



Parent/Student  
Handbook  
2025-2026

**Mater Dolorosa Catholic School**

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Massachusetts 01040

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[www.materdolorosaschool.org](http://www.materdolorosaschool.org)

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Dear Parents and Students,

*“Beloved sons and daughters of the Catholic Church,  
brothers and sisters in the faith: Catholic education is  
above all a question of communicating Christ, of  
helping to form Christ in the lives of others.”*

*~Pope St. John Paul II*

Welcome to Mater Dolorosa Catholic School! In choosing our school, you have demonstrated a commitment to the values, mission, and philosophy of a Catholic education. This handbook is for all of the students of Mater Dolorosa Catholic School in **Preschool – Grade 8**.

The Parent/Student Handbook reflects the policies, procedures, behavioral guidelines, dress code, and uniform guidelines of Mater Dolorosa Catholic School for the 2025-2026 school year. Please read this document carefully and sign the attached agreement. This agreement states that you intend to abide by the policies of Mater Dolorosa Catholic School during the next school year. Any necessary updates to this handbook will be posted on our school website throughout the school year.

The faculty and staff of your school look forward to working 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.

God bless you,

Fr. Albert Scherer  
Pastor

Mrs. Mary Fedora  
Principal

# *Prayer for Peace*

*-St. Francis of Assisi*

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
Where there is injury, pardon;  
Where there is doubt, faith;  
Where there is despair, hope;  
Where there is darkness, light;  
Where there is sadness, joy.*

*O Divine Master,  
Grant that I may not so much seek  
To be consoled, as to console;  
To be understood, as to understand;  
To be loved, as to love;  
For it is in giving that we receive;  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.*

# **Mater Dolorosa Catholic School**

## **Mission Statement**

Mater Dolorosa School, following the spirit of St. Francis, fosters and encourages a concern for peace and justice daily.

We endeavor to nurture this spirit in our students, from Preschool through Grade 8, through prayer and service to God and others.

Within a multicultural, ethnic, and racially diverse environment, we strive to maintain academic excellence and to keep pace with technological advances in an ever changing world.

**Mater Dolorosa Catholic School is accredited  
by the New England Association of Schools and  
Colleges**

## **Introduction**

The purpose of the school Handbook is to outline the general policies and operating procedures of Mater Dolorosa Catholic School. These policies are intended to enrich the environment of our school by providing an atmosphere conducive to learning while ensuring the health and safety of all students. Students and parents are responsible for reviewing and abiding by the policies set forth. While it is recognized that no handbook can cover every eventuality, we have provided an overview of policies of Mater Dolorosa Catholic School. The administration reserves the right to determine policies should the need arise.

## **Statement of Non-Discrimination**

Mater Dolorosa Catholic School admits students of any race, color, national origin, faith, or ethnic background to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students in this school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, faith, or ethnic background in the administration of educational policies and financial programs administered by this school.

## **Statement of Belief**

We believe that Mater Dolorosa Catholic School, with the involvement and support of parents and guardians, teaches each student to live the values of Jesus and to respect the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church.

We believe that Mater Dolorosa is a place where students from a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds receive a quality education in an atmosphere conducive to learning and moral development.

We believe that Mater Dolorosa provides an environment in which our students develop character and deepen their sense of respect and responsibility.

We believe that Mater Dolorosa provides a nurturing and caring environment in which each student is encouraged to develop and share his or her talents and abilities.

We believe that the teachers and staff of Mater Dolorosa are Christian, caring, and committed men and women who are faithful to the ideals of Jesus, enthusiastic about young people, and eager to help them to achieve their potential.

## **Agreement**

By registering at Mater Dolorosa Catholic School, parents and students contract to abide by the guidelines, rules, regulations, and policies of this school.

## **Parents as Partners**

As partners in the educational process at Mater Dolorosa Catholic School, we ask

parents/guardians:

To set rules, times, and limits so that your child:

- Gets to bed early on school nights; arrives at school on time and is picked up on time at the end of the day
- Is dressed according to the school dress code
- Completes assignments on time
- Has nutritional snack every day, when needed.

To actively participate in school activities such as Parent-Teacher Conferences;

To see that the student pays for any damage to school books or property due to carelessness or neglect on the part of the student;

To notify the school with a written note when the student has been absent or tardy;

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 situations regarding the student's well-being, safety, and health;

To complete and return to school any requested information promptly;

To read school notes and newsletters and to show interest in the student's total education;

To support the religious and educational goals of the school;

To attend Mass and teach the Catholic faith by word and example;

To support and cooperate with the discipline policy of the school;

To treat teachers and administrators with respect and courtesy in discussing student concerns.

## **Parent's Role in Education**

We, at Mater Dolorosa Catholic School, consider it a privilege to work with parents in the education of children because we believe parents are the primary educators of their children. Therefore, it is your right and your duty to become the primary role models for the development of your child's life--- physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally, and psychologically. Your choice of Mater Dolorosa Catholic School involves a commitment and exhibits a concern for helping your child to recognize God as the greatest good in his/her life. Good example is the strongest teacher. Your personal relationship with God, with each other, and with the Church community will affect the way your child relates to God and others. Ideals taught in school are not well rooted in the child unless these are nurtured by the example of good Catholic/Christian morality and by an honest personal relationship with God in your family life.

Once you have chosen to enter into a partnership with us at Mater Dolorosa Catholic School, we trust you will be loyal to this commitment. During these formative years (Pre-K to 8), your child needs constant support from both parents and faculty in order to develop his/her moral, intellectual, social, cultural, and physical endowment. Neither parents nor teachers can afford to doubt the sincerity of the efforts of their educational partner in the quest of challenging, yet nourishing, the student to reach his/her potential. It is vital that both parents and teachers remember that allowing oneself to be caught between the student and the other partner will never have positive results. To divide authority between school and home or within the home will only teach disrespect of all authority. If there is an incident at school, you as parents must make investigation of the complete story your first step. Evidence of mutual respect between parents and teachers will model good mature behavior and relationships. Parents should contact the teacher involved with an issue after their investigation of the incident. Then if needed, the principal will become involved.

Students are naturally eager to grow and learn. However, sometimes in the process of maturation new interests may cause them to lose focus. As this natural process occurs, the student needs both understanding and discipline. At times, your child may perceive discipline as restrictive. However, it is boundaries and limits which 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 all 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 your child to become the best person he/she is capable of becoming. Then if needed, the principal will become involved.

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## I. CATHOLIC FAITH FORMATION

As a Catholic school, the nurturing and guidance of our students in the tenets of our Catholic faith is the very reason for our existence. Parents, faculty, and staff working together are responsible for taking an active part in the faith journey of the students.

Prayer is an integral part of the school day, shared by all. In addition, students participate in liturgies, the Stations of the Cross, the Rosary, and other prayer services during the year.

### A. Sacraments

Students in Grade 2 celebrate First Reconciliation and receive their First Holy Communion.

In order for a child to receive these sacraments, s/he must be baptized and be ready emotionally and spiritually. If the teachers or Principal deem that a child is not ready, the child will receive another year of preparation before receiving the sacraments.

In preparation for the sacraments, it is expected that parents will reinforce at home what is taught in school. It is the responsibility of the parents to set a good example by taking the initiative regarding family prayer time, Sunday worship, and Reconciliation.

If a student transfers into our school, s/he must have attended another Catholic school or participated in a religious education program for at least a year before receiving the sacraments.

### B. Spiritual Life

All students have the opportunity to attend Mass regularly. The entire student body attends Mass once a month and on Holy Days. Each class has the opportunity to lead these liturgies with their teacher through participation as lectors, servers, and gift-bearers. Students are given the opportunity to sing in the choir during Mass. The presence of the students and faculty at Mass is an essential part of the spiritual life of the school. Students are given the opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation during the school year. In addition the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students attend a retreat during the school year.

### C. Non-Catholic Students

All children, regardless of their faith, are welcome as members of the Mater Dolorosa Catholic School family. Non-Catholic students, however, are required to participate in religion classes. They are also expected to attend Liturgies and other liturgical prayer services.

Non-Catholic students may participate in the celebration, but not receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. However, non-Catholic students may receive a blessing from the priest.

## II. ACADEMIC POLICIES

### A. Accreditation

Mater Dolorosa Catholic School is accredited through the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

### B. Admissions

New students entering Kindergarten must be five (5) years old on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of the school year in which they are enrolling. Age must be verified by a birth certificate. A physical examination is required when a student enters school for the first time. Immunization records must be completed, including evidence of a state mandated lead test. A baptismal certificate must also be presented for Catholic students.

New students who are transferring from other schools should arrange to provide copies of their academic records, as well as their latest report cards for review. All new students will be given a trial period in which to prove himself/herself both socially and academically. If during this trial period there are any problems, a student may be asked to withdraw his/her attendance at Mater Dolorosa Catholic School.

If a student is transferring from another Catholic school all financial debts must be paid before admission to Mater Dolorosa Catholic School.

All tuition payments will be paid using the online FACTS Tuition and Management system. Since the 2024/2025 school year, the admissions process is a completely online one through the FACTS program. All prospective families may inquire about/apply to Mater Dolorosa Catholic School by using the FACTS online link available on our school website [www.materdolorosaschool.org](http://www.materdolorosaschool.org). In addition, our current families are required to reenroll their child(ren) via the FACTS online link as well. A non-refundable fee of \$50.00 per student is required of each family during the application and reenrollment processes.

### C. Awards

Students in grades Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade receive special recognition for academics and good character throughout the school year. Students will receive honor roll awards in grades 4-8 based on the following criteria:

#### *High Honors –*

A's in all major subjects

No grade below an A-

No mark below a "2" in attitude

Satisfactory grades (S) in Liturgical Music, Spanish, Art, Gym, Computer and Conduct

No mark lower than an A- in Spanish (beginning in Grade 4)

*Honors –*

Five (5) A's and two (2) B's in all major subjects

No grade below a B-

No mark below a "3" in attitude

Satisfactory grades (S) in Liturgical Music, Spanish, Art, Gym, Computer, and Conduct

No mark lower than a B- in Spanish (beginning in Grade 4)

Students in Grade 8 receive special recognition for academic excellence (National Junior Honor Society). Scholarships are also awarded at the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Graduation Ceremony.

D. Conduct

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

The Principal reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of an action if any doubt arises.

Items such as, but not limited to, questionable books and pictures, knives, guns, weapons of any kinds, matches, lighters, cigarettes, vapes, radios, toys, trading cards, laser lights, CDs, iPods, or other mp3 players, cameras, or anything that will detract from a learning situation are not allowed in school at any time. For the continued safety of our students, faculty, and staff, cell phones for students are discouraged on our campus. However, should there be a need for a student in the Middle School grades to bring a cell phone to school, it must be kept **in the off position and handed into their homeroom teacher, who will keep it in a numbered pocket pouch. Students may retrieve their cell phones from their homeroom teacher at dismissal time only. If a cell phone is noticed/found to be on a student's person, the cell phone will be confiscated and brought to the office, where it can be retrieved at dismissal time. If a cell phone is found to be used(texting, face-timing, calling, emailing, taking pictures/videos and posting them during the school day), the cell phone will be confiscated and a parent/guardian will be required to come to the school to retrieve the cell phone immediately. If a medical or family situation requires your child to have their cell phone on their person, you must inform the school office, as well as the homeroom teacher. Please know that your child is NEVER forbidden to come to the office to call you for any reason. Students who have this permission are required to follow the same Code of Conduct as the rest of the student body.**

The school Administration will determine the appropriate disciplinary measure to be taken concerning the presence of these items in school. Items taken away from students will be returned to the parent/guardians.

#### E. Conferences

As a team of parent, teacher, and student we can greatly enhance the student's experience. Parent-teacher conferences are held toward the end of the first quarter and all parents are strongly encouraged to attend their scheduled appointments. Parents are given specific appointments with the teachers of their children, regardless of their academic progress. However, it is not necessary to wait for the regular conference time if a parent has a special concern. Parent- teacher conferences are encouraged and appointments can be made at any time during the school year. Impromptu conferences are strongly discouraged as teachers cannot always provide their full attention to your concern.

#### F. Curriculum

We follow the Diocese of Springfield, MA Curriculum Standards and the MA Common Core Standards as mandated by the state. In addition to the regular academic requirements, the following special/supplemental courses are included:

##### 1. Circle of Grace

The USCCB Bishops' *Charter for the Protection of Children and Youth* and the Safe Environment Policies of the Diocese of Springfield require that all children and youth in our schools and religious education programs be offered Safe Environment training that is age-appropriate and in accord with Catholic moral principles. The Diocese of Springfield and each parish and Catholic school provides such training. Age appropriate lessons for the Circle of Grace Program are presented to our students in Kindergarten through 8th grade. This program improves self-reliance, raises self-esteem, and helps master personal safety skills—all while assuring them that most adults are kind, safe, and committed to their well-being.

##### 2. Technology

Beginning in the 23/24 school year, and continuing into the 24/25 school year, the school was able to purchase brand new Chromebooks. Our school is fortunate to be able to provide a 1:1 device program for our students. All students in grades Kindergarten through 8th grade are assigned a device for their use during the school year. These devices may be used in school and at home should teachers' assignments. Students in Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade attend technology class once per week. The goal of the technology program is to allow students to broaden their awareness of computer technology and its potential as a learning resource. All computers and tablets have monitored internet capability. The school uses GoGuardian enhanced security on school devices, and all teachers, substitutes, and administration have the

ability to monitor student appropriate use of school technology *on and off campus*. ***A reminder, chromebooks and iPads are the property of the school.*** In order for any student to be assigned a school device, students and parents are required to sign a Technology and Internet Use Agreement.

### 3. Religion Classes

All students are required to participate in Religion classes. Knowledge of the Catholic faith is fundamental for sacramental preparation and for participation in the life of the Church. Parents' good example is essential to a child's growing in and living the Faith. Mater Dolorosa Catholic School is first and foremost a Catholic school, where the goal of every member of the administration, faculty, and staff is "to teach as Jesus taught." We impress upon our children the importance of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the Sacraments—especially Reconciliation and Holy Communion—and reinforce this through monthly Mass and Reconciliation.

- a. Virtues In Practice – Beginning with the 2023/2024 school year, students participate in the Virtues In Practice program, which was created by the Dominican Sisters of Saint Cecelia from Nashville, TN. This program teaches Preschool through Grade 8 students to grow closer to Jesus by imitating His virtues and life. Through a whole school (and at home, whole-family) focus, the entire school studies the same virtue each month. In all, students learn the lives of up to 81 saints who have modeled that month's virtue. Over a 3-year cycle (Year of Faith, Year of Hope, Year of Charity), 27 virtues are covered.

### 4. Physical Education

Physical Education is an important part of the educational experience. The development and maintenance of a healthy body is essential for physical well-being and good mental health. We believe that attitude development is an important part of education and we attempt to create an atmosphere for the development of leadership, sportsmanship, and congeniality through our physical education program. Physical education classes are provided once a week for students in grades Preschool through 8th grade.

### G. Discipline Code

Students are expected to conduct themselves with courtesy and appropriate behavior at all times during the school day including field trips, picnics, bus transportation, and at all school functions. At the beginning of each school year, students receive information regarding the discipline code for individual classes. A general policy is as follows:

#### 1. BULLYING

Bullying, in any form, including cyber-bullying through the use of technology or any electronic means, will not be tolerated. Bullying can be defined as aggression in which one child or a group of children engages in unprovoked and repeated physical, verbal, social or emotional harm against another. Bullying differs from other forms of conflict in that bullies seek to gain power over their victims. Bullying is a continuum of behaviors that ranges from name calling to assault. There are two main types of bullying behavior. Physical bullying includes such tactics as tripping, kicking, stealing and shoving. Emotional/social bullying includes gossiping, name-calling, publicly humiliating the victim, or convincing others to reject or isolate the victim. Engagement in online blogs, such as but not limited to, Instagram®, SnapChat®, Facebook® etc. may result in disciplinary actions if the content of the student's blog includes defamatory or threatening comments regarding the school, the faculty, other students or the parish. Students engaging in bullying behavior via texting and email are also subject to disciplinary action.

Students are strongly encouraged to report any and all instances of bullying to a teacher, parent, and/or administrator. Instances of bullying will be addressed and may result in in-school or home suspension, and in extreme cases, expulsion. Age appropriate instruction on bullying prevention in each grade is incorporated into the curriculum through the use of a variety of programs.

Mater Dolorosa Catholic School makes every effort to adhere to the guidelines and directives put forth in the Massachusetts Bullying Law.

## 2. Demerits

Demerits will be issued to students for violations against the discipline code and rules, dress code, or any of the following:

- Defiance, dishonesty, inappropriate language, inflammatory or racial remarks, or any misbehavior that, in the opinion of the Administration, is detrimental to the reputation of the school will be liable for disciplinary action
- Disrespect toward teachers, staff, students, or property
- Disruptive behavior, continual talking, getting out of seat, or throwing things
- Continued non-compliance of school uniform
- Chewing gum
- Any infractions against classroom rules or handbook regulations

## 3. Detention

Detention may be issued for students who receive three (3) Demerits for a breach of classroom and/or school rules. Parents are provided with a Detention Form with written notification of the

detention. The day, date, and time of the detention are at the discretion of the Principal who monitors the detention. Detentions may also be monitored by another faculty member.

#### 4. Loss of Privileges

Four DETENTIONS (12 DEMERIT SLIPS) WILL RESULT IN THE LOSS OF THE CLASS FIELD TRIP. The student must remain at home under the supervision of the parents/guardians.

#### 5. Suspension

For the most serious infractions of school rules and policy, the Principal gives suspensions from school. Suspensions are given only as a last resort. It signifies that the student's behavior has been so disruptive that the only reasonable way to deal with the situation is to remove the child from the school environment. Parents are required to meet with the Principal before reinstatement can take place.

Reinstatement will not be granted until the Principal and the student's teacher are satisfied that the reason for misconduct has been effectively eliminated.

#### 6. Expulsion

Expulsion is an extremely serious matter. Students who pose a threat to themselves or to others may be expelled from Mater Dolorosa Catholic School. Other extreme circumstances may also be considered for expulsion and is determined at the discretion of the Administration.

The Discipline Policy affects all students in all classes, as well as at lunch, during special events, on field trips, on the bus, and at all school functions. All Demerit forms must be signed by a parent/guardian and returned to the teacher or school office. If a student's actions make suspension or expulsion a consideration, the school will act in accordance with the Diocesan Handbook of School Policies. We cannot sacrifice the education of the whole class because of the disruptive behavior of one student.

- a. Beginning with the 2025/2026 school year, we are utilizing DevelopEd's 15 Skills of Self-Discipline (formerly known as Discipline With a Purpose) to supplement/support/enhance our discipline policy. This school-wide program focuses on teaching students 15 important skills to self-regulate themselves for positive versus negative outcomes. More information can be found at [www.15Skills.com](http://www.15Skills.com). These skills are practiced throughout the year, in the classrooms and in the school. Our goal is to teach students to think before they act so that their negative/challenging behavior doesn't lead them towards a negative outcome.

#### H. Education Fair

Each year in April, our school holds a spring Open House and Education Fair. All our students in Preschool through Grade 8 participate and this activity is one of the highlights of our academic

year. Students in Preschool through Grade 4 will highlight a portfolio of work produced throughout the year, while students in Grades 5 through 8 showcase specific projects. Parents are encouraged to support this even and to encourage their children in the selected projects.

#### I. Field Trips

Classroom teachers schedule field trips within our city and to various points of interest during the school year. These trips are designed to supplement different aspects of the classroom curriculum and to introduce students to the resources of the community. Therefore, student participation is a requirement and not an option. Field trip privileges may be revoked should student discipline or academic records warrant their exclusion.

Parents will receive notices of field trips well in advance of the scheduled trip date and will be asked to sign field trip permission forms prior to the day of the trip. Phone calls, emails, and faxes cannot be accepted as forms of permission to attend a field trip. Students must also ride the bus to and from the field trip with their class. At times students will be expected to pay for entrance fees and provide their own lunch. Every attempt is made to help offset field trip costs through fundraisers or appeal to the PTO.

Reasonable care will be taken by the supervisory personnel to see to the safety of the students. The school is not liable for injuries. Parents are encouraged to volunteer to chaperone trips. Parents who chaperone a field trip may not bring preschool or school-age siblings on the field trip. All parent volunteers are subject to a CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) check which must be completed prior to attendance on a field trip. In addition, parents must sign a Code of Conduct and view the Diocesan Called to Protect Video. Cell phones should be used for emergency situations only or as otherwise directed by the teacher and/or administration.

#### J. Graduation

Kindergarten graduation takes place in June in our school gymnasium at 9:30 a.m.. The Kindergarten students are dismissed to their parents' care following the ceremony.

The date for the Grade 8 graduation follows the guidelines set by the Diocesan School Office. Students in Grade 8 failing two major subjects will be issued a certificate of attendance at graduation. Students failing more than two major subjects will not be considered graduates of Mater Dolorosa Catholic School and will not be allowed to participate in graduation exercises. Participation in the Commencement exercises are a privilege for 8<sup>th</sup> grade students who have met the academic standards of the school.

All tuition and fees must be paid in full or the child will not participate in the end of the year field trips and/or graduation exercises for both Kindergarten and 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

#### K. Homework

Homework provides parental insight into current classroom topics and is an extension of the learning that takes place in school. At the beginning of each school year, students receive information regarding the homework policies for individual classes. A general policy is as follows:

1. Primary Students in grades Kindergarten – 2<sup>nd</sup> grade receive homework to provide practice and reinforcement of skills taught in class. All homework assignments are age and grade level appropriate.
2. Intermediate Students in grades 3 and 4 are expected to complete homework assignments on the designated day. Missing, late, or incomplete assignments will result in contact home by the teacher. Time will be allowed to make up assignments due to excused absences. Since each student has different capabilities and interests, it would be difficult to denote the specific amount of time to be spent on an assignment. If a problem arises, the teacher should be contacted. Missing, late, or incomplete assignments are not allowed to be turned in after a report card has been issued.
3. Middle School Students in grades 5, 6, 7, and 8 are expected to complete homework assignments on the designated day. Missing, late, or incomplete assignments will result in contact home by a teacher. Time will be allowed to make up assignments due to excused absences. Since each student has different capabilities and interests, it would be difficult to denote the specific amount of time to be spent on an assignment. If a problem arises, the teacher should be contacted. Missing, late, or incomplete assignments are not allowed to be turned in after a report card has been issued.
4. Backpacks are a necessary educational tool for students. They should be appropriate for your child's size and proportions (large enough to fit their necessary homework materials). **PLEASE NOTE: ROLLING BACKPACKS (BACKPACKS ON WHEELS) OR SUITCASE BACKPACKS ON WHEELS ARE NOT ALLOWED IN SCHOOL. THIS IS A SAFETY HAZARD.**

5. Homework due to Vacations/Planned Absences

The school calendar provides for extended weekends and week-long vacations throughout the school year. Parents are encouraged to schedule trips or family outings during these times so as to eliminate the need to interrupt a child's learning process. Missed assignments are the student's responsibility. Teachers may provide missed assignments when a student returns and given one day for each day missed to make up the assignments. Returning the missed assignments in a timely manner is the responsibility of the student and work not completed/returned will result in missing grades which could lower a student's overall grade. **No assignments will be given in anticipation of the vacation. There will be no exceptions to this policy.**

6. Homework Policy Due to Illness

When a student is absent for three or more days, a parent may call the school office before 9:30 AM to arrange for homework assignments. Homework assignments may be picked up at the school office between 1:30PM – 3:00 PM.

For short absences, students should make arrangements with classmates regarding assignments. Students may also receive missed assignments from their teacher when they return to school. Students will be allowed two days for each day of absence due to illness. For example, a student who was absent three days should be given three school days to complete the missed work. Tests may be made-up at the discretion of the teacher.

#### L. Library

The library is open every day during the school week. All teachers are allowed and encouraged to visit the school library to enjoy our selection of literature selections with their students. Every effort has been made to update our reading materials frequently. Many selections from the Cardinal Newman Society Book Lists can be found in our school library. Quiet and order must prevail in the library at all times.

Students are allowed to use the library with permission of their classroom teacher. Each student may borrow one book for a period of up to one week. There is no fine for overdue books, but the student who borrowed them must pay for lost or damaged books.

#### M. Pre-school

In carrying on our mission of providing quality Catholic education within a nurturing environment, Mater Dolorosa offers a Pre-school program for both 3 & 4 year-olds, and three separate Preschool classrooms are part of the program. The Preschool Team meets every summer to ensure that each of our students is placed appropriately in their classrooms by birth date. Our goal is to provide our preschoolers with positive opportunities for growth. All students must be confidently potty-trained. The Pre-school hours are 7:30 a.m. – 2:20 p.m.

## N. Progress Reports

Progress reports for Grades 1-3 are issued during the months of October, December, March, and May. The purpose of the report is to make both parents and students aware of a student's progress and to alert parents that a student may not be working up to his/her potential. The Progress Reports are to be signed by a parent and returned to the teacher on the next school day. If there are any concerns, parents are asked to contact the teacher.

Parents in Grades 4-8 have the ability to monitor their child's grades in their FACTS Family Portal throughout the marking period. Therefore, an issuance of Progress Reports is not necessary. Parents are encouraged to keep in contact with teachers if academic struggles are noticed and to work with your child and the teacher to map out a plan for success.

## O. Promotions and Retentions

Promotions and retentions are based on an evaluation of academic performance. A Mater Dolorosa student is required to repeat the grade if s/he has failed three or more major subjects for the year. Major subjects include: Reading, Math, Science, Social Studies, and Language Arts. The primary reasons for considering retention include a student's:

- Indifference or lack of effort
- Inability to fulfill that grades academic requirements
- Lack of maturity appropriate to the age level
- Frequent or long absences

## P. Recess

All students have outdoor recess. No student is allowed to leave the school grounds. Parents are asked to dress their children appropriately for weather changes.

Only students with medical excuses or teacher/administration requests will be allowed to remain in the building during scheduled outside recess. Students will be supervised in the office during this recess time.

## Q. Report Cards

Report cards are issued following the completion of each grading period, during the months of November, January, April, and June. Kindergarten Progress Reports are issued three times per year. Preschool Progress Reports are issued two times per year.

Parents should carefully review the report cards and contact the school if there are any questions regarding the grades. Report cards are sent home with the students. Parents are asked to sign and

return the report card slip as promptly as possible.

## R. Special Services

Limited speech therapy and services for students with special needs are available through the local public school system. A parent has the right to request an evaluation/referral.

A Title One remedial reading/ math teacher is available to work with students who are Holyoke residents that need extra help in grades Kindergarten – 8th grade.

## S. Study Skills

A parent can help his/her child be aware of skills and techniques that make learning easier and more enjoyable. The following are student guidelines for achieving good study habits:

- Come to class prepared with pencils, pens, paper, homework, and other necessary materials
- Be an active participant in class
- Listen well and take part in class discussions
- Ask questions to clarify problems
- Plan your day and schedule time for homework
- Use what is learned and apply it to new situations
- Strive to do the very best work possible

## T. Textbooks

Textbooks and workbooks are furnished for all students. If a book is lost, misused, or damaged beyond reasonable wear, the students will be held financially responsible. Although the majority of our textbooks are soft-cover consumables, students are required to see that hardcover books are covered with 'book socks' or paper book covers throughout the school year.

### III. BEHAVIOR

#### A. Alcohol, Drugs, and Weapons

The possession of weapons, the sale or use of alcohol, drugs, or any other controlled or dangerous substance on the school grounds or buses is strictly forbidden. Violation of this rule will cause expulsion and will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agencies.

#### B. Bus Conduct

The administration and staff of Mater Dolorosa School views conduct on the bus as an extension of classroom behavior. In order to promote the health and safety of each student, the following are the acceptable norms:

- Students should wait in an orderly manner at their designated bus stops
- Students should board and exit the buses in an orderly manner at the direction of the bus driver
- Bus lines should proceed only when led by the teacher
- All students must obey all rules of safety
- They should remain seated and voices controlled, in order to enable the driver to fulfill his/her responsibilities
- Holyoke residents who have bus privileges will need a note signed by both a parent and principal in order to take another bus or get off at a different bus stop. Students will not be allowed to call during the school day to ask permission to change buses or stops.
- In order to promote the safe transportation of students, cameras may be used to monitor the students' behavior on buses

The following acts may result in denial of the privilege to ride the bus:

- Profanity and shouting out of windows to people outside of the school bus
- Fighting or other aggressive physical behavior
- Unnecessary distraction of driver
- Destruction of any bus property (restitution will be the parents'/guardians' financial responsibility)

- Violation of rules and safety on school buses
- Any act which interferes with the safe and orderly transportation of students

All offenders of the bus regulations will have their privilege denied for a period of one (1) to three (3) days. More serious offenders may have their privilege denied up to ten (10) days.

Students who are denied the privilege three (3) times or who have seriously misbehaved to the point of endangering other riders may be denied the privilege to ride the bus for the remainder of the school year..

Students are not to bring textbooks, notebooks, or magazines into the cafeteria during lunch.

#### C. Cheating

Cheating is a serious compromise of a student's integrity and will not be tolerated. If cheating is discovered, the student's work will be confiscated. A failing grade will automatically be recorded for the work and parents will be notified.

#### D. Electronic Devices/Toys

To avoid disruption to the educational process and maintain the appropriate atmosphere in the school building, students may not use electronic games, E-readers, radios, walkmans, iPods, or like devices on school property without direct permission from the administration. Electronic paging devices and laser pens/lights are prohibited in the school building and on school grounds at all times. The school will not be held responsible for lost or stolen items.

#### E. Fighting/Threats of Violence

Fighting is strictly forbidden in the school, playground, or bus. Breaking this rule will result in an immediate and automatic suspension.

Threats of violence either written or verbal against individuals or the school will not be tolerated. Breaking this rule will result in immediate disciplinary action and notification to a parent.

#### F. Gambling

Flipping or matching coins, rolling dice, pools, or any other form of gambling are not permitted.

#### G. Internet

The Internet service is for educational purposes solely. This will include classroom activities and quality learning. The following items are not permitted:

- Using the Internet for commercial purposes or political campaigning
- Sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures
- Using obscene language
- Harassing or insulting others
- Damaging computers – including hardware and software
- Violating copyright laws and plagiarizing
- Attempting to make contact with anyone else on the Internet

Failure to follow the directions of the instructor within the confines of the assignment or abide by the rules set forth will result in suspension of Internet privileges.

#### Technology Concerns

- **Social Media:** Engagement in online social media and video posting sites such as, but not limited to, Facebook®, Twitter®, Instagram®, YouTube®, and Vine® etc., may result in suspension/expulsion or other disciplinary actions if the content of the student's blog or status includes defamatory comments regarding the school, faculty, administration, or other students or the parish.
- **Sexting:** Students involved in possession or transmission of inappropriate photos on their cell phones or other electronic devices face suspension and/or expulsion.

- Texting: Students should at no time be involved in texting during the course of the school day. Students involved in texting at school face detention, suspension and/or expulsion.
- Virtual Reality Sites: Virtual Reality Sites such as, but not limited to, [www.secondlife](http://www.secondlife.com)® pose developmental and moral risk to the life of the student. Parents are cautioned to be aware of the online sites visited by their children, knowing that often predators are not living in a neighborhood, but within the home via a computer. Students whose avatars depict other students, teachers, administrators, or parish staff in a defamatory light face detention, suspension, or expulsion.

#### H. Leaving School Grounds

Students are not allowed to leave the school grounds during school hours without the knowledge and consent of their teacher and the administration. Permission to leave the school grounds will only be granted upon written request from the student's parent. Student being dismissed by a parent/guardian must be signed out in the office prior to leaving the school. Homeroom teachers should be advised in writing if a child is to go home in a different way than usual. Parents/guardians may also call the school office to let their child know of a change to dismissal procedure.

#### I. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's work as one's own. Misuse of computer generated information, such as found on the Internet, encyclopedias, or reference works is cheating. This is true of all assignments and will be dealt with accordingly.

#### J. Pornography

Any student found possessing or distributing indecent, pornographic, lewd, or suggestive materials or literature is subject to suspension.

#### K. Sexual Harassment

In keeping with Diocesan policy and goals, it is the policy of Mater Dolorosa to promote and maintain an educational environment and a working environment free from all forms of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment will not be tolerated. Any individual who engages in this harassment will be in violation of this policy.

Complaints of harassment will be investigated promptly and in a confidential manner. Anyone who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from school. Incidents of sexual harassment must be reported to the administration.

#### L. Smoking

Smoking is strictly forbidden at school. Students are neither to carry nor use tobacco products of any kind.

#### M. Stealing

Any students who participates in the theft of money, goods, clothing, etc., or is found to be in possession of such, is subject to disciplinary action and will be held responsible for restitution.

#### N. Unauthorized Articles

Common sense and consideration are the best guides in determining whether or not to bring personal possessions to school. In general, students should not bring toys or unusual items to school unless they are intended for a specific purpose in the classroom. Toys, videos, CD's, collectible cards of any kind, electronic games, virtual pets, beepers, laser flashlights, or other articles deemed inappropriate are not allowed in school. The sale or exchange of items with other students is not allowed. Any infraction will result in disciplinary action.

#### O. Vandalism

Our school and school equipment are private property. Willfully damaging or destroying this property is cause for immediate suspension and possible expulsion. The school requires that the damages be paid for before a student is allowed to return to class. If a student accidentally causes damage, s/he should report it to his/her teacher immediately so that the damage is not viewed as vandalism.

#### P. Zero Tolerance Policy

Mater Dolorosa Catholic School has a Zero Tolerance Policy for proven threats, uncontrolled anger, violence, hate crimes, and the like. The school offers no apology for this policy. The safety of all our children is our primary focus and concern. Please be sure your child is well aware of this policy.

## IV. DRESS CODE

PARENTS WILL BE NOTIFIED IF THE UNIFORM POLICY IS NOT ADHERED TO, AND WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR IMMEDIATELY BRINGING IN THE PROPER UNIFORM SO THAT THEIR CHILD MAY GO TO CLASS. If a parent does not bring a uniform to school immediately then a Uniform Reminder will be given to a student. Once a student has received three (3) Uniform Reminders then the student will not be allowed in the classroom and a parent will be called to pick-up their child from school. The Principal reserves the right to extend/shorten the time of seasonal dress should weather permit such a change. All uniform regulations and guidelines are subject to the discretion of the principal.

School uniforms can be purchased at:

Blake's School Uniform Company

1205 Parker St.

Springfield, MA 01229

413-(413) 782-4123

[www.blakesschooluniform.com](http://www.blakesschooluniform.com)

School Uniforms by Tommy Hilfiger

<https://www.globalschoolwear.com/school/MATE01>

**School Code: MATE01**

### A. Boys

#### 1. Grades Kindergarten through 8th grade

- Navy blue uniform style pants only
- Light blue or white polo shirt with Mater Dolorosa Catholic School circular logo only (long or short sleeve)
- Dress shoes or sneakers that **fully cover the foot** in acceptable styles and colors; muted colors of white, black, navy blue, gray, brown, or tan are best. Fad type, bright, light-up, or

wheeled shoes or sneakers are not allowed. Crocs and slippers/slipper 'shoes' are not allowed (that means UGGs).

## B. Girls

### 1. Girls in grades Kindergarten through 5th grade

- Gray & blue kilt skirt or jumper
- Navy blue uniform style pants
- Light blue or white polo skirt with Mater Dolorosa Catholic School circular logo only (long or short sleeve)
- **Navy blue, gray or white knee socks or tights**
- **Navy blue or gray leggings**
- Dress shoes or sneakers that fully cover the foot in muted colors of white, black, navy blue, gray, brown, or tan are best. Fad type, bright, light-up, or wheeled shoes or sneakers are not allowed. High heels, sandals, flip flops, cowboy boots, crocs, and slippers/slipper 'shoes' (that means UGGs) are not allowed.

### 2. Girls in grades 6- 8

- Gray & blue kilt skirt
- Navy blue uniform style pants
- Light blue or white polo shirt with Mater Dolorosa Catholic School circular logo only (long or short sleeve)
- **Navy blue, gray or white knee socks or tights; navy blue or gray leggings ONLY.**
- Dress shoes or sneakers that fully cover the foot in muted colors of white, black, navy blue, gray, brown, or tan are best. Fad type, bright, light-up, or wheeled shoes or sneakers are not allowed. High heels are not allowed. High heels, sandals, flip flops, cowboy boots, crocs, and slippers/slipper 'shoes' (that means UGGs) are not allowed.

## C. All Students

### 1. Gym Uniforms

- Navy blue sweatpants with Mater Dolorosa Catholic School circular logo. These are for warm weather/all year, and can be purchased from Blake's Uniforms only.

- Gray t-shirt with Mater Dolorosa Catholic School circular logo only.
  - Sneakers – Best to be in muted colors or white, black, navy blue, gray, brown, or tan. Fad type, bright or sneakers with lights or wheels are not allowed.
  - Gray t-shirt with Mater Dolorosa Catholic School circular logo only.
- 
- Optional: Gray or navy blue sweatshirts (crew neck and hooded) with Mater Dolorosa Catholic School circular logo. School sweatshirts can be purchased from Blake's Uniforms in several styles. All school logoed sweatshirts are acceptable to be worn in school. Hoods may not be worn on the head in school at any time.

## 2. Hair

### a. All Students

Unconventional, bizarre, and eccentric hairstyles or coloring of any kind are not permitted. Feather and tinsel are also not permitted. Headbands, barrettes, elastic bands/scrunchies must be muted in color or match the school uniform pattern.

### b. Boys

Hair may not be lower than the top of the ears on the side or longer than the top of the collar in the back.

## 3. Jewelry

Necklaces may be worn if religious in nature. Other jewelry is discouraged. Watches are allowed, but will be confiscated from the teacher if they become a distraction or if used for any other purpose than telling time.

Earrings are permitted as follows:

- Boys: Earrings are not allowed
- Girls: One single earring only. No dangling earrings, extra- large loops, or eccentric type earrings allowed.

Tattooing or body scarring or writing on one's body is not permitted. Fake tattoos are not allowed.

## 4. Make Up

Make up is not allowed during the school day. This includes lip-gloss, eyeliner, etc. Light colored nail polish is acceptable. Fake nails are not allowed.

## 5. Seasonal Uniforms - School and Gym

a. Optional: Warm Weather Uniform - Girls and Boys

b. **August through October AND May through June**

- School Uniforms - Navy blue uniform shorts (only knee length walking shorts, no substitutions). Light blue or white polo shirts with Mater Dolorosa Catholic School logo only. Navy blue school uniform pants may be worn all year.
- Gym Uniforms - Gym shorts with circular school logo and gray gym shirt with circular school logo. Navy blue sweatpants with circular school logo may be worn all year.
- Shoes/sneakers that fully cover the foot in muted colors (are best) in black, navy blue, gray, brown, or tan may be worn
- Socks must be white, gray, or navy blue and worn/seen at all times.
- No flip-flops, crocs, sandals or backless shoes (that means UGGs shoes or slipper 'shoes') may be worn.

c. Optional: Cold Weather Uniform

- Girls may wear navy blue cardigan button-up or V-neck cardigan sweaters with Mater Dolorosa Catholic School logo only or school logo sweatshirts purchased from Blake's. Gray or navy blue school logoed sweatshirts may be worn. Hoods are never to be worn on heads in school at any time.
- Boys may wear navy blue V-neck cardigan sweater with Mater Dolorosa Catholic School circular logo school logoed sweatshirts purchased from Blake's. School sweatshirts may be purchased from Blake's as well. Hoods may never be worn on heads in school at any time.

All undershirts must be solid white and tucked in at all times. Camis and layering of shirts is not allowed.

Boots may be worn to and from school but cannot be worn during the school day; this includes, dress boots, UGGs, cowboy boots and work boots. Please bring proper shoes to school when boots are worn. School logoed sweatshirts may be worn to and from school, and may be worn during the school day.

Occasionally, the students are allowed to dress down. Dress down means that the child may come to school out of school uniform but must be dressed appropriately for school.

The following are not permitted during a dress-down day:

- Over-sized pants and jerseys or shirts with inappropriate slogans, logos or ads for tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or inappropriate musical bands
- Large Chains around the neck or wrist
- Half- shirts or tank tops
- Short shorts, biker shorts or miniskirts (no shorter than 3” above the knee)
- Flip flops, crocs, open back shoes, shoes with lights or wheels
- Pajama pants
- Make-up
- Low cut blouses/tops/spaghetti straps (shoulders must be covered)
- Clothing that is extremely tight
- Large or hoop earrings
- Sleeveless shirts

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

## V. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

### A. Financial Aid

An application for Diocesan Financial Aid is available on-line at *www.Factstuitionaid.com*. The window for Diocesan Financial Aid opens in January, and closes in mid-May. The closing date is determined by the Diocesan Financial Aid office, not our school. If aid is denied, parents are responsible for the full tuition amount. Out of Parish families or those registered with another Diocesan parish must present a signed voucher from their Pastor notifying Mater Dolorosa Catholic School that the parish is willing to pay part of their tuition cost. This voucher must be sent to school in order for you to receive the tuition break. Tuition assistance is also available, upon request of meeting with the principal. Principal and pastor will meet with parent and make determination of aid amount, if determined to qualify.

### B. New Students

New students may apply on our school website [www.materdolorosaschool.org](http://www.materdolorosaschool.org).

### C. Tuition

Information regarding tuition is shared on our school website as soon as the rate has been decided by our Finance Council. This typically is decided in late Winter. A tuition letter is shared with families as well. At this time, it is agreed and understood that Mater Dolorosa School has an obligation and commitment to provide its students with the best possible education. It is also agreed and understood that all parents/guardians have an obligation and commitment to make a sincere effort to be prompt and faithful in payment of their full tuition bill.

For Our Lady of the Cross Parishioners, Fr. Albert makes the decision if a family receives sponsorship. Once he receives your Parish Sponsorship Request Form, he takes many things into consideration and will contact families if sponsorship is being offered.

Mater Dolorosa Catholic School offers several tuition payment options. These payments must be made through the online FACTS Tuition Management, and first withdrawals begin in August. Tuition payments are no longer accepted in the school office. Tuition amounts can be found on our school website. You may also call our school at 413-532-2831 or email us at [secretary@materdolorosaschool.org](mailto:secretary@materdolorosaschool.org) for more information.

No student may begin the school year unless the above payment arrangements have been made or all monies (tuition and fees) owed for the previous year have been paid.

A charge of \$25.00 will be required for any check returned by the bank for insufficient funds that was paid to the school office for any purpose.

No report cards or diplomas will be released until all financial obligations to Mater Dolorosa School have been fulfilled. In addition, any family of an 8<sup>th</sup> grade student that does not meet their obligation could forfeit their child's opportunity for scholarships.

The cost of educating a child is approximately \$8,000, and is not completely covered by tuition. The deficit is made up through parish subsidy and fundraising activities. It is vital that every family be involved and supports these programs to the best of their ability.

Families are also required to volunteer ten (10) hours of service throughout the school year. Any family member may perform the volunteering duties and submit a Volunteer Form signed by a designated chairperson to the school office for credit. While Mater Dolorosa Catholic School would prefer to have a family's time commitment, it is understood that this may not be feasible for all families. If a family is unable to meet the volunteer commitment by the end of the school year they will be assessed a \$25.00 per hour fee for each hour of service resulting in a total of \$250.00.

## VI. GENERAL INFORMATION AND POLICIES

### A. Altar Servers

Students in the 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades are invited to join the altar servers and serve at weekly church liturgies. Practice for altar servers is held during school time.

### B. Assemblies

Assemblies are planned as special events on the school calendar. Some typical assembly themes include cultural presentations, professional speakers, prayer services, award presentations, and student assemblies.

### C. Athletics

Students have an opportunity to participate in basketball offered by the C.Y.O. in the school gym.

### D. Birthdays

Students may celebrate their birthday in school by dressing down and bringing in a birthday snack to share at snack or lunchtime. Snacks must be pre-cut individual snacks; no cakes. Please provide napkins and refrigeration/freezer is not available for snacks. Please speak to your homeroom teachers before planning to dress down or bringing in a birthday snack. Invitations for slumber parties or birthdays should be sent to the homes of students via the U.S. mail unless an invitation is being given to every student in the entire grade. Teachers will not provide addresses or mail/address invitations for students. In an effort to avoid hurt feelings, gift bags/thank you cards will not be given in school.

### E. Calendar

The current school year calendar indicating holidays, vacation weeks, and in-service days is sent to each family at the beginning of the school year. The Holyoke Public School System sets forth our guidelines. On occasion Mater Dolorosa Catholic School may call off a day of school for Diocesan events that benefit either the students or teachers. Those Diocesan days will not be made-up at the end of the school year. Calendars are published out on the school website and updated as needed.

#### F. Change of Address/Telephone Number

It is very important, for emergency and administrative reasons, that the office maintains an up-to-date address record for every student. Parents are asked to notify the school immediately if there is a change of address and/or telephone number during the school year.

#### G. Communications

Memos/newsletters containing items of interest to students and parents are distributed when the need arises. It is important that students bring these notices home and that parents take the time to read them and keep in touch with school events. Emails, texts and telephone calls are provided throughout the school year to inform families of important events and changes to schedules and programs. You may also visit our website at [www.materdolorosaschool.org](http://www.materdolorosaschool.org) for more information on Mater Dolorosa Catholic School.

#### H. Community Outreach

Our school is involved in a number of charitable activities throughout the year and collections are generally based on need.

#### I. Delay/Cancellation of School

Delay/cancellation of school will take place only during inclement weather, equipment failure, or public crisis.

Every practical means will be used to notify parents of an impending cancellation, including radio, internet and TV. During inclement weather conditions, please listen to your local radio station or watch Channels 22, 40, or CBS 3 on the TV as well as online news sources. We will also try to send out a text and post to our Facebook pages.

Our policy regarding the closing of school is in accordance with the Holyoke Public School Department. If their Superintendent authorizes the closing of schools, Mater Dolorosa Catholic School will also be closed. In the unusual circumstance where school must be cancelled during the school day, the administration and staff will be sure that all students have satisfactory transportation and supervision before releasing them from school.

#### J. Doctor/Dentist Appointments

Parents are expected to make every effort to schedule doctor and dentist appointments outside of school hours. When this is not possible, however, students will be excused only with a written,

dated request by the parents. Please call the school office by 8:30am if your child will be absent from school.

#### K. Emergency Information

In case of emergency, each student is required to have on file at the school office the following information:

- Parents' names, address, home and work phone numbers
- Emergency phone number of a friend or relative
- Physician's name, phone number, and medical alert information

Changes in the above information should be reported to the office promptly.

#### L. Extended Care Program

Before and after school care is provided to our students on a daily basis. Provisions are also made to provide after school care on half days. There is an hourly fee for this service and parents are billed via FACTS Tuition Management. Students play games, receive assistance with homework, and eat their snacks. Students must have an emergency contact sheet filled-out in order to attend the program. Student will not be released with adults not listed on their emergency form and students must make plans to go home with other students prior to coming to school.

#### M. Food Services

The purpose of the School Lunch Program is to provide a well-balanced nutritional lunch.

The hot lunch program begins operation the first day of school and continues throughout the school year. The menu is determined by the cafeteria staff and is published monthly. Breakfast and Lunch are provided at no-cost for all students for the 2021-2022 school year through a grant received by the Holyoke Public Schools. Milk is available for purchase for cold lunches as well.

#### N. Lost and Found

All found articles are taken to the school office. Students may claim lost articles after proper identification.

#### O. Parent/Legal Guardian Respect for Teachers

Parents/legal guardians are held to the same standard as students with regards to respect for teachers. Enrollment of the child in the school implies a partnership between the school, parents/legal guardian, and child. If the partnership breaks down, parents/legal guardians can be required to withdraw the child from school.

P. Pictures

All students have the opportunity to have their pictures taken by a professional photographer once during the school year, usually in the fall. Parents may purchase prints of these photographs according to the information provided by the photographer.

Q. Publications

All school publications must follow these guidelines:

- Anything published must not be libelous or an attack on any person, group, or institution
- A responsible publication is an accurate account, not slanderous or offensive
- All publications should be in good taste and demonstrate Christian values

R. Rights of Separated/Divorced Parents Regarding Their Children in School

In case of a pending or actual divorce or separation, the following policy and procedures will apply:

- Access to their child's records
- Conferences with the teacher to discuss their child's educational progress

*UNLESS RIGHTS HAVE BEEN LIMITED BY COURT ACTIONS custodial parents who request limitation of the above rights must provide the school with a copy of the relevant court document.*

Non-custodial parents do not have the right to:

- Meet privately with their child in school or take the child away from school

The only exception to the above will be in the case of specific instruction in writing from the custodial parent or a relevant court document.

Prior to the awarding of legal custody by the courts, schools will assume that both parents retain equal rights in all of the above areas, unless a legal temporary restraining order is presented to the school.

## S. School Office Information

Open Monday–Friday: 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Closed on holidays and school vacations.

Summer hours vary and will be sent home at the end of the school year.

Mater Dolorosa Catholic

School

25 Maple Street

Holyoke, MA 01040

Phone number: (413) 532-2831

Fax number: (413) 532-8588

Principal's Email: [mfedora@materdolorosaschool.org](mailto:mfedora@materdolorosaschool.org)

Web Site: [www.materdolorosaschool.org](http://www.materdolorosaschool.org)

## T. School Hours

Students are expected to be in the building by 7:45 to begin their day. The school day officially begins at 7:50am and ends at 2:30pm for students in all grades. Students not in their homeroom by 7:51am will be considered tardy and those dismissed prior to 2:30pm will be considered an early dismissal.

At Mater Dolorosa Catholic School, we work in partnership with parents to enable each child to develop as an independent learner. Parents should allow their child(ren) to enter the building/school building on their own in the morning. Parents should avoid bringing their child into the classroom each morning with the exception of Preschool students. Various classes invite parent involvement or visitation on particular occasions.

The school doors open for students at 7:00am for those utilizing the Before School Program. Any student that arrives prior to 7:30 will be sent to the Before School Program and families will be charged for the service according to the billing schedule, \$3.75 each morning. All billing for Extended Care is through FACTS Tuition Management.

Morning Prayer will begin promptly at 7:55 and Afternoon Prayer will begin at 2:20 with dismissal at 2:25pm.

Students who attend the Afterschool Program will be brought to the cafeteria following dismissal at 2:30pm. The Afterschool Program is in session until 5:00pm. The cost for the afterschool program is \$7.50 for the first hour and \$3.75 for each additional ½ hour.

#### U. School Supplies

Parents are responsible for supplying their children with the necessary writing tools (pencils and/or pens, paper, and notebooks) as required by his/her teacher. These supplies need to be replenished as needed throughout the school year.

#### V. Substitute/Part-time Teachers

Substitute and part-time teachers act with full authority in the classroom. Students are expected to be courteous and respectful. Any misconduct in the classroom will be acted on immediately.

#### W. Telephone

The office telephone is a business phone and is to be used by students only in an emergency.

#### X. Traffic Regulations

The administration has adopted several parking traffic policies due to the limited parking space around the school. The administration seeks the cooperation of all parents and students in observing this access and parking policies. These policies are in place for the safety and protection of our students. As children are dropped off in the morning, parents are asked to do this as quickly as possible so as not to hold up traffic. Please have your child exit the vehicle on the passenger side when dropping off in the cul-de-sac. Parents who drop off a child and need to come into the school are asked to park in front of the parish office or in the church parking lot. Students should be dropped off in the cul-de-sac only.

Students who are picked-up at the end of the day are brought to the church parking lot. The designated area for picking up students is in the church parking lot only. Parking on St. Kolbe Drive is prohibited and causes a serious safety risk to student and teachers. We appreciate your cooperation.

#### Y. Valuables

The school administrators and staff cannot be responsible for valuables which students bring to school. It is recommended that students leave all valuables at home. If special circumstances make it necessary for a student to bring substantial cash or other valuable possessions to school, these items should be registered and left at the main office.

## Z. Volunteers

Mater Dolorosa School considers its volunteers a very special resource. Parents, grandparents, and friends are encouraged to help in classrooms, cafeteria, library, and school functions. Please call the office if you have time, skills, or special talents you can donate to make our school a better place for students to learn and grow. All persons volunteering at Mater Dolorosa School are required to have a CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) check.

### Family Volunteer Requirements

Families are required to volunteer ten (10) hours of service throughout the school year. Any family member may perform the volunteering duties and submit a Volunteer Form signed by a designated chairperson to the school office for credit. While Mater Dolorosa School would prefer to have a family's time commitment, it is understood that this may not be feasible for all families. If a family is unable to meet the volunteer commitment by the end of the school year they will be assessed a \$25.00 per hour fee for each hour of service not completed. The maximum amount being \$250.

### Grade 6 – 8 Student Volunteer Requirements

In keeping with our Mission Statement - "Mater Dolorosa School, following the spirit of St. Francis, fosters and encourages a concern for peace and justice daily. We endeavor to nurture this spirit in our students from Pre-School through Grade 8 through prayer and service to God and others." - Students in grades 6 – 8 are also required to complete 5 hours of volunteer time. They may do this by volunteering at the school, their church, community events or projects.

## VII. HEALTH SERVICES

Mater Dolorosa Catholic School provides a school nurse on a part-time basis. We are fortunate to have two part-time school nurses on duty throughout the week on a shared schedule. The school nurse's office is located on the first floor of the school. The nurse is responsible for the maintenance of health records, routine health checks, contacting parents concerning health problems, and care of minor injuries.

### A. Illness or Injury

In case of illness or serious injury parents will be contacted. The school nurse or a member of the staff will care for the student temporarily. School personnel will render first aid treatment only. If emergency medical treatment is necessary, the parents will be contacted. If parents are not available, the child will be taken to the emergency room at the Holyoke Medical Center. In serious cases, 911 will be called first and then the parents.

If your child is not feeling well, please keep them home for their own well-being and for the health and safety of all our school population. There is no Perfect Attendance Award at Mater Dolorosa School.

Students must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school. Students who are sent home during the school day with a fever or vomiting will not be allowed to return to school the next day as this would not allow for the 24 hour protection of the entire school community. Students on antibiotics must take them for 24 hours before returning to school.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE - State Board of Health rules and regulations DISEASE - MINIMUM PERIOD OF ISOLATION	
Chicken Pox	One week from appearance of eruption and when all scabs are dry
German Measles	Until rash is gone
Mumps	One week from onset of disease or until swelling has subsided
Pediculosis (Lice)	Until free from lice and nits (eggs) for 48 hours
Pink Eye	24 hours after start of antibiotic drops or ointment
Scarlet Fever	For 7 days without drug treatment or 24 hours after drug treatment has begun with treatment continuing at least 10 days

## B. Immunizations and Vaccinations

State law requires that every child who is admitted to school must have evidence of successful vaccinations for diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, and polio. Also required are a rubella/rubeola vaccination and a tuberculin skin test. A student entering Kindergarten is required to have a lead test. Students entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade must have a second MMR.

## C. Insurance

The Diocese requires that all students have health insurance. School insurance will be offered at the beginning of each year. The cost is small compared to the potential cost of medical care and parents are encouraged to take advantage of this service.

## D. Medications

Medicine is treatment, and as such, is not part of the school health services. In most cases, pupils who are on prolonged medication can have the dosage adjusted so the time for taking their prescription will come while they are out of school. Students are never to have medication in their possession during the school day. Students who have a prescription for medications that must be taken during the school day must have an authorization form filled out by their physician. The medication must then be brought to school by the parent. Medications may only be dispensed by the school nurse when she is available, with written authorization from a physician. Medications cannot be dispensed by any other school personnel. If the school nurse is not present, the parent or an authorized adult other than school personnel may come to school to administer medications to the student.

If a child is to receive any medication during the school day the following information must be submitted in writing, with the parent's signature, for each medication:

- Name of child
- Name of physician and phone number
- Name and strength of medication
- Schedule for administration

In the event that a child needs to use an inhaler or cough drops, a dated, written note signed by the parent should be given to the teacher. Inhalers must be brought to the office. Inhaler and Epi-Pens are kept in a locked cabinet in the nurse's office.

## VIII. ORGANIZATIONS

### A. Mater Dolorosa School Board

The School Board “has as its primary concerns the ministry of Catholic school education: the spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional, and social development of the students.” The board, operating under the guidance of the School Board of the Diocese of Springfield and in conformity with the policies of the Diocesan Schools Office, concerns itself with the policy matters pertaining to the general excellence of Catholic education at Mater Dolorosa Catholic School.

The School Board is made up of members who are appointed for three-year terms. Anyone interested in serving may submit their name to a member of the Board.

### B. Parent Teacher Organization

The Mater Dolorosa School P.T.O. is highly involved in their ongoing efforts to strengthen the educational environment of Mater Dolorosa Catholic School. All parents are urged to become members and to actively participate. Meeting schedules are set by the PTO Board and are shared with the school and families.

Each year the P.T.O. sponsors two major fundraisers and with the help of all parents, these fundraisers can be very successful. They allow the P.T.O. to fund many important activities at the school.

## IX. SAFETY

### A. Bomb Threats

A bomb threat is an extremely rare occurrence. Nevertheless, the school is prepared for this type of emergency. Immediate evacuation of the building and notification of authorities and parents are the standard procedure.

### B. Emergency Drills

In keeping with the policies of the Holyoke Fire Department, fire officials will conduct fire drills in the fall and spring of the school year. Additional fire drills will be conducted at appropriate intervals throughout the school year by the administration. All students must leave the building quickly and quietly through the designated exits. Students should walk, not run.

To help prepare the students for a possible dangerous intrusion, lock-down drills are conducted periodically as well. In addition to our fire drills and lock down drills, the bus company conducts bus evacuation drills twice a year.

### C. Schoolyard Supervision

School staff will supervise the schoolyard during all recess times.

### D. Search and Seizure

The administration reserves the right to search students' desks, book bags, storage areas, cell phones, electronic devices or clothing when reasonable concern exists that there may be items which could potentially threaten the safety or well-being of other students or which are deemed inappropriate and against school policy. Any such items will be confiscated.

### E. Visitors

Visitors are always welcome at Mater Dolorosa Catholic School. All school doors are locked while school is in session. Therefore, ringing the buzzer for admittance is required. All parents and other visitors are required to report to the school office to sign-in. No one is allowed anywhere in the building without authorization from the main office.

## **X. SCHEDULE AND ATTENDANCE**

### **A. Absenteeism**

A parent/guardian must call the school by 8:30 a.m. the day of the child's absence. A dated note signed by a parent is required when the student returns. The school office will contact parents regarding unreported absences.

The following circumstances are the only justifiable excuses for school absence:

- Personal illness
- Family illness
- Death in the family
- Legal appointments
- Other serious reasons acceptable at the discretion of the Principal

The student is required to give advance notice, in writing, to the school to be excused for any other type of absence. Mater Dolorosa School is required to consult with the Diocesan Office if a student is absent 15 days and/or 18 days tardy.

### **B. Attendance**

Regular attendance is essential to a student's success in school. Most subjects are taught in sequence, requiring an understanding of each concept in the order of its presentation. Persistent absenteeism creates an academic hardship for a student and is regarded as a very serious problem. Student who are absent nine (9) days in one semester or eighteen (18) days during the school year risk promotion to the next grade and a report is filed with the Diocesan Superintendent's Office. In extreme situations the involvement of the Diocesan School Officials and Department of Children and Families may become necessary. Classroom teachers will not provide schoolwork in advance for students taking extended vacations during the school year.

### **C. Early Dismissal**

In general, students are not permitted to leave the building during school hours. Requests by parents for an early dismissal may be granted for sufficient reason in extraordinary cases. At such times, a parent, or person authorized by a parent, must sign the student out in the front office.

Early dismissal from school requires a written request from the parent/guardian specifying the time and reason for dismissal. The note must be brought to the school office at the beginning of the day.

Mater Dolorosa reserves the right to refuse to release a student to a parent/guardian whose condition could jeopardize the safety of the child. Students may be excused from school or class when illness or unusual circumstances arise during the day. Parents will be notified and must come to the office to sign out the child.

#### D. Tardiness

Children are expected to be in their designated classrooms by the starting time of 7:50 a.m. and ready to begin school. This is an important part of the day, when directions are given and a tone is set for the day. Parents have a responsibility to see that their child is in school on time.

Any child who arrives late must report to the office to be marked tardy. Students who ride the bus to school will be excused if the bus is late. When a child has been tardy three (3) times within 30 days, the school will contact the parent/guardian to discuss the situation and, if lateness continues, it will be handled as a disciplinary matter. Your child's learning time is lost when s/he is repeatedly tardy. When a child has been tardy ten (10) times a meeting between the parent/guardian and the Principal will be requested.

#### E. Truancy

Students who are absent from school without authorization from parents or the school will be considered truant. After a conference with the parents/guardian, the offender will be referred to the Principal for disciplinary action.

#### F. Withdrawals

Notification for withdrawal should be given by the parents of any student who is withdrawing before the end of the academic year. Teachers will summarize the student's progress and prepare the student's file for the Administration. When all obligations to the school have been met, the student's records will be forwarded to the next school of enrollment. Obligations include tuition, Before/After Care, and returning all books and Chromebooks in the condition in which they received them.

## XI. TRANSPORTATION

### A. Bicycles and Skateboards

Parental permission in a dated, written note is required informing the school that their child will be riding a bicycle to and from school on certain days. The school is not responsible for stolen bicycles. Students will leave with the car pickup line and must wait until all cars have left the parking lot. In accordance with Massachusetts State Law, helmets must be worn. Skateboards are not allowed.

### B. Bus Route and Operating

Bus routes and stops are established by the Holyoke Public School Department and are published through the area newspapers near the beginning of the school year. Parents, who wish to make requests for changes in routes or stops, should contact the principal or school secretary who will then request the change from the bus company. Students and parents are encouraged to notify the school immediately of any safety hazards, which they have observed during bus operations. Students who are not eligible for bus transportation cannot take the bus for any reason. Students with bus privileges who wish to take a different bus or be dropped at a different bus stop must have a note signed by both a parent and the principal in order for the change to be allowed. Official changes to bus services must be done through the Bus Company, not through the school. The Bus Company conducts bus evacuation drills twice a year.

### C. Changes in Regular Means of Transportation

In the event that a child is to return home from school by car instead of bus or s/he is to be picked up by a friend or relative, a dated note signed by a parent must be submitted to the school the morning of the day on which this is to occur. Children who wish to go from school to another student's home must bring a note from their parent giving them permission to do so. This note must be brought to the school office the morning of the child's planned visit and signed by the principal. Please remind your child that they will not be allowed to call home at the last minute to make after-school arrangements to visit a friend.

### **Right to Amend**

Mater Dolorosa School reserves the right to amend this Handbook at any time. Notice of amendments will be sent to parents via the students and/or e-mail communication. Amendments to the Parent/Student Handbook can also be found on the school's website. [www.materdolorosaschool.org](http://www.materdolorosaschool.org)

## Parent Signature Page

I have read the 2025-2026 Parent/Student Handbook and agree to follow the school policies and procedures as stated.

Family Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Parent Signature

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Date

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Student Signature

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Student Signature

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Date

***Parents and student must both sign.***

