)

ADDITIONAL CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION OF NON-CATHOLIC STUDENTS

The non-Catholic applicant should:

a. Understand, accept, and support actively the philosophy and goals of the school
b. Relate responsibly to the members of the school community, whether adults or students
c. Cultivate personal talents and abilities to the extent that he/she is able
d. Attend religion classes
e. Attend church service and/or liturgy at the school and understand the reasons for invitation
f. Participate in the school's service projects

Immigration: Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School complies with Immigration and Naturalization Service (**SEVIS**) requirements regarding non-immigrant, F-1 students. Such students entering the United States to study must hold passports with a U.S. student visa. Authorized personnel will complete all information required using the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System SEVIS registration. Our offices must conform to all policies issued by SEVIS and all student information must be accurate and kept current. Once families receive the SEVIS issued I-20, it must be taken to the consulate to have it validated. It would expedite the procedure if this is done on the same day it is issued.

Enrollment Block: The school reserves the right to dismiss or block re-enrollment of a student for the following reasons:
* Repeated violations of the Discipline & Behavior Policies
* Violations of Specific Policies
* Excessive unexcused absences or tardiness
* Excessive non-compliance with academic requirements,
* Continued non-compliance with tuition payment policy
* Continued uncooperative/non-supportive behavior on the part of the parent

Because it is impossible to foresee all problems which may arise, this clause empowers the administration to block enrollment for any repeat behavior which violates the spirit and philosophy of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School even though not specified above.

Withdrawal/ Transfer Policy:
• Notice of withdrawal of a current student during the school year should be made by the parent verbally or in writing to the school principal.
• An official withdrawal form must be completed by the school along with the parent.
• If a student withdraws during the school year, reimbursement of any monies applied to tuition will be determined by the administration and finance office if applicable.

- **No records will be sent to transferring schools of students whose financial commitment is in arrears.**

Student Records:

- Records of students transferring to other schools will only be sent from "school to school" once officially requested by their receiving campus. They are official and legal documents.
- A student's permanent student file is kept in a secured area and contain academic transcripts, testing scores, grades, earned credits, sacrament certificates, and promotion information.
- Health records are kept in the nurse's office.

Students requesting records/transcripts/recommendations must make a three school-day request to the School Office. All forms should be submitted to the Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School Office for distribution. Completed forms will be sent via the U.S. Mail. Special handling may require that all postal fees be paid by the parents.

- **No records will be sent to transferring schools of students whose financial commitment is in arrears.**

Probationary Period (New Students K3 – 6th): If a student is admitted to Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School, a probationary period of nine weeks exists during which time a decision is made whether the school can continue to meet the academic and behavioral needs of the child. Parents will be informed by the principal of the need to enroll the child elsewhere if the school is not able to meet the needs of the student. This decision may be based on academics, attendance, and code of conduct violations. For our Montessori students, this time is usually considered a period of adjustment where they will demonstrate readiness for school.

TUITION, FEES, & MANDATORY FUND RAISER

Annual tuition is to be paid in twelve (12) equal payments with the first payment due on June 1st. The remaining payments are due on the first (1st) of each month and payable until the fifteenth (15th). Tuition includes book fees and most supplies. Payments are to be made at the bookkeeper's office or mailed in the envelope provided to attention of the bookkeeper.

The school conducts two mandatory fundraisers per year:

- Fall Raffle, commitment* is $200 (40 tickets)
- Spring Car Raffle is $200 (2 tickets).
  *As per the enrollment application and registration forms, families are asked to commit to selling raffle tickets for each of the school's major fundraisers. The funds from this raffle help to supplement the school's operating costs. Commitments not fulfilled by the deadline will be assessed a $30 late fee and charged to the family account.

- Once a student is enrolled, registration fees are non-refundable. Refunds on tuition are not made after September 1.
- Unused lunch and drink fees are refundable.
- Educational trip fees that have been paid to the agency to be visited are non-refundable.
- There is a thirty dollar ($35.00) charge on all returned checks. A returned check constitutes grounds for payment in cash or by cashier's check. This applies to all checks made out to the school, not just tuition.
- A late fee of twenty dollars ($30.00) is added to each payment received after the 15th of the month. If the account is not cleared by the last day of the month, the student is not admitted to class until all financial obligations are met.
- June and July tuition must be paid in full prior to the first official day of class. If any obligations cannot be met, you must make arrangements with the school administration. Failure to make these arrangements may result in your child not being allowed to begin the school year at OLSS.
- In order to be eligible for January registration for the next school year, all financial obligations must be cleared. The school reserves the right to block enrollment if there is a documented history of non-compliance with the tuition payment policy.
- The school will not forward records for students who withdraw with an outstanding balance.

FAMILY SERVICE HOURS (Amended*)

Each family is required to perform 10 hours of service to the school community. There will be many events throughout the year where extra help is required and school staff cannot fulfill that need. This is when parent volunteers are extremely welcome!

This service can be performed at a variety of functions throughout the school year. These functions may be during the week or on weekends (giving working parents more opportunity). Incomplete service hours will be billed to the family account at $10.00 per hour. Further details are available in the Volunteer and/or Service Hours Handbook Guidelines.

- **Although the number of service hours (3hrs) previously requested on the 2016-2017 enrollment application has been raised as of July 2016, the dollar amount per hour has been reduced (from $50 to $10). The reason for the increase of service hours is due to the large Octoberfest fundraiser. PTO and the school is requesting as many parent volunteers as possible. It will be possible for parents to complete the majority of their hours at this event.**
- **Although weekend events will be available for service hours, we recognize that work constraints may affect a parent's volunteer time. Therefore, grandparents and immediate relatives may help with minimal hours.**

ATTENDANCE

In compliance with the Texas State Education Law and the Texas Catholic Conference Education Department (TCCED, accreditation agency), Our Lady of Sorrows School follows compulsory attendance laws, a student in PK3-8th grade who is enrolled in school and required to attend, must meet the legal attendance requirements. A school calendar may provide a total of 180 instructional days. A student who does not attend school for a minimum of 164 of those days may be retained for loss of academic instruction. The school calendar is published prior to the beginning of each school year and provided with this handbook. Parents/guardians are expected to honor this calendar when planning vacations and appointments. Regular attendance is essential for a continuous, uninterrupted program of instruction as a basis for academic success.

Pre-planned absences, such as vacations, will be counted as "Unexcused" and are discouraged. Teachers cannot accommodate parents by outlining lesson plans in advance. Teachers are not required to give make-up tests or assignments for absences due to vacations. No assignment will be given in *anticipation* of the vacation.

The school day extends from 7:45 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Students should not be on campus prior to 7:00 a.m. The school cannot accept the responsibility for any child arriving before or staying beyond the designated times unless the child is involved in a school-sponsored and supervised program.

- An "Excused Absence" will be granted for sickness, (with preferably a physician's note), death in the immediate family, or any other unusual cause cleared by the Principal. All notes must be turned in to the front office no later than seven days (one week) after the child's return to school.
- No make-up will be allowed and no credit will be given for work missed due to Unexcused Absences.
- In the event that a student fails to attend the required 164 days, the parent or guardian is required to meet with the school Attendance committee before May. Parent or guardian must furnish reasons for the absences, including medical verification before credit is given for the school year.
- The attendance committee comprised of Principal, Nurse, and a teacher, accepts the following as "extenuating circumstances" for the purpose of granting credit: personal sickness, sickness or death in the immediate family, quarantine, or participation in approved, school sponsored, extracurricular activities.

ARRIVALS AND TARDIES

All students are to enter the gym through the 11th street entrance, the Gumwood entrance through the courtyard if arriving between 7-7:45 am. Montessori students arriving after 7:20 may go directly to their classrooms through the 12th street entrance.

Morning assembly for students in 1st – 8th grades begins promptly at 7:45 a.m. in the gym. Students arriving after that time but before 8am should report to the cafeteria to be marked as tardy.

After 8am, the student must enter through the front entrance and obtain a late/tardy pass. Students arriving after 9:00 a.m. or leaving before 10:30 a.m. and not returning are marked absent.

Promptness is an indication of good self-discipline. Habitual tardiness will not be tolerated. Habitual tardiness seriously disrupts the educational process of other students and affects school performance of the student who is tardy. It is the responsibility of the parents to make sure the student is punctual to school.

EXCESSIVE TARDIES & ABSENCES

The following consequences will be in place to handle excessive tardies and absences:

- 8 tardies (Count each semester) equal to 1 day of absence.
- 18 tardies (maximum for full year) exclude from extracurricular activities for remainder of school year and may result in possible blocked enrollment (grades 1-7).
- 8 unexcused absences – elimination from extra-curricular activities.
- 16 absences (excused or unexcused) may result in possible academic retention or blocked enrollment for the following school year based on decision by Administrator. Exclusion from extra-curricular activities for remainder of school year.

EARLY DEPARTURES

When a student is to leave school before the regular dismissal time, a written note is required. The note is to be presented to the teacher in charge at the time of dismissal. The student is to come to the office at the designated time and is to be picked up by the parent who signs out the child. Class is not interrupted to call a student to the office. The school does not release a child to anyone other than the parent, legal guardian, or adult listed on the school record.

A student may not be released early on a continual basis. Patterns of early departure or consistent appointments made at the same class time will result in a conference with administration.

DISMISSALS

- All parents are to follow Dismissal Site instructions provided by the school.
- No student is allowed to wait in the office area or outside the school building without supervision while waiting to be picked up. These rules are formulated to ensure the safety of each child while on the school campus.
- Parents must notify the school in writing when a student is allowed to go home with another student or other person.
- Because of the disruptions it causes during our dismissal and to eliminate hurt feelings, **no limousines** are permitted to pick up students for birthday parties, special occasions, etc.

LATE PICK UP

Students not registered in the After School Care Program and not picked up on time at the regular dismissal are taken to a classroom and supervised. There is a $10.00 charge for this service. There is an additional charge of $10 for every 15 minutes past 4:00 p.m. This will be billed directly to the student's account. Continual late pick-up will result in a parent conference with an Administrator.

AFTERSCHOOL CARE PROGRAM

The After School Care Program at OLSS was to provide a safe environment for children of working parents. Priority placement is given to families with **both parents** working. **Drop-ins are not allowed**. This is not a babysitting program. A completed enrollment form must be submitted before students are accepted into the program. Payment for this service is due with the tuition payment at the first of the month payable by the 15th of the month. Failure to abide by the school policies may result in removal of the student from the program.

UNIFORM DRESS CODE

In a society where there is so much emphasis on external appearances and material possessions, it behooves us as parents and educators to help our children grow in the ability to see through and beyond these concerns to more important values. <u>In an effort to teach our children that it is neither the clothing nor the possessions that make each person special</u>, we require all students to wear the uniform prescribed for their grade level unless they have been given specific permission to do otherwise.

All students must be in uniform every day. If a student is not in uniform, the parents will be called and asked to deliver the necessary items to school for the child. The school will have "dress-down" days (blue jeans, non-uniform clothing, etc.) which will be announced during the course of the school year. P.E. classes from 4-8th have a required gym uniform as well and may be obtained in the front office.

Our Lady of Sorrows School, in conjunction with the Catholic Schools Office, has a uniform contract with Parker Uniforms (Harlingen). A list of the prescribed uniform clothing is available through their office as well as in this handbook. No part of uniforms may have a name brand visible.

OLS School recognizes that financial difficulties may hinder the purchase of uniforms from Parker Uniforms. Therefore, flexibility is allowed as to the purchase of boys slacks. Khaki slacks ***<u>MUST</u>*** be as close as possible to the khaki color and design used by Parker Uniform. Carpenter khaki slacks not allowed.

- All shirts and blouses must have the school emblem.
- Students in 5th-8th may wear alternate athletic shoes **during PE class only as per Coach's approval.**
- Scouting uniform may be worn to school on the day of regular meetings or for special Scout events.
- All visible clothing must conform to uniform code.
- All clothing must be clearly marked on the inside with the student's name.
- Any official school shirt may be worn on Spirit Day (most Thursdays).

GROOMING

- Students must keep a neat appearance at all times. Shoe laces are to be kept tied.
- Boys' shirts must be kept tucked in.
- Boys' and Girls' hair may not be bleached, tinted or dyed.
- ***Boys must maintain a neat haircut. Hair must not cover the ears, eyebrows, or collar***.
- Girls' hairstyles are to be worn in a controlled style. **(Barrettes, bows, and combs that match the uniform jumper or skirt, or are in school colors, may be used.)**
- Girls may NOT wear beads, strings, **colors**, etc. in their hair.
- Inappropriate hair styles for boys and girls will be determined by the Principal or Assistant Principal on a one-to-one basis.
- Light make-up is permitted for girls in grade 8 only.
- Only one pair of earrings may be worn (one in each ear lobe), even though a girl may have multiple piercings. Earrings are not allowed for male students.
- No other visible body piercing or tattoos are permitted. One ring, one bracelet, one watch may be worn.
- One necklace or a chain, medal, or cross may be worn inside the blouse or shirt.
- Hair sprays, deodorant sprays, fingernail polish, colognes, or perfumes may not be brought to school. These will be confiscated. (Roll on deodorants are recommended for use after P.E. class.)
- Only clear fingernail polish may be worn in all grades. Removal of all other will be done by school nurse.

Girls Uniforms

PreK3 - PreK4

Plaid Skort (Parker Uniform)
Sailor Blouse with tie matching the skort (Parker Uniform)
White/navy blue Tennis Shoe (Parker Uniforms) –or- All White Tennis Shoe (Parker Uniforms)
Crew Socks – all white

K 5- Grade 3

Plaid Jumper (length just below knee) (Parker Uniform) Sailor Blouse with no tie (Parker Uniform)
Crew Socks – all white
White/navy blue Tennis Shoe (Parker Uniforms) –or- All White Tennis Shoe (Parker Uniforms). Purchase flexibility is given here but shoe must be **all-white shoe**. **No cloth tennis shoes allowed. No colored stripes on shoes.**

Grade 4 - Grade 5

Plaid Skirt (length just below knee) (Parker Uniform) Sailor Blouse with Tie matching the skirt (Parker Uniform) Crew Socks – all white
White/navy blue Tennis Shoe (Parker Uniforms) –or- All White Tennis Shoe (Parker Uniforms). Purchase flexibility is given here but shoe must be **all-white shoe**. **No cloth tennis shoes allowed. No colored stripes on shoes.**
Official PE Uniform (***longer blue shorts**)

Grade 6 – Grade 7
Navy Blue Skirt (length just below knee) (Parker Uniform)
White Blouse with Tie matching the skirt (Parker Uniform)
Crew Socks – all white
White/navy Tennis Shoe (all white size 7 and up) (Parker) – or- All White Tennis Shoe (Parker Uniform) Purchase flexibility is given here but shoe must be **all-white shoe**. **No cloth tennis shoes allowed. No colored stripes on shoes.**
Official PE Uniform (***longer blue shorts**)

Grade 8
Navy Blue Skirt (length just below knee) (Parker Uniform)
White Blouse w/Tie matching the skirt (Parker) Crew Socks – all white
White/navy blue Tennis Shoe (all white if size is 7 or above) All White Tennis Shoe (Parker Uniform) Purchase flexibility is given here but shoe must be **all-white shoe**. **No cloth tennis shoes allowed. No colored stripes on shoes.**
Navy Blazer worn on Mass day/Special Occasions (Grade 8 only)

Boys Uniforms
PreK 3-K4
Khaki shorts or long slacks (Parker Uniform) Light blue Polo Shirt (Parker Uniform), Black Belt, Crew Socks – all white
All black Tennis Shoe (Parker Uniform)
K5- Grade 5
Khaki Shorts or Long Slacks (Parker Uniform)
Navy blue Polo Shirt to be worn Mon. – Thurs. (Parker Uniform)
White Polo Shirt to be worn on Friday for Mass (Parker Uniform) Black Belt
Crew Socks – all white
All black Tennis Shoe (Parker Uniform). Purchase flexibility is given here but shoe must be **all-black shoe**. **No cloth tennis shoes allowed. No colored stripes on shoes. No visible brand names or symbols.**
Official PE Uniform (Grades 4 – 5)
Grade 6 – 8
Khaki Slacks (Parker Uniform) Striped Oxford Shirt (Parker Uniform)
Tie to be worn with oxford shirts on Mass day
Navy Blazer worn on Mass day/Special Occasions (Grade 8) Black Belt
Crew Socks – all white
All black Tennis Shoe (Parker Uniform). Purchase flexibility is given here but shoe must be **all-black shoe**. **No cloth tennis shoes allowed. No colored stripes on shoes. No visible brand names or symbols.**
Official PE Uniform (Grades 6 – 7)

Winter Wear Clothing – Girls/Boys

Plain white or navy tights and knee highs allowed

Designated Parker Uniform Sweaters/Pullovers, Jackets in Navy

- OLS School recognizes that financial difficulties may hinder the purchase of uniforms from Parker Uniforms. Therefore, flexibility is allowed as to the purchase of jackets**. The recommended color for all jackets and sweaters is navy blue with no visible brand name or logo.** These may be worn to and during the school days. All other color sweaters and jackets must be removed within in the school buildings and classrooms. We suggest you purchase a navy blue sweater for your child to wear in the classroom if the jacket is other color and must be removed.

GROOMING

- Students must keep a neat appearance at all times. Shoe laces are to be kept tied.
- Boys' shirts must be kept tucked in.
- Boys' and Girls' hair may not be bleached, tinted or dyed.
- Boys must maintain a neat haircut. Hair must not cover the ears, eyebrows, or collar.
- Girls' hairstyles are to be worn in a controlled style. **(Barrettes, bows, and combs that match the uniform jumper or skirt are in school colors may be used.)**
- Girls may NOT wear beads, strings, colors, etc. in their hair.
- Inappropriate hair styles for boys and girls will be determined by the Principal or Assistant Principal on a one-to-one basis.
- Light make-up is permitted for girls in grade 8 only.
- Only one pair of earrings may be worn (one in each ear lobe), even though a girl may have multiple piercings. Earrings are not allowed for male students.
- No other visible body piercing or tattoos are permitted. One ring, one bracelet, one watch may be worn.
- One necklace or a chain, medal, or cross may be worn inside the blouse or shirt.
- Hair sprays, deodorant sprays, fingernail polish, colognes, or perfumes may not be brought to school. These will be confiscated. (Roll on deodorants are recommended for use after P.E. class.)
- Only clear fingernail polish may be worn in all grades. Removal of all other will be done by school nurse.

ACADEMICS/CURRICULUM

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School follows the Diocesan required academic curriculum standards, which are consistent with the State of Texas Education Agency guidelines, in the teaching of all secular areas. Subject textbooks and programs are chosen for their alignment to these guidelines.

The Religion program provides each student the opportunity to develop and enrich their relationship with God. It is our goal to catechize each member of our student community to be sent forth to love and serve God and others in imitation of Jesus Christ.

Students in Kindergarten through 8th grade take the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), as required by the Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Brownsville, once in the fall and benchmarks in the spring.

Progress Reports/Report Cards

The academic year is divided into 4 quarters of 9 weeks each. Progress reports for students in grades 1-8th are issued approximately midway through each marking period. **Report Cards with numerical grades are issued every nine weeks for these same students, however grades are not issued to 1st graders until the second nine-week marking period**. Montessori progress reports are issued 3 times years, once before the Christmas holiday, and twice in the spring.

Grading Policy

94 – 100 =A 86 – 93 = B 75 – 85 = C 70 – 74 = D 69 and below = F (failing)

Grades are weighted in for students in 3rd-8th as follows:

Tests	50% of academic grade
Classwork/Quiz	40% of academic grade
Homework	10% of academic grade

Class projects may be counted as a test, quiz, or classwork grade as per the teacher's discretion. Exams in Middle School may count as two test grades.

Report Cards envelopes must be signed and returned to the homeroom teacher. It is the responsibility of the parent to ask their student for the distributed report card. Requests for grade error change must be made in writing to the teacher within 2 days of distribution.

Honor Roll

It is the belief of OLS School that honor roll recognition is based on academic grades, is granted per quarter, and defined as the following:

"An" Honor Roll grades for all subjects, including electives, must be 94-100.

"A/B" Honor Roll grades for all subjects, including electives, must be 86-100.

Homework

Homework is an important part of the student's educational experience. It is given for reinforcement and enrichment purposes. It is also given to foster habits of independent study and to meet growth needs of individual students.

Assignments are expected to be neatly written and completed when due. These assignments may include class, research, science, technology, or in preparation for a test.

The following guidelines are recommended for parents and students:

Primary (1-8th)

- Homework is due the day following the given assignment, unless otherwise noted by teacher. It is checked and returned in a timely manner by the teacher.
- Parents will be notified if homework is not being consistently returned. This inconsistency may be noted on progress report.
- Students who are absent due to illness or family emergencies and are given excused absences are given a day for each absence to make up their missed homework.
- Missed work or tests may not be given for unexcused absences.
- When advanced notice is given for a long-term assignment, no excuse is accepted for lateness. It is our goal to help each child develop responsibility in completing their assignments.
- Students absent 3 or more days are given additional time to make-up work if they have received such permission from their teacher.
- Homework will not be given when student is absent one day only.
- Parents may contact front office to request homework for students out more than one day.

Make-Up Work and Testing

It is the responsibility of the student (grades 3-8) to arrange time and place for make-up work with the teacher. Students are given one day per each excused absence day to make up missed work or tests. Students who do not make up work during the allotted time or dates will not receive credit for missed work.

Work missed during out-of-school suspension will not receive credit, as this is an unexcused absence due to disciplinary action. However, students are expected to complete assignments to remain current with coursework.

Testing of students may include the following:

- Assessment of Catholic Religious Education (ACRE) Level 1, administered to grades 5 & Level 2 administered to grade 8.
- Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) administered to grades K-8 during the fall and spring semesters. (make-up not available after two days of absence)
- Classroom testing (weekly/quarterly) for student performance assessment
- Special academic needs testing will be done by appropriate agency or school district in which the child resides.

Valedictorian/Salutatorian

Students who have attended and completed the entire 3 years of 6th, 7th, and 8th grades at Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School qualify for consideration as Valedictorian and Salutatorian.

Valedictorian will have the highest grade point average of the three combined middle school years. Salutatorian will have the second highest average of the three combined middle school years.

Promotion

A student is promoted to the next grade level if, considering his/her academic abilities, he/she has satisfactorily completed the work for the current grade level and adhered to the attendance policy. The following are the specific regulations for promotion:

Kinder 5 yrs.:

A student must have completed the requirements for the Kindergarten Montessori program and have the social maturity to move on to the next grade level. This decision may be made jointly by teacher, parents, counselor, and Principal.

Grades 1-5:

A student must have passing grades in all major core subjects: Religion, Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies.

Grades 6-8:

A Middle School student, according to accreditation requirements, must earn a minimum of 7 credits per year, with a minimum of 21 credits required for the three years.

A student failing two core subjects may not be promoted to the next grade level. Retention may be at the discretion of the Principal and Teacher. Students may also be TRANSFERRED to the next grade level but may not continue at OLS School.

Academic Integrity

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School places high value on academic integrity. It does not permit any form of dishonesty or deception that unfairly, improperly or illegally enhances a grade on an individual assignment or course grade.

This includes but is not limited to:

- Cheating on exams
- "borrowing" or "sharing" answers on tests and exams
- Taking tests for other students
- Plagiarism in any submitted coursework

Students who choose to violate these guidelines face a failing grade, detention, suspension, and/or expulsion.

COMMUNICATION/CONFERENCES

The lines of communication should always be open and positive between student, teacher, parent, and administration. Therefore:

- students are encouraged to approach their teachers first in the event of any concerns or questions in regards to academics, school policies, extra-curricular activities, or events.
- parents are encouraged to keep in close contact with their child's instructors. Although teachers strive to maintain contact with every parent, the reality is that due to instructional demands, this is not always done in a timely manner. Do not wait for that teacher phone call if you have concerns. Call the front office and a message will be forwarded to the teacher or a parent conference will be set up.
- Teachers have designated parent/teacher conference times. If these times are not possible, accommodations will may be attempted, included before and/or after school hours.
- All conferences should be conducted in a professional, confidential manner, and in an appropriate setting. Hallways and sports game sites are not appropriate settings.
- Conferences will be limited only to the parent's child and other students' behavior will not be discussed.
- The teacher has the right to stop the conference if a parent becomes verbally or physically abusive and the parent will be asked to leave the building.
- A parent asking to meet with the Principal or Assistant Principal in regards to student concerns wil.l always be encouraged to meet with the teacher first. It is in the spirit of open communication that we support resolving issues at the root.
- If a parent and teacher cannot resolve an issue, the counselor or Assistant Principal is asked to step in and mediate.
- The Principal will step in when all mediation has been exhausted.

RenWeb

Our school has contracted with RebWeb, a hosting communications company, to develop and maintain direct electronic communication between students, parents, and teachers. This will may include emails, grade links, and teacher websites.

OLSSNET.ORG

Our school website is a good source of information and support that includes a copy of the handbook, menus, calendar, events, and much more.

Facebook

Like us on Facebook as well under Our Lady of Sorrows School McAllen.

Email/Remind App

Teachers have school email accounts and parents may communicate with them through these accounts, always remembering to be professional in their correspondence. Staff is discouraged from communicating with parents through social media such as personal Facebook accounts, Twitter, Texts, etc.

Many teachers use the Remind App to communicate immediate changes in assignments, send project reminders, or field trip information. The teacher will contact parents as to how to be included in the Remind app.

Telephone Calls

- Teachers will be given the message to respond to parent telephone calls by having said messages placed in their teacher in-boxes. Teachers check their boxes between classes or during their planning times. If the concern is urgent, the receptionist will let the teacher know.
- School phones are to be used for official business only.
- Students are not called out of class to answer a parent phone call. In extreme emergency, the phone call will be directed to an administrator.
- Telephone calls requesting a student be told of a change in transportation, After School Care, etc. are discouraged and accepted only if done before 2pm. Relaying these messages can be very disruptive to the learning process, as well as to the front office staff's duties.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

A grievance is a complaint based on any alleged violation or inequitable application of policy or a dispute over the meaning or interpretation of the terms contained in this handbook.

This procedure is intended to resolve a grievance informally at the lowest possible administrative level in a Christian atmosphere. Persons with concerns regarding application or interpretation of a policy should first attempt to address the concern with the teacher. Only after such attempts have failed should administrators be contacted.

The following levels of submitting and resolving a grievance are:

INFORMAL ACTION – RESOLUTION/CONCILIATION

Level 1 - Presentation to the Teacher

Level 2 - Presentation to the Assistant Principal

Level 3 – Presentation to the Principal

FORMAL ACTION

If a satisfactory resolution is not reached at the resolution/conciliation level, the complainant shall state his or her complaint in writing (on a form to be provided by the principal), setting forth the nature of the complaint, all relevant details and the remedy sought. This form should be submitted to the pastor within ten (10) working days following the meeting with the principal.

Level 4 - Presentation to the Pastor

Level 5 Decisions corresponding to any matter other than school personnel are final and will not be considered at Level 6.

Level 6 - Presentation to the Superintendent

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

The essence of Christian discipline is self-discipline. Rules and regulations pertaining to the management of student behavior are necessary for the development and maintenance of an orderly, safe, Christian school environment.

Because student behavior needs to reflect the Catholic values of Our Lady of Sorrows School, the following Code of Conduct has been established. It is applicable at any time a student's behavior would reflect upon the school or parish community, ***whether the action takes place on or off school property*.**

CODE OF CONDUCT & POLICIES

POLICY REGARDING BULLYING

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School is committed to providing an atmosphere conducive to learning with a focus on the personal worth and dignity of every child. All efforts are made to educate children in a Christ-like setting. Therefore, verbal, written, or on-line acts of name-calling, taunting, bullying, harassment, physical aggression, acts causing physical injury, or acts causing another to do the same are not tolerated.

Victims or witnesses to these actions should report them to the teacher and/or administration immediately. All allegations are investigated, and prompt, appropriate disciplinary action is taken.

Disciplinary action may include any or all of the actions indicated in the 'Consequences' section of this Code of Conduct or as required by law.

POLICY REGARDING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The administration and staff of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School believe that all students are entitled to study and work in school-related environments that are free of sexual harassment. Our Lady of Sorrows School does not tolerate sexual harassment of any type. **(***Harassment*: *Engaging in any type of unwanted and unwelcome verbal or physical behavior*).

Victims or witnesses of these actions should report them to the teacher and/or administration immediately. Allegations are investigated and prompt, appropriate disciplinary action is taken. Parents of both parties are notified.

Examples of peer sexual harassment include, but are not limited to: verbal, written (including texts, chats, social media), or on-line taunting, bullying, other offensive, intimidating, or hostile conduct, gestures or touches, actions, clothing or accessories, music, verbal, written, or on-line communications, graffiti, jokes, nicknames, stories, pictures, cartoons, drawings, or objects which are offensive, annoy, abuse, or demean an individual or group.

Disciplinary action may include any or all of the actions indicated in the 'Consequences' section of this Code of Conduct or as required by law.

POLICY REGARDING STUDENT THREATS

All student threats to endanger or inflict harm to oneself or others are taken seriously. Anyone hearing a threat must report it immediately to the supervising adult or Principal. A student making a threat, whether verbal, written, on-line, or other is taken to the office for supervision.

Judgment as to the seriousness and immediacy of the threat will indicate notification of the parents and/or police, as the situation warrants, along with any intended or potential recipients of the threat (i.e., adults or, if the threat is directed against a student, the parents of the student).

Disciplinary action may include any or all of the actions indicated in the 'Consequences' section of this Code of Conduct or as required by law.

POLICY REGARDING FIGHTS

Any student engaged in a fight is subject to immediate disciplinary action appropriate to the age and maturity of the student.

Disciplinary action may include any or all of the actions indicated in the 'Consequences' section of this Code of Conduct or as required by law.

POLICY REGARDING WEAPONS

A weapon includes but is not limited to any instrument, device, or object capable of inflicting injury and designed or specifically adapted for use as a weapon, and possessed or carried as a weapon. This includes any dangerous object (firearm, knife, deadly weapon, explosive, incendiary device) or look-alike.

This policy expressly prohibits the use, possession, transmission, sale or discharge of any weapons, instruments, or explosive devices in the school, on school grounds, or at school-sponsored activities. If it is determined that this policy has been violated, the parents of the offender shall be immediately contacted and shall cooperate with the disciplinary process.

Disciplinary action may include any or all of the actions indicated in the 'Consequences' section of this Code of Conduct or as required by law.

POLICY REGARDING DRUGS OR ALCOHOL

Students will not possess, sell, use, transmit, or abuse drugs or look-alike drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or any illegal substance. If it is determined that this policy has been violated, the parents of the offender shall be immediately contacted and shall cooperate with the disciplinary process.

Disciplinary action may include any or all of the actions indicated in the 'Consequences' section of this Code of Conduct or as required by law.

POLICY REGARDING SEARCH AND SEIZURE

Because school officials have a legitimate interest in the safety and protection of all students within their care and custody, the school reserves the right to search anything brought on school property.

Lockers are the property of the school and are subject to search at any time. The Principal reserves the right to conduct locker inspection and/or search if circumstances warrant it. Students tampering with another student's lock or locker are referred to the office for disciplinary action. The Principal reserves the right to have students empty their pockets, purses, and/or packbacks for stolen articles, weapons, and/or drugs.

Disciplinary action may include any or all of the actions indicated in the 'Consequences' section of this Code of Conduct or as required by law.

POLICY REGARDING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

Texas State law requires teachers, administrative personnel, and other employees of any public or private school to report all suspected incidents of child abuse to the Child Protective services (CPS). Child abuse includes physical abuse, physical neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional maltreatment. OLSS will follow the State of Texas guidelines for the CPS investigation.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Respect Authority - students will not defy school authorities and/or challenge school rules and policies.
2. Accept consequences for your actions - students will not refuse to accept discipline and the consequences of their behavior.
3. Avoid school or classroom disruptions - students will not deliberately disrupt any school activity.
4. Avoid endangering yourself or others - students will not endanger the well-being of themselves or others and avoid all forms of assault or violence and will not bring to school or have in their possession any article or object judged to be harmful to themselves or others or the good order of the school.

5. Show affection appropriately - any expressions of affection between/among students will be simple and appropriate to the school situation.
6. Avoid foul language - students will not use profane, vulgar, disrespectful, or hurtful language.
7. Maintain a "Bully-Free" environment - students will not tease, bully, harass, and/or coerce others.
8. Respect school and personal property - students will not damage, destroy, or deface any property and will be required to make restitution as directed.
9. No unauthorized snacks - students will not chew gum or have or consume any unauthorized snacks, food, or beverages on school property.
10. No illegal substances - students will not possess, sell, use, transmit, or abuse any drugs or look-alike drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or any illegal substance and will participate in the education and prevention programs provided or recommended by the school.
11. Follow the Uniform policy - students will follow the school uniform code regulations.
12. Complete assignments and do your own work - students will be truthful and honest and not engage in any form of cheating or dishonesty.
13. **Leave all electronic devices at home - students will not have in their possession personal cell phones, pagers, electronic games, beepers, recording/ listening devices, or unauthorized software**.
    ********Cell phones should be turned in to the front office before the start of the school day and retrieved at day's end. A student caught using a cell phone, which includes calling, texting, or picture taking, during school hours will have phone confiscated by administration. Phone must be then picked up in front office by parent.**
14. Follow arrival and dismissal policies - students will follow all school policies for arrival and dismissal and will not leave the school premises or assigned classes without authorized permission during the school day.
15. Follow rules and procedures - students will not violate the ***Code of Conduct*** or its ***Specific Policies.***

CONSEQUENCES FOR NON-COMPLIANCE

Actions that can be used to enforce this Code include but are not limited to the following:

- verbal or written warning
- written notification to parents of infractions/phone call to parent, communication through RenWeb
- confiscation of objects which violate the code of conduct (These items may be returned at the administrator's/teacher's discretion directly to the parent.)
- parent conference
- After School Detention
- In-School-Suspension (requires payment of applicable fee for additional personnel)
- behavior contract
- referral to professional counseling
- mandatory community service

The following disciplinary actions must be approved by the Principal or Assistant Principal:

- Out-of-School Suspension (A student MAY NOT make up work missed)
- notification of the police
- blocked enrollment
- expulsion
- ineligibility for Honors graduation (grade 8)

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

Administrators, faculty, and staff at Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School are committed to:

1. Motivating and assisting students to follow the Code of Conduct as a means of personal growth, an expression of Christian moral behavior, and respect and care for oneself and others
2. Enforcing the school rules and discipline policies with fairness and discretion
3. Allowing for adjustments in disciplinary actions as deemed necessary due to circumstances and maturity of the student
4. Maintaining effective and respectful communications with parents regarding student behaviors and appropriate parental responses
5. Continually updating their understanding of student behavior and its influences, and the techniques of classroom and student management.

PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents/guardians have the responsibility as primary teachers and disciplinarians of their child to:

1. Model and support their child's practice of the Catholic faith
2. Support school policy and the authority of the administration and teachers
3. Insist that their child obeys the regulations and principles of good behavior
4. Support teachers and administration in the discipline of your child and respect their judgments as they apply the school discipline code
5. Be aware of and monitor external influences like TV programs, movies, social media, etc.
6. Sign and return all correspondence in the time prescribed
7. Encourage their child to complete all assignments
8. Communicate openly with faculty and staff when necessary and avoid any criticism of teachers and school policy within and without the school building
9. Follow the policies and procedures stated in the handbook
10. Pay all fees (tuition, lunch, etc.) on time
11. Reimburse school for property destroyed (accidentally or intentionally) by their child.

A note to parents:

As the parent/guardian of an Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School student, you are principally responsible for the behavior and conduct of your child. As school administration and teachers, our goal is to assist and support you in this responsibility. Also, through our direction and our code of conduct, we hope to provide motivation and guidelines for your child's behavior. In a particular way of fulfilling your many parental responsibilities, we ask that you be especially mindful of your child's use of and exposure to our contemporary media and entertainment (television, films, games, music, internet access, etc.). More than ever, these expose our children to extremes of violence, sexuality, and personal disrespect, which can affect their own attitudes, values, and behaviors.

Elastic Clause

Because it is impossible to foresee all problems which arise, this clause empowers the administration to take disciplinary action for any behavior on the part of student or parent which violates the spirit and philosophy of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School even though not specified in this Code of Conduct.

TECHNOLOGY

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School's computer facilities provide unequaled opportunities to explore and use a varied and exciting set of educational resources including computer programs, CDs, and access to the Internet.

We recognize that the Internet's access to virtually limitless sources of information poses a hazard. Some Internet sites contain materials which are sexually explicit, offensive, or contrary to our educational mission. Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School does use filters and a firewall that limit access to undesirable web sites. However, these measures are not completely effective in deterring individuals who are intent on accessing such sites. Therefore, we provide supervision wherever computers are in use.

Engagement in online blogs such as, but not limited to, Facebook, InstaChat, MySpace.com®, Xanga®, Friendster®, etc. may result in disciplinary actions if the content of the student's blog includes defamatory comments regarding the school, the faculty, other students or the parish.

We place primary responsibility on the student to use our computer facilities for appropriate means only. The rules for computer usage and guidelines for on-line conduct will be posted in each room where computers are available for use. Failure to meet any of these expectations may result in revocation of the student's permission to use the school's computers and/or other disciplinary action.

To be granted permission to use the school's computers, the student must:

- Sign the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) Agreement;
- Obtain a parental signature on the AUP Agreement;
- Return the signed copy of the AUP Agreement to the Homeroom Teacher.

The following are considered as serious violations, which may lead to suspension or termination of privileges:

- Use of the network or Internet to plagiarize or violate copyright laws
- Use of the network or Internet to send or display offensive and/or obscene messages or pictures
- Use of computer to access material that is profane or obscene, that advocates illegal acts, or that advocates violence or discrimination towards other people
- Use of the network or Internet to harass, insult, or attack others
- Use of the network or Internet for commercial purposes or sending of unsolicited junk mail, or chain letters
- Trespassing in another's folder, work, or files FOR ANY REASON
- Use of DVDs, USB data devices (regardless of source or content) without the permission of the network administrator or classroom teacher
- The creation, propagation, and/or use of computer viruses
- Acts of vandalism, which include, but are not limited to, any attempt to harm or destroy the network/Internet or any networks or sites connected to the network/Internet
- Attempts to breach security codes and/or passwords
- Willful destruction of computer hardware, software, or attempts to exceed or modify the parameters of the system (will require restitution for costs associated with system restoration, hardware, or software)
- Attempts to read, delete, copy, or modify the electronic mail of other system users
- Deliberate interference with the ability of other system users to send or receive electronic mail
- Electronic snooping for any purpose or transmission of discriminatory or harassing language by any student, school employee, or volunteer
- Threats to carry out any of the above

Online Safety

When using the Internet, students are expected to act in a proper and ethical manner and to abide by these general rules when using school computers:

- Being polite. Not writing or sending abusive messages to others.
- Using appropriate language. Not swearing, using vulgarities, or any other inappropriate language.
- Not revealing personal address or phone numbers or those of fellow students or send my picture to anyone without getting my parent's permission.
- Never arrange a meeting with any person encountered online while using the school's computer system.
- Notify a staff member if a request for personal information or threatening statements, or any transmission that causes the receiver to feel uncomfortable is received through the school's system.
- E-mail is not guaranteed to be private. People who operate the system do have access to all e-mail. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities may be reported to the authorities.
- Do not buy or order anything online or give out credit-card information

PARENT PERMISSION FOR MEDIA RELEASE

Parents or Guardians must give permission for Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School to use a child's name, picture, or comments in any materials used to promote school programs, recruit new students, and/or dispense public information. **This permission is to be granted or denied during orientation and kept on file throughout the school year**.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Clinic

Texas State law forbids the dispensing of medications by school employees without the written request of the parents or legal guardians. The designated school employee at the school is the nurse.

A student with severe health issues such as diabetes, epilepsy, asthma, etc. needs a note from the doctor summarizing the condition, to be kept in the student's emergency file.

If your child requires medication during school hours, this medicine must be sent to the clinic with a note containing the following information:

1. Name of student
2. Name of the medication
3. The prescribed dosage of the medication
4. The time(s) and exact dates of administration of the medication
5. In the case of prescription drugs, the full name of the doctor prescribing the medication
6. The signature of the parent or legal guardian
7. Medications must be prescribed by a U.S. physician and come from a U. S. pharmacy.

CAMPUS CRISIS PLAN

OLSS adheres to all regulations contained in the Campus Crisis Plan issued by the Diocese of Brownsville Catholic School Office. This Crisis Plan covers emergencies that may arise at school and includes response procedures, emergency numbers, and other pertinent information. The Crisis Plan is available for review in the school office.

Confidentiality

School staff, including teachers, counselors, and administrators, will keep confidential information entrusted to them as long as no one's life, health, or safety is at stake. Parents will be notified promptly if there is an immediate concern.

Educational Field Trips

Field Trips are initiated by the teacher and approved by the Principal. Permission slips must be signed by a parent or guardian, and returned to teacher along with applicable fees requested. Verbal permission by telephone or written permission by fax will not be accepted in lieu of an official permission slip due to liability issues.

These educational field trips are a privilege, not a right; thus, participation can be denied if a student fails to meet academic and/or behavioral requirements.

All trips will be related to some aspect of the curriculum being studied.

Emergency Contact Information

In order to assure our ability to make contact in case of emergency, parents must update Emergency Contact information as changes are made to home addresses, home phone or cell phone numbers, or emergency contact persons.

FAMILY/CUSTODIAL SITUATIONS IN RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SCHOOL

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School is finding an increasing number of families experiencing transitions in parental custodial relationships. For this reason we find it necessary to clarify and restate the usual procedures followed by the administration and faculty in dealing with parents in such situations.

In two parent families it is assumed that both parents are living at the same address unless we have been notified otherwise. Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School personnel will, therefore, send home notices, communications, etc., with the child. It is assumed that both parents are communicating regarding the child and that all information is shared by and between the parents. This information includes, but is not limited to, conference appointments, report cards, progress reports, discussions with school personnel, tuition statements, and extra-curricular activities.

In families experiencing separation of parents, or ending in divorce, the above information will be sent home with the child to whichever parent currently has care of the child. It is assumed that this information is shared by the parents and between the parents. Since this situation frequently impacts on a child's achievement and interaction at school, parents are asked to inform both the Principal and teacher of this fact so that appropriate support can be given to the child. Our Lady of Sorrows School personnel cannot proceed on hearsay, rumors, or demands of a parent, but only with the appropriate documentation detailed below.

In cases of an actual divorce decree involving clear custody by one parent, the Principal is to be informed by the custodial parent of this fact. A copy of the first page of the decree bearing the case number, the pages referring to custody and the relationship with the school, and the final page bearing the judge's signature are to be submitted to the Principal. Unless the decree indicates otherwise, school communications will be sent home to the custodial parent. Custodial parents should understand, however, that unless the divorce decree specifically limits the non-custodial parent's right to access to records, the non-custodial parent has a right to the same access as the custodial parent. We will, unless instructed by a Court Order, release such records upon request to the non-custodial parent. "Records" include official transcripts, report cards, health records, referrals for special services, and communications regarding major disciplinary actions. It does not include daily class-work and papers or routine communications sent home through the child to the home of residence. In these cases the custodial parent is asked to cooperate with the school and share this information directly with the non-custodial parent. This avoids time-consuming duplication of services.

Further, you should realize that unless restricted by Court Order, any non-custodial parent has the right to attend any school activity of their child which includes sports activities and class programs. Parents should keep each other informed as to these activities to avoid duplication of communications and to allow the school to better attend to the duty of teaching your children.

In cases of "joint" custody (shared parenting agreements) entitling both parents access to school personnel and activities, it is assumed that one copy of communications and information will be sent home with the child and that this will be shared by and between the parents.

Regarding parent conferences in all situations: It is preferred and will be the general procedure that one conference appointment be scheduled 'jointly' if both parents wish to be present. It is assumed that parents are also to set aside differences and to come together on behalf of their child for this time. A joint conference further insures that both parents are given the same information at the same time, thereby avoiding misunderstandings and misinterpretations.

In cases where joint conferences are clearly neither possible nor desirable by all parties involved, alternative arrangements may be discussed with the Principal, subject to the approval of both parents, and further reviewed by Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School's legal counsel. Every effort will be made to keep communication open with both parents while at the same time avoiding duplication of services and excessive demands on the teacher's time.

Visitation should generally begin at the home of one of the parents and not at school. It is hoped that visitation arrangements would reflect the sensitivity of both parents to the consistency and routines that foster security in a child and allow for school responsibilities and homework to be taken care of during the school week.

If there are questions concerning this statement of procedures or circumstances you feel necessitate other arrangements, please contact the Principal personally.

Guidance Program

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School provides full-time certified counselors. The counselors provide individual, group, and class sessions. Parents may request additional counseling services by submitting the appropriate forms available in the school office.

Graduation

- The school coordinates a graduation Mass and ceremony for 8th graders in May.
- The Montessori Kindergarten has a promotion celebration on their last day of school in the school gym.

LIBRARY

The library is central to the school's total educational mission. As such, the library program is fully integrated into the curriculum, serving the school's educational goals and objectives. The library offers both traditional resources and new technologies as teaching and learning tools. The library is accessible to teachers and students during the instructional day, as well as before and after school at the library manager's designated times and days.

Students regularly visit the library to check out books, to receive instruction of library techniques, and to do research. When in the library they are under the supervision of the library manager. Fines are assessed for overdue books and all lost or overdue fees must be paid at year's end to receive report card.

Middle School lockers

Lockers and locks are provided as a convenience. Students are responsible for keeping their lockers clean and orderly. No decorations are allowed on the outside of the locker. Only school provided locks may be used. Students are advised not to share their locker combinations with others. Locker assignments and combinations will be handled through the school secretary and receptionist.

Parties

- Grades PK-5 are permitted two class parties per year (Christmas and Valentine's Day). School sponsored dances and sports activity days are scheduled only for Middle School.
- Class time is not taken for birthday parties. Birthday cupcakes or cookies may be brought to share with classmates during snack time for Montessori students or lunchtime as dessert for the other grade levels. This requirement is a result of excessive celebrations in previous years.
- ***Birthday invitations may be distributed in class only with teacher approval. Distribution may only be made to the entire class or boy/girl sections. Invitations given out during morning assembly or lunchtime may be confiscated. These requirements are for the emotional well-being of all students. It is very hurtful to see classmates receive an invitation while one is left out.***
- Students may not bring refreshments or collect money for any celebration without approval from administrators.
- Delivery of flowers, balloons, etc. to the school is discouraged. Such deliveries will be held in the front office and given to students at the end of the school day.
- The developmental stages of students should be considered when planning outside activities that affect the school population. Home parties that encourage boy-girl relationships, or allow the use of alcoholic beverages, drugs, etc. should never be tolerated.

Physical Education

All students are required to participate in the gym classes unless a written note from the student's physician is presented stating the reason and duration of the exemption. Copies should be given to the classroom teacher, coach, and nurse.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS OR EVACUATIONS

Notification of school closings due to weather will be announced on TV Channels 4, 5, and 48. Notice will be posted on the school Facebook page, Website, and through the school messenger email and phone notification system.

In case of a school evacuation, students are to be picked up at the Church.

School Facilities

Use of the school facilities is encouraged for programs which provide a significant religious, educational, or civic contribution to the public, provided that such programs do not interfere with regular school activities or create expenses or liabilities which jeopardize the school's operation.

The principal in conjunction with the pastor will determine the conditions under which their school facilities may be used. Adequate insurance or bonding must be supplied.

Solicitations

Literature promoting private businesses, organizations, or political candidates may not be distributed through the school.

Student Community Service

In an effort to instill in our students the Church's teachings on social justice and call for all of the faithful to contribute to the common good of all its members, and in fulfillment of our school's mission statement, all students in grades 6,7,8 will be required to do 20 hours of community service during the school year. This service is part of their Religion grade and service opportunities may be provided by the school campus ministry program. Other service opportunities may be approved by administration and the campus minister.

Student Fund-Raising

Students may not engage in fund-raising activities without the approval of the Principal, either individually or as a club.

TEXTBOOKS

All student textbooks, workbooks, and paperbacks must be cared for at all times. Students who lose, deface, or misplace a textbook, workbook, or paperback are required to replace it at their own expense. Student accounts will be billed for the cost of the replacement book plus shipping.

Visitors and Guests

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School is a closed campus. All parents, visitors, and guests are required to check in at the front office and receive an ID pass. A photo ID or Driver's License may be required. This pass must be obtained for those adults attending morning assembly as well.

Volunteers

All volunteers dealing directly and consistently with students must undergo a criminal background check or name based search through law enforcement databases as well as training in a diocesan program on recognizing child abuse called "Protecting God's Children". Both are done through the school and sessions will be announced.

Volunteer doing community service will be assigned an area and duties explained on tasks they will be responsible for. Cell phones should not be in use during volunteer time.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students participating in Extra-Curricular activities are evaluated at each progress report and reporting period. Any student receiving a failing mark in any subject will be ineligible for extra-curricular activities for (a) two weeks after a progress report (b) four weeks after a report card, or (c) as soon as a student can show proof from the failing class teacher that the grade has been raised to passing. If, after this time period all grades are passing, the student will recover his/her eligibility. Continued participation in any activity is contingent on behavior and compliance with school policies and the Code of Conduct. Grounds for removal from an activity can include, but are not limited to, serious violation of the Code of Conduct, behavior contract, excessive discipline slips, and suspension.

ATHLETIC PROGRAM

All students in grades 6, 7, and 8 are eligible to try out and participate in the interscholastic sports program offered by the school. Other grade levels will be permitted to participate based on Athletic Director's discretion. Continued participation is determined by academic performance and behavior. Refer to the Athletic Handbook for more details regarding eligibility and participation.

STUDENT COUNCIL

Student Council is a service organization that plans activities for the student body, and works with the PTO, the Athletic Program, faculty, and staff to promote school spirit and unity. Student representatives are elected during student orientation days at the beginning of the school year. Once elected, continued membership is determined by academic performance and behavior. Please refer to Student Council contract for more details.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

The Worship Committee's primary purpose is to enhance the religious climate of the school. Students in grades 6, 7, and 8 may submit an application for membership. The final selection of members is determined by academic grades, essay, citizenship, teacher recommendation, and parental consent. Once selected, continued membership is determined by academic performance and behavior.

JUNIOR TECH

The purpose of the Junior Tech Club is to develop and maintain an OLSS student web site promoting Christian values. Students in grades 5, 6, 7, and 8 may submit an application for membership. The final selection of members is determined by academic grades, good citizenship, effective communication skills, computer skills, teacher recommendation, and an essay explaining the benefits of technology. Once selected, continued membership is determined by academic performance and behavior.

NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY

Our Lady of Sorrows Middle School is a participating member of the NJHS. This organization is part of the National Honor Society, the oldest and most respected organization for recognizing the academic accomplishments of young scholars in America. Any student in the seventh and eighth grade who meets the challenging academic standards set forth by the organization's Charter is eligible for selection and possible induction. Selection, discipline, and dismissal will be reviewed and recommended by the Faculty Council as set forth in the NJHS Constitution.

LEGION OF MARY

The Legion of Mary seeks to enhance the school through prayer and service. Members meet to pray together and plan service projects to the school and parish community. Students in grades 3-8 are eligible to participate and continued membership is determined by academic performance and behavior.

8TH GRADE CAMP EAGLE EXPERIENCE

The 8th grade class takes an annual trip to Camp Eagle in Rocksprings in central Texas. In order to qualify for this experience, a student must maintain a passing yearly average for all classes as well as be passing all subjects during the quarter the trip is taken. The student must also be in compliance with behavior requirements. A student will be ineligible for the trip if they have faced multiple disciplinary actions during the year, including but not limited to, detention, placed on contract, probation, or suspended more than once during the year. Final decision as to a student's attendance will be made by the Principal.

EDUCATIONAL TRIPS (Cell phones are not permitted on Educational Outing without Principal's permission) Educational trips are initiated by the teacher and must be arranged with the Principal beforehand. Parents must sign and return a permission slip along with applicable fees giving a student permission to participate in the trip. Permission given verbally, by telephone, or by fax will not be accepted in lieu of the official permission slip. **Trips are a privilege, not a right; thus, participation can be denied if a student fails to meet academic and/or behavioral requirements**. All trips will be related to some aspect of the curriculum being studied at the time the trip is taken. Students not participating in the trip must attend school. Students who are participating in the field trip must ride the bus to and from the field trip with their class. Students not on the bus may not participate in the field trip and will be counted absent for the day.

Medications including an EpiPen and a copy of the student's Emergency Health Care Plan must accompany the student. The adult carrying the EpiPen will be identified and introduced to the student as well as the other chaperones.

ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLAN

In compliance with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA), enacted in 1986, all schools, public or private, are required to have an inspection of all buildings, for asbestos-containing building materials (ACBM), by accredited asbestos-trained personnel. All Catholic School facilities of the Diocese of Brownsville were inspected in 2016, including Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School campus in McAllen, TX. The Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School campus was inspected for ACBN by personnel from EFI Global, Inc. (EFI), an environmental consulting firm located in Houston, Texas. EFI is accredited and licensed by the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) to perform asbestos condition assessments of all suspect and identified ACBM. Building materials at Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School were observed to be in undamaged condition and/or present minimal hazards, if any, to building occupants. Periodic surveillance is also conducted semi-annually by campus personnel.

This management plan assures that students and personnel are free from any exposure to asbestos containing material. The inspection findings, both current and previous, and management plan are on file in the administrative office. These are available for review upon request at any time during normal school hours.

GAS PIPE TESTING PLAN

In compliance with the mandate from the Railroad Commission of Texas, Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School undergoes Gas Pipe Testing every two years.

RIGHT TO AMEND

If changes are necessary during the school year, OLS School maintains the right to amend the contents of this publication. Such changes will be announced through parent notices, monthly newsletter to parents, and the school website (www.olsschool.org).

Revised 7/2016

2016-2017
PERSONNEL HANDBOOK
ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

This page of the handbook is to be signed and kept in the office.

I understand the rules and regulations of this Personnel Handbook and will support the policies and philosophies of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School.

_____ _____
Printed Name Date

_____
Signature

_____ _____