

**PARENT/STUDENT  
HANDBOOK  
2025-2026**





Dear Parents,

Welcome to Mother Catherine Academy. In choosing MCA, you have demonstrated a commitment to the values and philosophy of a Catholic education for your child.

The administration, faculty, and staff of our school look forward to working with you to provide a Christ-centered environment which will foster spiritual development and promote academic excellence in your child.

The policies and procedures outlined in the handbook are intended to facilitate our collective efforts in the educational development of your child. They outline the expectations and responsibilities of all who are involved in the challenge of Catholic education at MCA.

Thank you for taking the time to review these policies. Please sign the final page indicating that you support and will abide by the policies set forth in this handbook, and please keep this handbook in a convenient place for future reference. Thank you for entrusting MCA with your child's education. We look forward to working together to help you meet your child's spiritual and academic needs.

Mr. Anthony Wojt  
Principal

Mrs. Debra Phetteplace  
President, MCA Board of Trustees

**SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION**

PHONE: (301) 884-3165

FAX: (301) 472-4469

WEBSITE: [www.mothercatherine.org](http://www.mothercatherine.org)

PRINCIPAL'S E-MAIL: [awojt@mothercatherine.org](mailto:awojt@mothercatherine.org)

SCHOOL MAILING ADDRESS:

38833 Chaptico Road  
Mechanicsville, MD 20659

**SCHOOL DAY: 7:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**



OUR MISSION .....	1
PROFILE FOR GRADUATES.....	2-3
RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.....	4
BOARD OF TRUSTEES .....	4
CHILD PROTECTION POLICY .....	4
ADMISSION CRITERIA .....	4
WITHDRAWAL POLICY .....	4
ARRIVING LATE .....	5
PARENT/GUARDIAN ROLE .....	5
PARENT/GUARDIAN/STUDENT COOPERATION .....	5
PARENT/GUARDIAN SUPPORT.....	6
LEGAL RIGHTS OF PARENTS .....	6
TUITION AND FEES.....	6
TUITION ASSISTANCE.....	7
TRANSPORTATION .....	7
BUS TRANSFER POLICY.....	8
ABSENCE/TARDINESS.....	8-9
HEALTH INFORMATION .....	10
IMMUNIZATIONS.....	10
MEDICAL INFORMATION .....	10-11
COMMUNICATION.....	11
GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES.....	11
CELL PHONE POLICY/SMART WATCHES.....	11-12
TECHNOLOGY AND INTERNET USAGE .....	12
TECHNOLOGY CONCERNS.....	12-13
REPORT CARDS .....	13
HONOR ROLL CRITERIA .....	13
SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT TEAM .....	13
REPORT ON STUDENT PROGRESS.....	14
PROMOTION, RETENTION, TRANSFER.....	14

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ELIGIBILITY.....	14
HOMEWORK.....	14-15
TESTING .....	15
TEXTBOOKS.....	15
BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAMMING .....	15-16
THREATS .....	16
STUDENT BEHAVIOR PLAN .....	17
SUSPENSION .....	17-18
EXPULSION .....	18
SEARCH.....	18
SCHOOL UNIFORM .....	19-20
UNIFORM VIOLATIONS .....	21
MARKING CLOTHES AND POSSESSIONS/LOST AND FOUND.....	21
TAG DAY DRESS CODE .....	21
ACCESSORIES .....	21-22
LUNCH PROGRAM .....	22
PLAYGROUND .....	23
EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING.....	23
DRUG & SMOKE FREE ENVIRONMENT .....	23
FIELD TRIPS .....	23-24
LIBRARY .....	24
VOLUNTEERS .....	24
HONOR CODE SYSTEM.....	25
NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY.....	26
PAROCHIAL SCHOOL CALENDAR.....	27-28
AMENDMENT OF HANDBOOK.....	28



**MOTTO**  
**A JOURNEY OF FAITH**  
**Home of the MCA SAINTS**

**OUR VISION**

MCA will provide an exceptional Catholic education to the children of today while inspiring them to be the virtuous leaders of tomorrow.

**MISSION STATEMENT**

MCA, an independent Catholic school, strives to promote the message of Jesus Christ through prayer, work and example while providing a nurturing and encouraging environment grounded in the Catholic tradition. We foster academic excellence in an innovative and creative learning environment. These programs enrich and promote students' self-esteem, learning, moral and spiritual values. Our mission is to nurture and challenge our children to recognize and realize their full potential as they grow to love God, respect others and serve their community.

**OUR PHILOSOPHY**

We believe in an education grounded in the Catholic tradition.

We empower students to develop a strong foundation in Christ.

We believe in academic excellence.

We provide a challenging learning environment based on a STREAM (Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Art and Math) program to prepare students for tomorrow's world.

We believe in a nurturing and encouraging environment.

In partnership with our families, we provide a safe, positive and caring environment with clearly defined behavioral expectations.

We believe in the mission of Jesus Christ to serve our community.

All children of faith are welcomed at MCA.

## **MCA Profile of Graduates**

The Profile of Graduates provides the answer to the following question: When our students have completed our entire educational program and have had the benefit of the services and activities provided by MCA and the community:

- What do we expect them to know?
- What do we expect them to be able to do with what they know?
- What qualities or characteristics do we want them to demonstrate?

A Profile of Graduates:

- Describes the students at the point of exit from MCA.
- States the values, achievements and readiness that each student will manifest upon graduation.
- Should be considered both as a Bill of Rights and a set of corresponding responsibilities for students, faculty, staff, administration and MCA's community.
- Defines the outcomes each and every student will attain if the "Mission" is operative and appropriately translated into programs and services.

A Profile of Graduates serves to:

- Translate the identity, vision and values expressed in the "Beliefs" and "Mission" into statements that describe student outcomes.
- Translate and transform concepts from the ideal and global to specific expression in the development of a student in MCA.
- Give expression to what the "Mission" means in the operational life of this institution.
- Define an outline or the shape each student is expected to grow into regardless of specific courses taken or post-graduation plans.
- Provide a concrete reference point for faculty, staff and MCA's community when designing curriculum, instructional experiences, service programs, auxiliary resources and student and family services.

The “MCA’s Profile of Graduates” is:

It is our sincere hope and belief that, as a result of completing an education at Mother Catherine Academy,

Graduates will live their Catholic faith by:

- Growing in their personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Recognizing that all gifts and talents are God-given.
- Being able to see Christ in others.
- Attending and participating in Sunday Mass.
- Frequent reception of the sacraments beyond what is obligatory.

Graduates will reflect their values by:

- Using their Catholic faith as a compass to guide their moral decisions.
- Demonstrating virtues when interacting with others.
- Acting responsible and accountable in everyday living in pursuit of sainthood.

Graduates will exhibit the attributes of a leader by:

- Making decisions based on their Catholic values.
- Modeling and encouraging others by drawing upon inspiration from the saints to act according to the moral teachings of the Catholic Church.
- Participating in elections and other government activities that involve religious freedoms, basic human rights, and actions to support Catholic doctrine.

Graduates will demonstrate the quality of their education by:

- Finding personal success in academics and beyond so that their unique talents can contribute to God’s plan in the world.
- Applying critical thinking skills and rigorous study habits to fulfill their academic tasks with excellence.
- Being well versed in the teachings of the Catholic Church and able to explain and defend the faith to others.
- Being effective speakers and writers and knowledgeable about world events that impact our Catholic faith.

Graduates will demonstrate their service to community by:

- Being active in their local parish ministries and other non-profit organizations.
- Voluntarily share talents and time for the purpose of enriching other people’s lives in their community and beyond.
- Recognizing and acting on their responsibility to give back to society through service to those in need.
- Being good stewards of God’s creation by promoting efforts to protect the earth and all living things.

### **RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTIONS AND WORSHIP ATTENDANCE**

MCA is a place of faith formation and all students, regardless of religious background, shall attend school prayer and worship services and fully participate in religious instruction. All Catholic students are expected to attend regular Sunday liturgies at their home parish and to frequently receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist, once they are eligible to do so.

### **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Our school Board of Trustees consists of individuals who make our school policy. Their role is to use their expertise to advise the administration of the school in matters of policy making and organization of programs that relate to school functions. Being a member of the school Board is a privilege. The primary job of any member of the Board is to offer advice and expertise to strengthen the decision-making process.

### **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

MCA adheres to child protection regulations as mandated by the MCA Board of Trustees. These regulations have been implemented for the safety of the children in Catholic schools and parish ministries associated with the Archdiocese of Washington (ADW). As part of this policy, MCA is mandating that anyone who wishes to volunteer in any way that involves contact with the children (coaching, chaperoning field trips, classroom and cafeteria helpers, etc.) must be fingerprinted and receive FBI and state cleared background checks. Contact the school office to receive information on the fingerprinting guidelines in order to complete this process.

### **ADMISSION CRITERIA**

Students entering Pre-Kindergarten (3) must be age 3 by September 1, 2024. Students entering Pre-Kindergarten (4) must be age 4 by September 1, 2024. Students entering Kindergarten must be age 5 by September 1, 2024. Any students transferring from another school, will be accepted upon registration if there is room in the particular grade. If a student has left MCA, even if for a brief time, that student must reapply to be considered for re-admission. Prospective students take a placement test in order to determine their strengths and weaknesses in the areas of math and reading. If there appears to be a serious deficiency in either area, it may be suggested that the incoming student be entered at another grade level. A new student will be on probation for one year. If during this trial period there are any problems (academic or behavioral) that can't be overcome, the parents of that student may be asked to withdraw him/her from MCA.

### **WITHDRAWAL POLICY**

Families must notify the principal in writing if a student is being withdrawn from the school. Families who choose to leave Mother Catherine Academy before the end of the academic year, agree to pay the remaining balance of tuition for the full academic year. This does exclude families who have a special circumstance surrounding their departure from the school. Families who choose to leave the school year prior to the end of the academic year will need to schedule an appointment with the school administration. The school will not forward records for students who withdraw with an outstanding balance for tuition, extended care or other financial

commitments. When making requests for student records you must give the office advance notice of at least five school-days to allow sufficient time for reviewing and processing such items.

### **ARRIVING LATE**

**Anyone arriving 7:45 a.m. or after is considered to be late.** If your child is arriving late, it is necessary for the parent/grandparent/guardian to come into the school office and sign the student in. Please park your vehicle on the side of the school building and bring the student into the office. It is against school policy to drop your student off at the front door unless a teacher is standing outside to help the student into the building. This is a matter of security as well as safety. Please refer to the section entitled, "Attendance" to see how late arrivals affect your child's attendance record.

### **PARENT/GUARDIAN ROLE**

We recognize that the parent is the primary teacher of the child. Parents are the initial model in Christian behavior. As partners in the educational process, and to help children develop the self-control necessary to succeed to the best of their ability, parents and school staff work hand in hand to develop in the student's good habits of behavior as well as proper attitudes toward the school. In this effort, we ask that parents respect the teacher as a professional dedicated to furthering the student's academic and spiritual progress. Additionally, we ask the parents to comply with the rules of the school concerning student conduct and dress code. Parents and teachers must work together to follow through with any identified disciplinary actions and any other recommendations made in the best interest of the student. It is the hope of the school staff that, in working with the parents, we will teach the student respect for authority, rules, the rights of others, and private and public property.

### **PARENT/GUARDIAN/STUDENT COOPERATION**

Parents/Guardians and students understand and acknowledge the Roman Catholic religious nature of MCA. Parents/Guardians and students agree not to publicly repudiate the teachings and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church and will respect and support the unique identity that MCA derives from its Catholic faith. As the primary educators of their children, parents/guardians will not act in any manner that contradicts the Catholic nature of MCA. Parents/Guardians shall cooperate fully with the school and the students shall participate in all required school programming, including instruction in the Catholic faith and attendance at Mass. As the primary educators of the students, parents/guardians agree to promote the best interests of the church and school and will comply with the policies of MCA.

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN SUPPORT**

Parents are required by their signed tuition agreement to participate in the four (4) major fundraisers by selling/purchasing a pre-set amount of items. Parents are required to participate in our annual bingo program by completing four (4) Saturday night bingos at the school, arriving no later than **4:30PM**. Please keep in mind the following when working your scheduled bingo:

- **Missing a scheduled bingo will result in a \$500.00 charge as agreed in the tuition agreement.**
- **If a trade is needed it is the responsibility of the family to secure a trade and email Mrs. Johnson**
- **Phone use during bingo is for emergencies only**
- **Arrival time is 4:30**
- **All Pull Tab and Floor Workers call back Bingos and Pull Tabs**
- **Floor Workers spread out in gym to facilitate call backs when done selling specials**
- **Everyone can help count Pull tabs when done their original station**
- **Please make sure to send able-bodied family representatives**

Parents are required to purchase a pre-determined amount in our SCRIP program. Parents are also required to complete and document 15 volunteer hours for the benefit MCA. It is the responsibility of the parent to submit a volunteer statement to the office for each volunteer service performed. This will be our main way to track volunteer hours. Failure to comply will result in additional billing as appropriate.

## **LEGAL RIGHTS OF PARENTS**

In the case of separation, divorce or adoption, a copy of the court orders identifying parental or legal guardian custody must be presented for inclusion in the student's file. Legal documentation regarding any change in custody status during the time a child is enrolled in school must also be presented to school officials. MCA abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. **In the absence of a court order to the contrary, the school will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the academic records and to other school-related information regarding the child. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order. The school will comply with the written court documents.**

## **TUITION AND FEES**

There are three categories of tuition: families with a single student, families with two students and families with three or more students. The Registration Fee is \$150.00 per student and is non-refundable. There is also a Book and Technology Fee of \$300.00 per student for grades K-8 and \$220.00 for Pre-K and is non-refundable. Enrollment/registration and tuition payments are made through TADS. TADS charges \$50.00 setup fee for agreements that are paid in one or two installments. TADS charges \$55.00 setup fee for agreements that will be paid in 4 or more payments. TADS charges a \$50.00 late fee for any balance of \$50.00 or more that becomes

over five (5) days past due. That fee will be added to your account. Payments returned from the bank will also incur a \$50.00 fee. **If your account becomes more than two (2) months past due, your child will not be permitted to attend school until your account is made current. Report Cards and/or Student Records will be held for non-payment of tuition and fees. Late Fees will also be applied.**

Any checks that are returned due to insufficient funds will incur a \$25.00 fee to be paid to the school within five (5) business days. In addition, check writing privileges may be suspended or revoked.

**All Extended Care:** Invoices will be sent home every 2 weeks, payment will be due the following day after receipt of invoice. If your child is attending Before Care and After Care, one invoice will be sent for both services. Drop in care will also be sent an invoice. **Those enrolled in the full time or part time program will be charged the full rate whether they use the program the entire week or not.** Payments should be received by the due date on the invoice. Checks should be made payable to Mother Catherine Academy or MCA. Please place payment in a sealed envelope marked "Extended Day Care".

### **TUITION ASSISTANCE**

MCA recognizes the significant sacrifices many families make to educate their children in a values-centered, Catholic environment. **Tuition assistance is available through the Archdiocese of Washington (ADW). Applications to the ADW are usually due by the beginning of December. This should be your first avenue for assistance. Once you have completed and filed the application to ADW, you may also apply for the Mother Catherine Spalding Legacy Scholarship, and/or pastors / parish assistance. Once these avenues of assistance have been determined, the principal should be contacted for additional school assistance as necessary. If you are experiencing financial difficulty, please contact the school principal and the President of the MCA Board of Trustees. All requests for assistance directly from MCA should be submitted by April 1.**

### **TRANSPORTATION**

St. Mary's County provides transportation free of charge for parochial school students. Riding the bus is a privilege. The most important goal of transporting students is the safety of each child. As such, the bus driver has full control and is responsible for management of discipline on the bus. Students are to ride the bus seated in their assigned seats and are to talk in a conversational tone. Booklets outlining bus safety and discipline regulations are distributed to each student within the first two weeks of school. The school strongly supports these safety and discipline regulations and requests that parents read the booklet, discuss it with their children, and encourage respect and compliance with these policies for the general safety and well-being of all concerned. In the case of repeated student misconduct, bus privileges will be suspended.

If a problem arises on the bus, please contact the bus driver first. If the problem continues, bring it to the attention of the Principal.

All children are expected to ride home on their assigned bus. If a change in transportation is deemed necessary, the parent must complete a “Request for Transportation” form (this can be found on the school website under the Family Information/Forms tab, OR go to the St. Mary’s County Transportation website under Nonpublic School Buses). This form needs to be emailed to the Non-St. Mary’s County Public Schools transportation office at [Thomas.Thompson@stmaryscountymd.gov](mailto:Thomas.Thompson@stmaryscountymd.gov).

### **BUS TRANSFER POLICY**

MCA is a student transfer point for bus riders. This means that some students who are picked up at their homes will change to a different bus at MCA in order to get to their school. We are not a drop off / pickup point between cars and buses. Students riding buses to MCA may transfer to a second bus in order to be transported from home to school in the morning and from school to home in the afternoon. Students should follow the directions of the bus drivers and the staff of MCA. Students may not be dropped off at MCA and then get on a transfer bus. Students should walk, not run when transferring. Students should always walk on the outside of the oval and never step between buses. *Students are not allowed to transfer from a private vehicle to a bus or from a bus into a private vehicle. If a student misses the bus at his/her home, it is the responsibility of the parent to transport the child directly to his/her school.*

### **ABSENCE/TARDINESS**

If your child is ill and will not be attending school, we request that a parent/guardian call the school before 8:00 am. Upon returning to school, a written note or email must be provided to the office within five (5) days to explain the reason for the child’s absence otherwise the absence will be recorded as unexcused. Students are expected to make up any work missed during an absence. If the student is absent for several days, please make every effort to get work for your child to complete at home. When a student misses school after three days of illness, student **must provide medical documentation.**”

Submitting appropriate documentation for your child’s absences is imperative for those absences to be considered “excused.” Otherwise, your child’s compulsory absenteeism is considered “unexcused.” If you have any documentation for these unexcused absences, then you must provide them to the school. Failure to provide the necessary documentation will result in a report being filed with the local Child and Family Protection Services for your role in permitting chronic truancy (habitual absenteeism). If you choose to withdraw your child from the school and fail to enroll your child in homeschool or register at another school within 5 days, then you will be reported to the local Child and Family Protection Services per potential educational negligence.

**We discourage vacations during the school year and teachers are not required to give make-up missed instruction for absences due to vacations. Students are responsible to make up assignments and assessments. Classwork and participation assignments cannot be made up and will be scored 0.** If there is a serious reason for your child to be out of school for reasons other than health, please notify the principal in writing ahead of time. If the expected absence has not been cleared by the principal, make-up work may not be provided for your child.

**WHEN A STUDENT IS ABSENT DURING THE SCHOOL DAY THAT STUDENT MAY NOT PARTICIPATE IN AN EVENING OR AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITY. EXAMPLE: A SEVENTH GRADE STUDENT IS ABSENT OR SENT HOME SICK → THAT STUDENT MAY NOT ATTEND ANY EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITY THAT SAME EVENING (INCLUDING CLUBS, DANCES, SPORTS, ETC.).**

Leaving school early or arriving at school late is a disruption not only for the particular child but also for all of the child's classmates. In an effort to eliminate these disruptions, it will be necessary to present a written note or email the office explaining the situation. The note must give a specific reason for being late or leaving early including medical appointments. An excused reason must be validated with a doctor's note or some other means of verification. Parents are required to sign out their child in the school office. If the child returns to school during the same day, he/she must then be signed back into school. Students who are away from school for an appointment for 3.5 hours will be counted as absent. Five (5) late arrivals/tardy will count as one (1) day of absence. **Excessive absences (20 days) or the equivalent of 20 days including tardiness can be cause for a student to be retained in the current grade for another year and will be reported to the appropriate county authorities in regards to the student's truancy.**

Please make all phone calls relating to changes in transportation before 2:30 PM. Please do not come into the school building to pick up your child after 2:30 PM. You must then enter the car rider line of cars to pick up your child.

The following are valid reasons for excused absences from school (if properly documented by the student's parent or guardian upon the student's return to school):

1. Illness of the student (after three (3) days of illness, medical documentation **must** be provided that indicates that the student is able to return to school);
2. Death in the student's immediate family;
3. Necessity for a student to attend a judicial proceeding;
4. Lawful suspension or exclusion from school by chief administrative officer;
5. Temporary closing of facilities or suspension of classes due to severe weather, official activities, holidays, malfunctioning equipment, unsafe or unsanitary conditions, or other conditions requiring closing of school or suspension of classes; and
6. Other absence(s) approved in advance by the principal upon the written request of a parent or guardian. Sufficient notice should be given to the school in order to provide expected student work to be completed while absent. Failure to provide sufficient time may result in an unexcused absence.

Any absence that does not fall into one of the above categories, or is not properly documented by the student's parent/guardian, is an unexcused absence.

PERFECT ATTENDANCE is recognized at the end of the school year. This is an honor for the child and his/her family. Perfect attendance will not be awarded to students who have been late or have left school early more than 3 times during the year without a written excuse.

## **HEALTH INFORMATION**

When your child is not well, please keep him/her home from school. This will help reduce the risk of infecting others. Your child **must** be kept home if he/she exhibits any of the following:

- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Severe cough
- Yellowish, watery or red eyes
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Abnormal body temperature or fever (below 97 or above 100)

If your child develops any of these symptoms while at school, parents will be notified to come and pick them up. **Please have a backup plan for someone to come to pick your student up at school while you are at work. MCA requires written authorization to be on file for anyone other than the parents/legal guardian to pick up a child.** Students must be fever/vomit free for 24 hours without the aid of medication before returning to school. Students who are sent home during the school day with a fever or vomiting will not be allowed to return the next day as this would not allow for the 24-hour protection of the school community.

## **IMMUNIZATIONS**

Maryland State Law requires children in ALL grades to provide proof of immunization against Diphtheria, Pertussis (Whooping Cough), Tetanus, Polio, Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (German Measles). Every student must have an Immunization Record on file in the school office BEFORE the first day of school.

### NOTE:

- As of September 1992, Maryland State Law now requires a SECOND Measles immunization once a child reaches the age of 5, usually in the form of MMR vaccine.
- As of September 2006, children in Pre-K through tenth grade must have vaccinations for chickenpox and Hepatitis B.
- As of August 2015, children entering Kindergarten must have two (2) doses of Varicella vaccine.
- As of August 2015, children entering 7th grade must have a single dose of Tdap vaccine and a single dose of Meningococcal vaccine.
- Complete physical examinations are required prior to entrance into school by ALL PK and Kindergarten students, and all NEW students in 1st – 8th Grade.

## **MEDICAL INFORMATION**

MCA has an on-staff delegating nurse. This position is held by a registered nurse (RN) who comes into the school regularly to inspect medical records and to instruct staff on the safe and proper dispensing of authorized medications. A delegating nurse is only in the school part time. It is mandated by the state that any medication (prescription, over the counter meds, and cough drops) coming into

the school be brought into the school office by an adult. Medication must be accompanied by a doctor's explicit directions and be in its original container with the student's name and dosage information on it.

Students are not allowed to carry **any** medication (including cough drops) with them nor are they allowed to keep medication in their book bags or lockers.

### **COMMUNICATION**

Good communication between the school and home is essential to the success of the student. A family folder goes home each Wednesday. In this folder you will find notes, calendars, flyers and a weekly letter from the Principal. Some of the notices going home are of a timely nature and must be signed and returned to the school office promptly. Please check the folder each week. Some notices may be sent via email, so it is important to make sure you have a current email address on file with the front office. If you do not use email, that should also be made clear so that we can send home a hard copy of any notices going out via email. Various forms of communication that are used to relay information to our families also include email, text notifications, phone calls and social media.

### **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

When parents have a concern about a student's academic or social success, the parent should contact the school in the following sequence:

1. First, contact the **classroom teacher** (this is the person who sees your child the most).  
Decide with the teacher what course of action should be implemented. Wait one or two weeks to see if the newly implemented plan is successful. Plan a follow-up phone call or meeting with the teacher to determine the progress of the student.
2. Second, if there is still a concern about the matter after working with the teacher, make arrangements to meet with the principal. Please call the school office to arrange for such a meeting.
3. If there is still an existing conflict, the parents may contact the President of the Board of Trustees.

### **CELL PHONE POLICY/SMART WATCHES**

The administration, faculty and staff know how important it is for you to be able to stay in touch with your child. Students in grades 3-8 are eligible to carry a cell phone to school. If your child has a cell phone or any other device with internet access and brings it to school it **MUST** be turned in to the classroom teacher during homeroom. The phones will be put in a plastic container and kept in a safe place in the homeroom. Any student who elects to bring their phone or other internet capable device to school must have a signed cell phone contract on file in the school office. Children who participate in after school activities may check their phone before the start of the activity and then the phone must be turned in to the teacher or staff member in charge. This policy also applies to extended care. Our faculty and staff will always allow a child to call their parents. The children are more than welcome to use the school phone or our administration will assist them. In the event of an emergency or lockdown, the phones would be easily accessible in the classroom. At the end of the school day, your child's phone will be returned at dismissal (3:00pm).

If a student is found to have a cell phone in their possession, the cell phone will be taken away and kept in the principal's office for a full week. After a week, a parent may come and pick up the cell phone. The school will not return the phone to the student.

It is a policy to work together and to teach our children responsibility as we continue to move into this world of communication. As we all know, there are many institutions, government buildings, etc. where electronic devices are not permitted. We want to continue to encourage our children to develop good responsible behaviors. Our goal at MCA is to promote a healthy, safe environment for all our children and to remain focused on their academics.

### **TECHNOLOGY AND INTERNET USAGE**

Acceptable use of Technology and Internet by Students at MCA: Students shall use all technology equipment, including but not limited to computers, networking systems, Internet, mobile devices, communication devices, cell phones, email, social networking sites, calculators, DVD players, and cameras ("technology equipment") with care and respect, whether at school, at home, or elsewhere. Students shall not type, send or otherwise use any inappropriate or offensive words. They also shall not display, send or otherwise use inappropriate or offensive images, sounds or messages from or on technology equipment. Students shall not use technology equipment in a manner which violates any local, state or federal laws. Students shall immediately report to a teacher or supervising staff member any inappropriate material or misuse of technology equipment of which the student becomes aware. Students shall not use technology equipment in any way to engage in cyber-bullying behavior. Any student use of cell phones and mobile devices during school hours is prohibited, with the exception of instances authorized by the teacher or principal or in the case of medical emergencies.

When using the school's technology equipment, all students: shall not reconfigure any school hardware, software, or network settings; shall print, download, or otherwise transfer only that information approved by the teacher or supervisor; shall obtain the permission of a teacher or supervisor before loading a file or drive onto a school computer; shall not use any school technology equipment to create, store, transfer or use software or electronic content in a manner which violates the rights of the holder of copyright in the software or the content; shall not plagiarize works on the Internet; shall not load any software onto the school computers without first obtaining the teacher's permission; shall only use the Internet for school-related projects and shall visit only the sites assigned by the teacher; shall not 'surf' the Internet or visit "Snapchat" or any other social networking websites while at school; shall not log-on to the Internet without permission from a teacher or supervising staff member; shall not give out, post, or otherwise distribute personal information such as photographs, home addresses, telephone numbers, parents' work addresses or telephone numbers or the name and location of the school. Each student's parent/guardian must review the Technology and Internet Usage Agreement in TADS with the student and sign and return the Agreement during the enrollment process.

### **TECHNOLOGY CONCERNS**

**Social Media:** Engagement in online blogs such as, but not limited to, Snapchat, TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter 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.

**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. Students involved in possession or transmission of inappropriate photos on their cell phones or other devices face suspension and/or expulsion.

Any violation of state and/or federal law will result in notification to the proper authorities for appropriate action.

### **REPORT CARDS**

Report cards are distributed four times during the school year, except for Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students who are evaluated in January and again in June. Parents are required to meet with the teachers in November when the first report card is distributed. This includes Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten parents who will meet to discuss progress thus far. The grading system is as follows:

#### **Grades 1-2**

EE – Exceeding Expectations

AE – Approaching Expectations

X-Not Assessed At This Time

ME – Meeting Expectations

NE – Not Approaching

#### **Grades 3 – 8: 10 POINT GRADING SYSTEM**

A: 90% – 100%

D: 60% – 69%

B: 80% – 89%

F: 59% and below

C: 70% – 79%

### **HONOR ROLL CRITERIA**

Students in grades 3-8 have the opportunity to be named to the honor roll as follows:

High Honor Roll: A's in all areas.

Honor Roll: A's and B's in all areas.

- These assemblies usually take place right after report card distribution. This will be noted on the calendar and also in the Wednesday Newsletter that comes home weekly.

### **SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT TEAM**

MCA has educators that are designated by the school principal to serve as a resource for student instruction. These educators may be referred to as a "Student Assistance Team" or by some other similar designation and shall function following the procedures and guidelines utilized by the ADW Catholic Schools Office.

### **REPORT ON STUDENT PROGRESS**

Report cards are important tools for communication and are distributed four (4) times a year (except Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten – only two (2) times). No report cards or interims will be given if tuition or other fees and payments are in arrears.

MCA has incorporated an online grading system as an operational tool. Rediker is a Learning Community Management System used for school and class organization. It is a portal service that is aimed at improving communication between parents, students, and teachers. Rediker provides school and classroom level website support for administrators, parents, teachers and students from 3rd through 8th grade. Parents will only be able to access information applicable to their child. All parents will be assigned student accounts. Upon activating their accounts, parents and students will have access to class news, assignments, and grades.

### **PROMOTION, RETENTION, TRANSFER**

Promotion to the next grade depends on successful completion of all subject areas and required attendance. The administration may recommend the repetition of a grade, tutoring, or summer school classes as requirement for promotion when, after conferences with teachers and parents, it is believed that such action will better prepare the student academically or emotionally for the next grade. Students may also be transferred to the next grade. The transfer of a student may indicate a learning problem that requires further investigation, testing or assessing. Any student in eighth grade who is being transferred as opposed to promoted will not receive a diploma from MCA.

### **EXTRA-CURRICULAR ELIGIBILITY**

Students in grades 3-8 who wish to participate in basketball, cheerleading (grades 1-8), dances, or any other extra-curricular activities must maintain an overall C average in all subjects. One F or two Ds will make a student ineligible for all extra-curricular activities. Interims are issued about 4 weeks after report cards and can improve a student's status for eligibility.

### **HOMEWORK**

Homework is an integral part of a student's education. It serves to reinforce skills and concepts taught in the classroom. Parents should provide the student with a quiet but not isolated place to sit each evening to complete homework. This will ensure that the student can ask for help if needed and will not get too distracted with the computer, phone or TV in his/her room. Homework assignments should always be neat, complete, and turned in on time. If homework is not assigned, the student should read from a book, study for an upcoming test, or play an educational game online for a certain amount of time. A guideline for allotted time to complete homework is as follows:

Kindergarten – about 15 minutes  
Grades 1 & 2 – about 30 minutes

Grades 3, 4, 5 – about 45 - 60 minutes  
Grades 6, 7, 8 – about 60 - 90 minutes

If your child is spending considerably more time on homework, you should speak to the teacher. The goal would be to find a way to help the child complete assigned homework in a timelier fashion.

### **TESTING**

Students in grades 2 - 8 will participate in the Thrives Academics (Scantron) tests which will be taken on the computer in September, January, and May (for grades 2 - 8). Students will be tested in the areas of Reading and Math. Parents will be given a report of the student's test results as soon as they are available. An individual student report will be provided to parents from this assessment as well.

### **TEXTBOOKS**

Current textbooks, workbooks and library books are provided. Each student is responsible for his/her books. **Hard cover textbooks must be covered at all times.** If student returns library or textbooks in unusable condition, they are responsible for paying for replacement. Cooperation with these procedures is required.

### **BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAMMING**

As a Catholic school, MCA believes and teaches that each of us is called to love our neighbor and to treat them with respect. MCA is committed to providing a physically safe and emotionally secure learning environment that is free from bullying, harassment, and intimidation in any form, including cyber-bullying. Bullying, harassment, and intimidation of any member of the school community is prohibited. All reports of bullying, harassment, and intimidation will be treated seriously. The principal's review and investigation of a credible allegation will be done in a prompt, confidential, and thorough manner. Reprisal or retaliation against anyone who reports acts of bullying, harassment, and intimidation is strictly prohibited. All reports of reprisal or retaliation will be treated seriously.

Bullying, harassment, and intimidation mean any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, including electronic communication (telephone, cellular phone, computer, iPod, etc.), that:

- a. Physically harms an individual; damages an individual's property; substantially interferes with an individual's education or learning environment; or places an individual in reasonable fear of harm to the individual's person or property.
- b. Occurs on school property; at a school activity or event; on a school transportation vehicle or bus; or over communicative forums (i.e. internet, intranet) or devices (cell phones).

**BULLYING:** "Bullying" is a type of harassment that can happen between students or between the parents and school personnel as well. Specifically, bullying occurs when:

- a. A person is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more persons, and has difficulty defending himself or herself.
- b. Bullying has three distinct features: 1. action occurs overtime, 2. intentionality to cause mental/physical harm; 3. imbalance of

power.

- c. Bullying behaviors are dynamic and take many forms such as written, verbal, graphic, subtle, physical or non-physical acts or gestures (including electronically transmitted acts – i.e. internet, cell phone, personal digital assistant (pda), tablet, or wireless, communicative device).
- d. Bullying behaviors are reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression; or a mental, physical, or sensory disability or impairment; or by any other distinguishing characteristic.

**HARASSMENT:** In general, "harassment" is conduct that meets all of the following criteria:

- a. is directed at one or more persons;
- b. substantially interferes with educational opportunities, benefits, or programs of one or more persons;
- c. adversely affects the ability of a person to participate in or benefit from the school's educational programs or activities because the conduct, as reasonably perceived by the person, is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive as to have this effect;
- d. is based on a person's actual or perceived distinguishing characteristic (see above); or is based on an association with another person who has or is perceived to have any of these characteristics.

**INTIMIDATION:** "Intimidation" is a type of harassment that can happen between students or between the parents and school personnel as well. Specifically, intimidation would be any of the following:

- a. the act of using fear on a perceived or physically weaker student to make him or her do something against his or her own volition;
- b. the act of making another student feel afraid or timid;
- c. the act of using communication to make another student feel afraid to try something or to avoid doing something.

The General Consequences for bullying are as follows:

First Offense – Parent contacted/Warning is given

Second Offense – Parent contacted/In-School Suspension

Third Offense – Parent contacted/Out-of-School Suspension

\*The principal has the authority to apply immediate suspension or expulsion if the bullying incident is of an extreme or severe nature.

### **THREATS**

In the event of any actual or perceived threat of violence or other inappropriate/illegal behavior towards others or self, MCA reserves its right to take any and all actions it deems necessary for the health and safety of its school community, including the individual(s) making the threat. These actions may include contacting law enforcement offices, mental health professionals and/or any other outside experts as the school official(s) deems necessary.

## **STUDENT BEHAVIOR PLAN**

The classroom rules are designed to make the classroom a place where everyone is respected, where all ideas are appreciated, and where teaching and learning proceed uninterrupted. Teachers of grades Pre-Kindergarten through grade 2 have regulations that are age-appropriate. In grades 3 - 8, students will receive warnings when a teacher considers a student to be out of compliance with expected behavior. If a student continues to disregard the guidelines, demerits will be issued. Demerits will be signed by the parent and returned to the homeroom teacher the following school day. Upon receiving 3 demerits, the student will serve lunch/recess detention to be arranged by the child's homeroom teacher. A detention notice will go home to notify parents of the exact time and date of detention. If a student is issued three (3) detentions, they will then be required to serve one (1) day of In-School Suspension (ISS). General school rules are as follows:

- 1 – Respect yourself, others, and all property
- 2 – Be prepared for class
- 3 – Talk at appropriate times
- 4 – Allow a teaching/learning environment to prevail in the classroom
- 5 – Allow orderly behavior to prevail in hallways, lunchroom, bathrooms, playground and all other areas of the school
- 6 – Conduct yourself appropriately at all functions when representing Mother Catherine Academy (basketball games, dances, etc.)
- 7 – Be truthful, trustworthy, and do your personal best every day
- 8 – Wear your full uniform in a neat fashion

Some behaviors that are considered to be inappropriate and demerit worthy would include, but are not limited to: chewing gum, repetitive unpreparedness for class, blatant disrespect or defiant behavior shown towards a staff member, student, or another adult volunteer and repetitive violation of the dress code.

**PARENTS AND STUDENTS THAT ATTEND ANY SCHOOL FUNCTION ARE ASKED TO REFRAIN FROM CHEWING GUM IN THE SCHOOL BUILDING AND ARE ASKED TO REMOVE THEIR HATS UPON ENTERING THE BUILDING FOR ANY FUNCTION.**

## **SUSPENSION**

When a serious offense is committed, when repeated violations of school rules have occurred, or when normal disciplinary procedures have failed to bring about improvement in student behavior, an in-school or out-of-school suspension may be warranted. In-school suspension means that the student will be isolated from his/her classmates for the day but will be given all assignments to complete on his/her own. Out-of-school suspension means that the student will remain home for a specified number of days.

Some behaviors that could lead to one of these forms of suspension would include, but are not limited to: cheating (including copying another student's class work or homework, allowing another person to copy your class work or homework, plagiarism, or any other act in which a student portrays work as his/her own when in fact it is the work of someone else), fighting, smoking or use of any drugs,

possession of anything that could be considered a weapon, arson, extortion, vandalism, and any other act that threatens/disrupts the school environment or is detrimental to the reputation of MCA.

### **EXPULSION**

Expulsion is viewed as a radical action at which point it is clear that the student's interests would be better served in another environment, or that the individual's behavior is a serious threat to the school community, or both. MCA follows the guidelines for expulsion as set forth by the Board of Trustees.

### **SEARCH**

The administration of the school has the right to question students, search their desks, property, or person, inspect the contents therein, and retain suspected material, providing the administration has reasonable cause. It is the policy to randomly search any student and/or his/her property prior to field trips.

## **SCHOOL UNIFORM**

Part of the tradition of Catholic schools is the requirement for school uniforms. Having the students equal in dress is viewed as an issue of justice. Without brand names, labels, or logos, students are more apt to focus on their academics. Uniforms are to be kept in a clean and acceptable state. Shirts will be tucked in at all times. Belts and waistband of skirts will be visible at all times. Skirts and shorts must fit properly. **Ill-fitting uniform items will result in violation.** Uniform violations will include deliberate defacement (coloring, drawing, and cutting) of any part of the uniform. The current dress code is as follows:

### **BOYS UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS (2025-2026)**

<b>Uniform Item:</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Worn in Summer and/or Fall Season</b>	<b>Details</b>
Polo Shirt	Navy Interlock Polo w/embroidered logo	Summer & Fall	Short or Long sleeve
Shorts	Khaki Chino Blend	Summer	Plain Front or Pleated. No Cargo or Carpenter
Pants	Khaki Chino Blend	Fall	Plain Front or Pleated. No Cargo or Carpenter
Sweater	Navy Zip-front w/embroidered logo	Optional	
Gym Shirt	Gold w/heat transfer logo	Summer & Fall	Short sleeve
Gym Shorts	Navy Mesh w/heat transfer logo	Summer & Fall	
Sweatpants	Navy w/heat transfer logo	Fall	
Sweatshirt	Navy Crewneck w/heat transfer logo with a <b>UNIFORM</b> shirt underneath, <b>NO HOODIES</b>	Fall	
Socks	Solid White, Solid Navy or Solid Black	Summer & Fall	Crew or Ankle (Socks must be above the ankle)
Belt	Solid Black or Brown (Grades 3-8)	Summer & Fall	
Shoes	Casual Shoes – Tan or Brown Sperry or <b>All Black or All White Athletic Shoes, NO checkerboard, Converse All-Stars or other colors (Red, Pink, Green)</b>	Summer & Fall	<b>No Color Added. Velcro is acceptable for primary grades. NO Crocs, NO sandals, NO Sanuk’s, NO Hey Dudes, NO boots or high tops. No tattered shoes.</b>
Gym Shoes	All Black or all White Athletic only	Summer & Fall	Required on PE days
Hair	Hair must not touch shirt collar, neat appearance	Summer & Fall	No pony tails or buns

## GIRLS UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS (2025-2026)

Uniform Item:	Description	Worn in Summer and/or Fall Season	Details
Polo Shirt	Navy Interlock Polo w/embroidered logo	Summer & Fall	Short or Long sleeve
Skort or	Khaki Chino Blend	Summer & Fall	Knee length
Skirt	Khaki Solid A-line	Summer & Fall	Knee length
Short	Khaki Chino Blend	Summer	Plain Front or Pleated
Pants	Khaki Chino Blend, <b>NO Riding pants or leggings</b>	Fall	Plain Front or Pleated
Sweater	Navy Zip-front w/embroidered logo	Optional	
Gym Shirt	Gold w/heat transfer logo	Summer & Fall	Short sleeve
Gym Shorts	Navy Mesh w/heat transfer logo	Summer & Fall	
Sweatpants	Navy w/heat transfer logo	Fall	
Sweatshirt	Navy Crewneck w/heat transfer logo with only <b>UNIFORM</b> shirt underneath, <b>NO HOODIES</b>	Fall	
Socks	Solid White, Solid Navy or Solid Black	Summer & Fall	Knee High, Ankle or Crew (Socks must be above the ankle). No ruffle socks.
Tights	Solid White or Navy	Fall	<b>No</b> leggings (May be worn under the skort/skirt during cold months)
Belt	Solid Black or Solid Brown (Grades 3-8)	Summer & Fall	
Shoes	Casual Shoes – Tan or Brown Sperry or <b>All Black or All White Athletic Shoes, NO checkerboard, Converse All-Stars or other colors (Red, Pink, Green)</b>	Summer & Fall	No Added Color. <b>No Heels/dress shoes.</b> Velcro is acceptable for primary grades. No Crocs, NO sandals, NO Sanuk's, NO Hey Dudes, NO boots or high tops. No polka dots. No tattered shoes.
Gym Shoes	All Black or all White Athletic only	Summer & Fall	Required on PE days
Hair Accessories	Navy Blue or White Headbands/Hair pieces	Summer & Fall	No Flowers or Sequins

## **UNIFORM VIOLATIONS**

While the stated intention of the uniform is to draw less attention to individualized dress, it should be noted that the expectation is that each student take personal responsibility for staying in uniform every day. When a student is not in compliance with a uniform dress code, students in grades 3 - 8 will receive a WARNING. **AFTER 2 WARNINGS THE STUDENT WILL BE SENT HOME TO CHANGE.** Students in grades Pre-K through 2 will receive a uniform violation form that must be brought home and signed by a parent and then returned to the student's teacher the following school day. One or two of these write-ups serve as a reminder that the student is not in uniform.

## **MARKING CLOTHES AND POSSESSIONS/LOST AND FOUND**

Please label all of your child's belongings. As a security precaution we recommend placing the child's name on the inside of these items if possible. Items that have not been marked with the owner's name will be placed in the lost and found located in the school gym next to the stage (gray tub). Items not claimed within a reasonable amount of time will be donated to charity.

## **TAG DAY DRESS CODE**

On specified days, students will be allowed to come to school out of uniform. On these days, clothing must be modest and appropriate. Shirts with inappropriate words or pictures on them are not allowed. Pants must be clean and free of cuts, holes or fringe. Tank tops, tops with spaghetti straps or crop tops that could show the midriff are not allowed. Tight-fitting pants or jeans are not allowed. **Leggings or yoga style pants are not allowed.** Low cut tops are not allowed – shirts should touch the collarbone. **Shorts or skirts should not be more than two inches above the knee.** No undergarments may be worn as outerwear as part of tag day, this may include undershirts, boxers as the outer wear. No hair coloring or facial paint is permitted on the face at any time (Pep Rally will be at the discretion of the principal or vice-principal at the time of the event). If items of clothing are deemed inappropriate for school, the parents will be called to bring proper clothing to school or the student will be asked to put on a school uniform. **A second violation will exclude the student from participating in the following tag day event.**

## **ACCESSORIES**

### **Jewelry**

- A religious medal or cross may be worn on a silver or gold tone chain.
- **One** pair of stud earrings may be worn by girls in the earlobe; hoop earrings are not allowed; no earrings for the boys.
- Wrist watch is the only bracelet-type of jewelry allowed (**no** smart watch).
- No other type of jewelry is to be worn with the exception of a medical alert ID necklace or bracelet.

### **Make-Up**

- Make-up is **not** to be worn at school.
- **Only** clear nail polish is allowed. Nails are not to be colored or decorated. **Artificial nails and French tips are not permitted.**
- Visible body markings such as temporary tattoos must be covered with a bandage until they have worn off or been removed.
- Students may not draw markings on any visible parts of their body with pens or markers.

### **Hair Styles**

- Hair must be clean and in a neat fashion at all times. Radical haircuts or hairstyles are not allowed. Bangs must fall above the eyebrows. **Hair must be the natural color.**
- Boys' hair length: **the hair should not touch the collar of the shirt, and hair may not hang in the child's eyes.** Mohawk styles, pony tails or buns are not allowed. Students who are issued a demerit for inappropriate hair style, color or length will be given three (3) days to correct the problem. Parents are encouraged to make this change a priority once notice has been given in order to avoid further punitive measures such as loss of recess, written assignments, etc.
- Hair accessories for girls are for managing hair and should not appear to stand out in color, size or style. Wide, brightly colored hair bands or scarves are not permitted.

### **LUNCH PROGRAM**

Hot lunch is available Monday – Friday through an online pre-ordering system. Students who wish to purchase hot lunch must participate in our online system. Families who wish to purchase hot lunch will be required to **pre-order** for their students by midnight the night prior to the school day. Students do not have the capability to order lunch on site and we do not accept cash payments for lunch. Hot lunch is available at the cost of **\$4.50** per day and extra is available for **\$1.50** more (hot lunch must be purchased in order to also get an 'extra' hot lunch). Bottled water is also available for \$0.50. Ice cream will be sold on Fridays at \$0.75 each. Milk is paid for by the year and is a separate program aside from our online lunch program. Students have the option of bringing a lunch from home if they do not wish to pre-order hot lunch. Fast food lunches and soda are not permitted. **\*\*Lunch prices are subject to change throughout the year\*\***

**Students with severe food allergies must notify the office.**

The lunchroom is to be an orderly place. Voices are to be kept at a conversational level. Students should not run, throw food, or leave any trash behind them either on a table or on the floor.

## **PLAYGROUND**

Fair play and safety are the key measures of playground regulations. When any competitive activity is played, the rules must be decided upon before the game begins. All students who would like to participate in a game should be allowed to play. Any exclusion of students or unfair game rules will warrant the game to be terminated or students at fault to be taken out of the game. There are plenty of balls and other equipment for the children to use during recess. If the homeroom teacher gives permission to a student to bring in extra equipment, the equipment should be used fairly by everyone. Bringing in your own equipment does not make it possible for the owner of the equipment to set the rules or name the players of the game. Hard balls are not allowed.

## **EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING**

If there is a possibility of a school closing, early dismissal or late morning start due to weather, please check the following sources for information:

School Reach (School Notification for Parents)

Local radio: 98.3FM, 97.7FM

Television: Channel 4 (NBC), Channel 5 (FOX)

Internet: [www.mothercatherine.org](http://www.mothercatherine.org), [www.smcps.org](http://www.smcps.org) and on our MCA Facebook page

MCA will follow the St. Mary's County Public School system in closing. When MCA has a scheduled early dismissal and there is a late start due to weather, MCA students will come to school at the late arrival time and remain in school until the regular 3:00 dismissal. We will also continue to use our School Reach text message and voicemail program for these changes in the schedule and other important announcements that need to go out immediately.

## **DRUG AND SMOKE FREE ENVIRONMENT**

Mother Catherine Academy maintains a drug free and smoke free environment for our children. At no time are cigarettes, e-cigarettes, vapor or smokeless tobacco allowed around the presence of our children. This includes all school related activities on and off campus in which MCA students are present (including but not limited to basketball games, field trips, school dances, etc.). If you are chaperoning an event, you are ensuring the school that our children are always in your presence and being monitored at all times. Our main goal is to provide a safe and nurturing environment for your child and all children who attend MCA.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are an extension of the classroom learning experience. **When a field trip is planned, it is expected that every student attends.** Just as with a school absence, absence from a field trip requires a valid written note of explanation and the reason must fall within the guidelines of an excused absence. Our students have many unique and exciting destinations within the Maryland area. In cases where chaperones are needed, the homeroom teacher will make the request and notify parents who will be assisting with the trip. In some cases, it may not be possible to honor every parent request to attend the trip. Students must ride the bus to and from the scheduled field trip. While attending a field trip, the following guidelines must be adhered to: The teacher is the primary educator and disciplinarian. In an effort to maintain order and safety, the teacher will assign several students to each chaperone. The chaperone

will be in charge of the whereabouts of those individuals at all times during the trip. At no time is a single student allowed to leave the group. If a bathroom break is necessary, the students are to go to the bathroom with another student(s) and or the chaperone. The chaperone should at least stay near the bathroom until the entire group is re-assembled. A chaperone is expected to give full attention to the group under his/her care. A chaperone may not bring a child's sibling along on a trip. ALL CHAPERONES MUST HAVE COMPLETED A CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK ON FILE IN THE SCHOOL OFFICE.

Payment: Field trips are prepaid and all fees that are prepaid are nonrefundable. The school prepays for the bus, the tickets and/or performers.

### **LIBRARY**

All students go to the library once a week. The library uses the Accelerated Reader Program in addition to reading in the traditional way. The Accelerated Reader Program is a computer-generated reading program. The program covers grades 1-8 and assesses each child so that he/she is reading at a comfortable level. Accelerated Reader encourages independent reading, promotes positive reading skills and enhances students' reading growth. The Accelerated Reading Program will count as a significant percentage of the student's report card grade in reading. Students are responsible for repayment of any lost library books.

### **VOLUNTEERS**

We welcome the parents and grandparents of our students as volunteers. There are many ways in which volunteers can assist the school in achieving some goals. Each family has a commitment to volunteer 15 service hours over the course of the school year. These hours may be worked as dedicated homeroom parents, workers at some of the school activities or functions, or doing work at home that may assist in school functions. Families will be assessed \$12.00 an hour for each volunteer hour that is not worked. All volunteers that work directly with students must be fingerprinted. This is necessary for the safety of our students. Parents who volunteer to serve lunch or who volunteer in another capacity in the school may not drop into a classroom to see their child during the day. This is an interruption to the teacher and the educational process. Please remember that the main responsibility of a volunteer is to assist the administration or teachers. For this reason, non-school-age siblings are not allowed to accompany parent volunteers to school for meetings, to serve lunches, work in the building or accompany a class on a field trip.

### **HONOR CODE SYSTEM**

MCA adheres to an honor code that embraces a philosophy based on respect, integrity and honesty. The school expects all students to be aware of, understand, and follow this code of conduct:

*“As a student at MCA, I recognize the principles of honor and integrity as the basis of our community. I promise I will not lie, cheat, steal, plagiarize, or violate my pledge of confidentiality. I affirm that all work is my own and I accept my responsibility to do what is right while encouraging my fellow students to do the same. On all my work, my name affirms my honor.”*

\*\*Any programs, events or policies contained herein are subject to change or cancellation as necessary.

## Non-Discrimination Policy

Archdiocesan schools follow local, state, and federal non-discrimination regulations, as applicable. As religiously-affiliated schools, Archdiocesan schools are not required to adopt any rule, regulation, or policy that conflicts with the religious or moral teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>1</sup>

Catholic students shall be given preference over non-Catholic students for initial admission into Archdiocesan schools. All applicants shall follow all applicable policies and procedures regarding school-based entrance requirements, health examinations and immunizations before finalizing any admissions.

---

*<sup>1</sup>Maryland law requires non-public schools that receive state funds to publish the following additional statement: “It is the policy of the State of Maryland that all public and publicly funded schools and school programs operate in compliance with:*

*(1) Title VI of the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964; and*

*(2) Title 26, Subtitle 7 of the Education Article of the Maryland Code, which states that public and publicly funded schools and programs may not:*

- (i) discriminate against a current student, a prospective student, or the parent or guardian of a current or prospective student on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability;*
- (ii) refuse enrollment of a prospective student, expel a current student, or withhold privileges from a current student, a prospective student, or the parent or guardian of a current or prospective student because of an individual’s race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability; or*
- (iii) discipline, invoke a penalty against, or take any other retaliatory action against a student or parent or guardian of a student who files a complaint alleging that the program or school discriminated against the student, regardless of the outcome of the complaint.”*

*Maryland law further provides that Title 26, Subtitle 7 of the Education Article of the Maryland Code “does not require a nonpublic prekindergarten program or nonpublic school that is religiously affiliated to enroll, retain, or extend privileges to a student or prospective student who does not meet the usual and regular qualifications, requirements, and standards of the program or school or to adopt any rule, regulation, or policy that conflicts with the program or school’s religious or moral teachings, provided that the denial, rule, regulation, or policy is not based on discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.”*

### Mother Catherine Academy Calendar School Year 25-26

August	26 – First Day of School – Early Dismissal 27-28 – Full Day 29 - Early Dismissal
September	01 – Labor Day – School Closed 18 - Early Dismissal 19 – St. Mary’s County Fair – School Closed 22- Professional Day – School Closed
October	23 – Early Dismissal 24 – Fall Collaboration Day- School Closed 30 – End of First Quarter
November	06 – Early Dismissal 07 – School Closed 26-28 – Thanksgiving Break – School Closed
December	01 – Classes Resume 19 – Early Dismissal 22 - Jan 4 – Christmas Break – School Closed
January	05 – Classes Resume 16- Early Dismissal 19- Martin Luther King Day – School Closed 22- End of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter
February	13 – Professional Day – School Closed 16 – Presidents Day- School Closed
March	06 – Early Dismissal 09– Spring Collaboration Day – School Closed 30 – End of 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter

April	02 – Holy Thursday- Early Dismissal 3-12 – Easter Break- School Closed 13 – Classes Resume
May	22 – Early Dismissal 25 – Memorial Day – School Closed
June	08 – Full Day 09 – Full Day 10 – Early Dismissal 11 – Early Dismissal 12 – Early Dismissal – Last Day of School

**AMENDMENT OF HANDBOOK**

MCA retains the right to amend this handbook. Notice of any amendments will be sent in writing via the Wednesday folder. In light of the unique situations which may occur in the educational process and because it is impossible to foresee all school issues that arise, the faculty and administration reserve the right to address and to take appropriate action for any such situations not specifically referenced in the handbook.

**PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN THE LAST PAGE  
ACKNOWLEDGING THAT YOU HAVE READ AND AGREE  
TO THE CONTENT OF THE PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK.**

**School Name: Mother Catherine Academy**  
**School Year: 2025-2026**

Print Student's Name and Grade Level \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Print Student's Name and Grade Level \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Print Student's Name and Grade Level \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

I/We, the undersigned parent(s), acknowledge that I/We have received the Parent and Student Handbook for Mother Catherine Academy.

I/We have read and reviewed the Parent and Student Handbook with my/our child (ren).

I/We accept and understand the policies and procedures of the school, and I/We accept and understand that failure to adhere to these policies and procedures is sufficient reason for dismissal or non-renewal of re-registration of the child(ren) at the school.

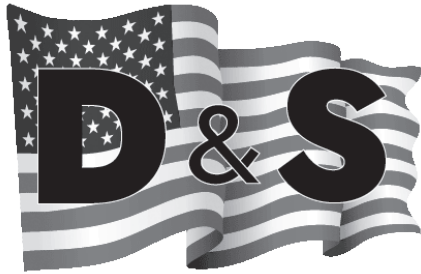
I/We understand that if I/we have a question, concern, or issue pertaining to the policies and procedures of the school, then I/we will adhere to the following line of communication: Teacher, Principal, President, and Board of Trustees.

Parent /Guardian Name (Please Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_







**VEHICLE & RESIDENTIAL  
GLASS SPECIALISTS**

*Auto Glass Repair & Replacement • ADAS Calibration  
Residential Glass Replacement*

2800 Old Washington Road • Waldorf, MD 20601

**301-843-6833**

**www.DSGlassService.com**



Erie  
Insurance®

22720 Washington Street  
Leonardtwn, MD 20650

**301-475-3151**

**www.danburris.com**

**DAN BURRIS**  
*Coverages for your  
Auto, Home, Business  
& Life Insurance Needs*



**www.trupowerelectrical.com • 443-432-3645**

"We Keep  
America Running"



**AUTO PARTS**

**GUY AUTO PARTS**

23902 Colton Point Road • Clements, MD 20624  
**301-769-3311**



**Authentic  
Mexican Cuisine**

25470 Point Lookout Road  
Leonardtown, MD 20650

**301-997-0442**  
Fax 301-997-0554



*For All Your Fabrication & Powder Coating Needs*

22675 Washington St. - Bell Bldg., Unit 101  
Leonardtown, MD 20650

**443-295-8855**  
**301-769-3290**



**Town Market, LLC**

22675 Washington Street, Unit 106  
Leonardtown, MD 20650  
**240-587-0362**

*Something for Everyone!*

**Fresh Local Produce • Meats • Cheeses**  
**Fresh Flowers • Hanging Baskets**  
**Clothing & Shoes**

Authorized Dealer for *Buoy Boots* and *Simply Southern*

*Fueling* **YOUR HOME COMFORT**

Heating Oil & Propane • HVAC Services • Service & Installation

*Since 1928*

**Burchoil**

**Burch Propane**

301-373-2131

[burchoil.com](http://burchoil.com)

**Experienced Local  
Licensed Agents  
to Serve Your Needs**

**AUTO • COMMERCIAL  
FARM • HOME • LIFE  
POWERSPORTS**



Locally Owned,  
Independent,  
Insurance

**[www.OakPointIns.com](http://www.OakPointIns.com)**  
**(301) 863-8100**





23415 Three Notch Road, Suite 2003  
California, MD 20619

301-862-4424 • [www.schneiderbraces.com](http://www.schneiderbraces.com)



**ONE VISION ROOFING**  
301-909-3383

**\$500 OFF**  
for  
*First Responders*



- » Audio/Visual
- » DvLED & Projection
- » Conference Rooms
- » Managed IT
- » Production Print Shop
- » Copy/Print/Scan
- » Document Conversion

**GINNA GALENTINE**  
cell: 301-440-3298  
office: 301-577-1021 x 106  
[ginnag@dcatechpartners.com](mailto:ginnag@dcatechpartners.com)  
**5000 Philadelphia Way**  
**Lanham, MD 20706**  
[www.dcatechpartners.com](http://www.dcatechpartners.com)



**CHESTERTON ACADEMY**  
OF ST. MARY'S

**HIGH SCHOOL WITH A HIGHER PURPOSE**  
[www.ChestertonStMarys.org](http://www.ChestertonStMarys.org)

- In the Catholic tradition
- Classical
  - Socratic method
  - House system
  - Original texts
  - Affordable
  - Daily Mass
  - Fine and performing arts
  - Joyful
  - One of 62 nationwide schools of the Chesterton Schools Network
- Located in Mechanicsville, MD



**Smile Castle**  
PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY

Board Certified Pediatric Dentists

Find us on 

23076 Three Notch Road  
Suite #203  
California, MD 20619  
**240-349-5000**

ONLINE BOOKING  
available on our website:  
[www.SmileCastle.com](http://www.SmileCastle.com)

Regular Dental Visits • Baby Wellness Visits • Management of Developing Dentition  
Special Needs Dentistry • Hospital Dentistry • Dental Trauma Management • Nitrous Oxide Sedation  
Oral Conscious Sedation • Fillings, Crowns, Pulp Therapy, Extractions & Much More!



TUTOR WITH JOSHUA

ENRICHING MINDS, CHANGING LIVES

Specializing in Math & Science Topics  
from Elementary through College

240-230-7155 (text friendly) • [www.tutorwithjoshua.com](http://www.tutorwithjoshua.com)





*Famous for our fried chicken, stuffed ham, country sausage  
& all of our homemade dishes!*

25466 Maddox Road • Chaptico, MD 20621

**301-884-3308**

[www.chaptico-market.com](http://www.chaptico-market.com)

---

Manufacturers of **SINGULAIR**<sup>®</sup>  
Home Sewage Treatment System by **norweco**<sup>®</sup>  
and Standard Septic Tank Products

*Superior Tank, Inc.*

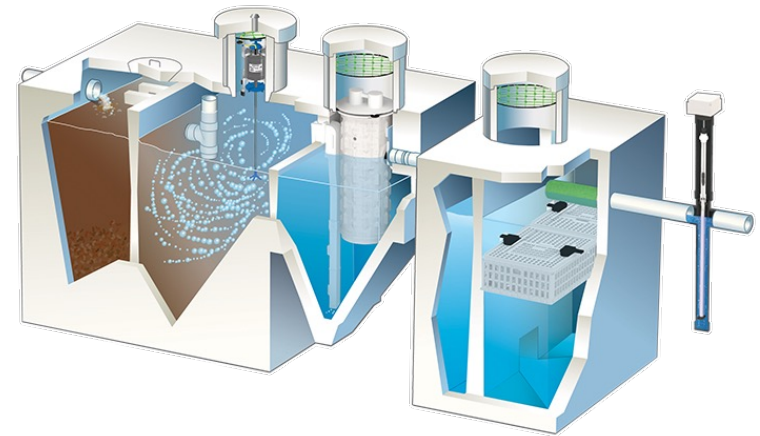
Plant Located on Route 488 in Bryantown, Maryland

P.O. Box 10 • Bryantown, MD 20617

**301-274-3772 Local • 301-870-3904 D.C.**

**301-884-3222 St. Mary's • 410-535-0040 Calvert**

**301-274-4759 Fax**



---

*Compliments of a Friend*



THE CHARLES  
MEMORIAL GARDENS

*A peaceful rest for the ones you love*

Cemetery, Columbarium,  
Memorial and Engraving Services

301-475-8060

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



*Pawsitive  
Passage*

PET CREMATIONS

*We are committed to providing  
a dignified, Pawsitive Passage  
that respects and honors the memory  
of your beloved friend while  
providing closure to the family.*

301-475-0446

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

26325 Point Lookout Road • Leonardtown, MD 20650



# D *St. Mary's* DENTAL

28160 Old Village Road  
Mechanicsville, MD 20659

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

Intersection of Mechanicsville Rd. and Old Village Rd.  
1-800-NO-PAIN-C OR (301)884-3248

## COMPLIMENTARY NEW PATIENT EXAM

(up to a \$119 value)

FREE when you present this  
coupon (one per person)

cannot be combined with any other offers

## *It's all about your smile!!*

- ❖ Crowns, bridges, and Dentures
- ❖ Implant Placement
- ❖ Implant Restorations
- ❖ Digital Impressions
- ❖ Extractions and Socket Preservation
- ❖ Root Canals
- ❖ Tooth-colored fillings
- ❖ Sleep Apnea / Snoring Appliances (per a physician order)
- ❖ Tooth Whitening
- ❖ Newly Renovated
- ❖ State-of-the-Art Facility

*Great  
with  
children!*

