



**AVE MARIA
ACADEMY**

6899 Smoky Row Rd.
Columbus, Ohio 43235
www.avemariaspsjoa.org

PARENT HANDBOOK

Inspired by Mary's 'Yes', we nurture each child's gifts -
mind, body and soul.

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Mission, Beliefs and Governance

Ave Maria Academy Mission Statement

Rooted in our Catholic identity and deep belief in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, our school exists to form disciples of Christ who grow in communion with God and one another and who, with their families, practice an unwavering commitment to our faith and academic excellence.

Ave Maria Academy Vision Statement

We desire to be a cornerstone in the community, sending students and their families as humble servants of the Truth who lead with authentic intelligence, compassion, integrity and love.

Ave Maria Academy Core Beliefs

We are led by the Holy Spirit.

We value love, compassion, forgiveness and justice.

We believe in the dignity and worth of every human being.

We believe in academic excellence and human perseverance.

We believe service is our faith in action.

Parent/Student Agreement to Comply with School Policies

A student is required to know all of the information, policies, and regulations. These policies will be reviewed at the school, and parents are strongly encouraged to review this information with their children.

Acceptance of admission/enrollment to Ave Maria Academy entails an agreement to comply with all school rules, policies, and regulations as published and those that may be enacted during the school year by the administration. A statement indicating agreement by students and families is to be signed and returned to Ave Maria Academy at the beginning of each school year.

The Catholic Church and this Catholic school recognize parents as the primary educators of their children. The education of students at our school is a partnership between parents and the school. If, in the opinion of the administration, the partnership is irretrievably broken, the school reserves the right to require the parent to withdraw his or her child. This is a very serious decision that is not made lightly.

Right to a Catholic Education

Catholic schools exist to collaborate with parent(s)/guardian(s) to foster spiritual growth and the educational development of each child. Catholic schools also serve the community, particularly the Catholic community of the diocese.

Catholic schools of the Diocese of Columbus shall be open to children of parent(s)/guardian(s) who seek the religiously oriented education which Catholic schools can provide. Schools shall recruit and admit students of any race, color, gender (except those schools supporting a single gender according to their mission) or ethnicity to all its rights, privileges, programs, and activities. In addition, the school shall not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, English proficiency, or disability (medical or academic) in the administration of its educational programs and extra-curricular activities.

Preference shall be given to members of Catholic parishes. Others shall be welcomed on the basis of availability of space at the discretion of the pastor and/or principal. Pastors and principals shall exercise discretion in judging admission of pupils.

Pastors and principals must refuse admittance to anyone who, in their opinion, seeks to enroll for the purpose of circumventing the law.

Catholic schools are schools of choice. Any parent who wishes to have a Catholic education for his/her child agrees that the parent and child will abide by the policies and regulations of the school.

If the policies and/or regulations are not adhered to, or if the school determines that attendance by a student will not be continued, the child may be asked by the principal and/or pastor at the elementary level and the principal and/or superintendent at the high school level to leave the school (Policy 5000).

Nondiscrimination Policy

The governing board of Ave Maria Academy, 6899 Smoky Row Rd., Columbus, Ohio 43235 has adopted the following racial nondiscrimination policies:

“Ave Maria Academy recruits and admits students of any race, color, or ethnic origin to all its rights, privileges, programs, and activities. In addition, the school will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, employment, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school administered programs. The Ave Maria Academy will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or ethnic origin in the hiring of its certified or non-certified personnel.”

School Advisory Committee

The purpose of the School Advisory Committee is to provide Maria Academy with advice and to make recommendations regarding issues affecting the school. The committee is composed of members who have been appointed by the Pastor with the assistance of the nominating committee. The current members are:

Sister Monika
Ryan and Renee Olney
Kristy Skocik
McKenna and Nathaniel Dowdell
Jennifer Vance

Daniel Cisneros
Scott Lewis
Stephanie Greiser
Rachelle Fisher
Tom and Sabrina Bently

The mission of the School Advisory Committee is to promote and support a distinctive religious learning environment that provides for the propagation of the Catholic faith and values, fosters academic excellence, and develops fully the intellectual, social, physical, and emotional capabilities unique to each student.

Home and School Association

The main purpose of the Home and School Association is to assist and support the programs and operation of Ave Maria Academy in cooperation with the Administration. School families are encouraged to support the efforts of the Home and School Association. Communications regarding Home and School functions will be included in the students' Friday Folders and/or will be available through the Parent Information Portal.

Admissions

Guidelines for Acceptance to Catholic Schools ([Diocesan Policy 5100](#))

All Catholic preschools, elementary schools, and high schools are open to students who sincerely seek a Catholic education and meet the requirements listed below.

1. No person shall be admitted as a student in any Catholic school unless that person and his/her parent subscribe to the school's philosophy and agree to abide by the educational policies and regulations of the school and of the Diocese.
2. Whether the student is Catholic or non-Catholic, the student must agree to attend religious classes and the religious activities conducted in the school.
3. No student shall be admitted to any Catholic school unless he/she is deemed to have reasonable hope of successfully completing the school's program. In doubtful cases, students may be admitted on a probationary basis with dates and criteria of evaluation clearly established in writing.
4. A Catholic education should be made available to as many students as possible, but the school must consider whether it has sufficient resources to meet the educational and financial needs of all applicants. Decisions on enrollment may be made based on these constraints.
5. No student shall be admitted to a Catholic school if there is a financial debt of any amount owed to another Catholic school, inclusive of schools within the Diocese of Columbus and schools in other dioceses.
6. Students shall not be denied admission to a school because of a disability unless this disability seriously impairs the student's ability to successfully complete the school's academic program, or unless the school cannot provide sufficient care or make reasonable accommodation for the disabled child.
7. A birth certificate as proof of age must be presented to the school prior to admission. A baptismal certificate shall be required of all baptized Catholics students. The information on the birth and baptismal certificates shall be entered on the permanent office record in the proper place, but only when verified by the official document.
8. A child entering kindergarten must be five years old on or before September 30. A student entering first grade must be six years old on or before September 30. No child shall be admitted to first grade who has not successfully completed kindergarten. A waiver from this requirement may be granted only by the receiving school.

9. Each Catholic school retains the right to set local admissions standards, policies, and procedures in addition to those specified by the Diocese. The admission policy for each school should be made public and clearly stated in the local Family Handbook. Elementary Secondary Both 1000 SER 5000 Series – Students Office of Catholic Schools + Diocese of Columbus 5100.
10. A copy of the Family Handbook is given to new applicants, either in physical or digital form. Parents are to acknowledge in writing (in either physical or digital form) that they have read and agree to adhere to the policies and regulations therein.
11. Annually, the pastor and/or principal shall review each student's continued eligibility for re-enrollment in the school.

Diocese of Columbus Priorities for Acceptance – Elementary Schools

1. Children from families registered at and actively involved in the sponsoring parish(es) a. children with siblings currently/previously enrolled, b. children now reaching school age, c. children from families newly moved into the parish whose children have been in Catholic schools where such were available.
2. Children from non-participating, Catholic families residing in the parish boundaries with siblings currently or previously enrolled in the school.
3. Students whose families are active, practicing members of Eastern Rite Catholic Churches that are in full communion with the Roman Catholic Church (for example, the Maronite, Syro-Malabar, Ge'ez, Chaldean, and Byzantine Catholic Churches).
4. Children transferring from other Catholic schools:
 - a. from parish schools that are closing
 - b. from parishes not offering full K-8 programs
 - c. schools with a waiting list
5. Children of other, non-Catholic faith traditions.

Admission for Transfer Students

Students transferring to Ave Maria Academy from a school district in Ohio will provide a permanent record or transcript from a school chartered by the state of Ohio.

Students transferring from out of state will provide a permanent record or transcript from a state recognized in the state of origin. These are subject to review by the principal prior to admission and placement.

The schools of the Diocese of Columbus **do not grant credit for home-schooled students**. Therefore, the student must first be evaluated by the public school district to determine grade placement prior to admission.

Child Custody

The custodial parent is required to provide the principal or the person in charge of admission with the most current certified copy of any child custody order or decree pertaining to the student through the registration process or upon acceptance.

Any child custody order or decree changes pertaining to a student's enrollment must be provided to the school, in hard copy, within two weeks of a court's decision. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the school of any change in custody status and to provide documentation promptly. (Policy 5106)

Guidelines for New Student Admission

Application paperwork will be considered complete after all required documents and the application fee are received. Applications received after the annual designated application window will be placed on the waiting list.

Application Materials

The following information is required at the time of acceptance:

- Birth certificate (copy only)
- Baptismal certificate (if Catholic) (copy only)
- Last 4 digits of social security number
- Recent report card for students entering grades 1-8
- \$120.00 per child non-refundable application fee
- Custody papers if parents are separated or divorced
- IEP, 504, or any other student support documentation or evaluations

Priorities for Acceptance

1. Children from families registered at and actively involved* in St. Peter St. Joan of Arc Parish
 - a. Children with siblings currently/previously enrolled in K-8 (in good standing)
 - b. Children of current Ave Maria Academy Staff (active at St. Peter St. Joan of Arc or in their home parish)
 - c. Children of Ave Maria Academy alumni
 - d. Children now reaching school age
 - e. Children of families newly moved and registered into St. Peter St. Joan of Arc whose children have been in Catholic schools where such were available.

*Active involvement ranked by date of registration at the parish, as well as regular contributions and involvement in the parish

2. Children from Non-Parishioners with siblings currently enrolled in K-8
3. Children whose families are active, practicing members of other Eastern Rite Catholic Churches that are in full communion with the Roman Catholic Church
4. Children enrolling or transferring from other Catholic Parishes
 - a. with parish schools that are closing
 - b. who do not offer K-8 programs
 - c. with parish school with a wait list
5. Children of other, non-Catholic Faith traditions.

Continuous Enrollment

According to state regulations, all families with children applying for kindergarten must complete the new student application process. Preschool students whose families are active, registered parishioners are guaranteed enrollment for kindergarten. Preschool students whose families are not active, registered parishioners will be considered with the above mentioned priorities and will be exempt from the new student registration fee. Families with children at Ave Maria Academy will be exempt from the new student registration fee.

Children enrolled in kindergarten through grade 7 are guaranteed admission for the following school year.

Notification of Admission

Families will be given a status update of their application (admission or position on the waiting list) within two weeks of the annual, designated application window.

Waiting List

If the number of applicants exceeds the number of grade level openings, a waiting list will be established. Following the application period, positions on the waiting list will be assigned using the same ranking criteria stated above.

- Families offered a new admission will have 48 hours to respond.
- If a family is offered a new admission prior to the beginning of the school year and does not accept, the family will be given a choice to either go to the bottom of the current list or be removed altogether.
- If a family is offered a new admission during the school year and does not accept, the family will be given a choice to either apply for the beginning of the next school year or be removed altogether. Special circumstances for not accepting admission (such as illness) will be given separate consideration by the school administration.
- A new waiting list will be established for each school year. Participation in the annual application will be necessary to be considered for the next school year even if the family is on the current waiting list.

Registration and Tuition Policies

New Student Application

***A new student is one who is not currently enrolled at Ave Maria Academy or Preschool.*

Families applying for admission for new students in preschool - grade 8 must submit the following:

- Completed application packet.
- Application fee of \$30.00 per student. The application fee is nonrefundable and is not credited toward student tuition.

New Student Acceptance

***A new student is one who is not currently enrolled at Ave Maria Academy or Ave Maria Academy Preschool.*

Upon notification of acceptance, families should complete the online enrollment packet through FACTS. This include the following:

- Acceptance fee of \$120.00 per student for grades preschool through eight. This one-time acceptance fee is nonrefundable, but the amount will be credited toward the student's tuition.
- Set up FACTS Tuition Payment Plan for automatic tuition payments ("FACTS Enrollment Form").

Deadline for Acceptance Fee and FACTS Enrollment

The acceptance fee and the FACTS on-line enrollment packet must be completed within seven (7) business days of notification of acceptance. Families failing to submit the acceptance fee and the FACTS on-line enrollment packet by the deadline will forfeit their place(s) for the upcoming school year. We are unable to hold places. Families forfeiting a place, but wishing to re-apply, will be accommodated if space is available. However, the family will be assessed a \$50.00 per student late fee. This fee is nonrefundable and is not credited toward the student's tuition.

Tuition Payment Plan

Ave Maria Academy offers several payment plans: full pay plan, semi-annual, or monthly payments. Families may elect to have payments drawn on the 1st or 15th of the month beginning in July.

Returning Students

A returning student is a student who, at the time of re-enrollment, is currently registered at Ave Maria Academy in grades Pre-School and Kindergarten.

Re-Enrollment

Continuous Enrollment at Ave Maria Academy for students who are currently enrolled are guaranteed admission for the following school year.

Re-enrollment occurs in January of each year. Families of returning students must electronically submit their re-enrollment packet through the FACTS Family Portal by the deadline as determined by the school each year.

Commitment Deadline

Families of returning students must electronically submit a re-enrollment packet (one per student) along with a \$30 re-enrollment fee (\$30 per family) within 7 business days. Families failing to electronically submit their re-enrollment packet within 7 business days will forfeit their place for the upcoming school year.

We are unable to hold places. Families who have forfeited one or more places, but wish to re-register, will be accommodated if space is available. However, families will be assessed a late fee of \$50.00 per student. This fee is nonrefundable and is not credited toward student tuition.

Tuition Payment Options

All tuition payments are processed through FACTS. Tuition payment plans are established when you complete enrollment or re-enrollment.

Families may choose from the following options:

- Annual
- Semi Annual
- Monthly

Payments will be processed on the 1st or the 15th of each month beginning in July.

Withdrawals

A withdrawal includes new families who have signed an acceptance form or families who have re-enrolled for the upcoming school year.

The following policies apply to students who withdraw prior to the beginning of the school year:

- If the school is notified of the withdrawal between June 30th and July 31st, a withdrawal penalty equal to 10% of your total tuition bill will be charged to your FACTS account.
- If the school is notified of the withdrawal between August 1st and the first day of the new academic year, a withdrawal penalty equal to 20% of your total tuition bill will be charged to your FACTS account.
- If the withdrawal is due to special family circumstances (such as moving out of the geographic area, loss of job, change of financial status, etc), once the principal or pastor approves, a withdrawal penalty will not be assessed.

The following policies apply to students who withdraw during the school year:

- A withdrawal conference must take place with the school principal or the pastor.
- Once the school principal or the pastor approves the withdrawal from the school, the tuition account will be reconciled based on the number of months partially and/or fully attended. (Example: A student in attendance in August through October 15th will pay for 3 months of tuition)

Questions and Additional Information

Please call Ave Maria Academy at 614-761-0905 if you have any questions or would like additional information.

Tuition

Tuition for Kindergarten - Grade 8 for the 2026-2027 school year is \$8,100.00.

EdChoice Expansion Scholarship

For the 2026-2027 school year only, after September 30, Ave Maria Academy will be a provider of the EdChoice Expansion Scholarship. Families must submit an application to be considered for this assistance.

All K-8th grade students at Ave Maria Academy, except for those who have accepted the Jon Peterson Scholarship, are eligible to participate in the EdChoice Universal Scholarship program. Families whose income is at or below 450% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines are eligible for a maximum EdChoice scholarship of \$6,166. All families whose income is above 450% of the Federal Poverty Guideline will be awarded a prorated amount of the scholarship as displayed in the graphs linked here.

The following documentation is needed to apply:

1. Ed Choice Request Form – one for each K-8 child.
2. Proof of Address – a utility bill showing both the service and billing address (no cell phone bills). Only one per family is needed.
3. Copy of Each Child's birth certificate (photo is acceptable) - one for each child.
4. Income verification – Completed online through the ODE portal. Only one income verification is necessary per family.
5. All documents from this list, except for the income forms, need to be emailed as separate files to dflanagan@spsjoa.org. Please read this fact sheet for more information.

Emmaus Road Scholarship

Established and certified by the Ohio Attorney General in December 2021, the Diocesan Education Corporation (dba Emmaus Road Scholarship Fund) is a scholarship granting organization (SGO) of the Diocese of Columbus that was formed to capitalize on a new tax credit passed into law by the Ohio Legislature.

What is an SGO? Simply, it is a religious or non-religious non-profit organization exempt from federal taxation that receives contributions from donors to be used primarily for academic scholarships to attend K-12 primary and secondary schools AND prioritizes scholarships for low-income students. The law allows for a dollar-for-dollar credit on your 2023 Ohio income tax liability – up to \$750 per person, or \$1,500 if married filing jointly – effectively allowing residents of Ohio to make a choice about how their Ohio tax dollars are utilized.

This program creates much-needed scholarship dollars for Our Catholic Schools to make a Catholic education accessible and affordable for all while giving donors the power to put their tax dollars to work to support our efforts to lead children to an encounter with Christ.

To donate to the Emmaus Road Scholarship please visit:
<https://emmausroadscholarship.org/gift>

Academics

Religious Instruction

The unique feature of a parochial school is the process of religious development and formation of its students.

At Ave Maria Academy this is maintained through the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd curriculum, Theology of the Body and Ruah Woods - Anthropology. CGS covers the basic tenets, beliefs, traditions, and practices of the Roman Catholic faith. Sacramental preparation for Eucharist, Reconciliation, and Confirmation are incorporated into the curriculum at the appropriate grade levels.

Eucharistic participation is of the highest priority. The children will attend morning Mass every Thursday. Other important liturgies are scheduled throughout the year.

The student body also has the opportunity to experience traditional devotions and practices of the Catholic faith including the rosary, confession, Adoration, Stations of the Cross, Lenten sacrifices, mission education, vocation awareness, and prayer. Please see our school calendar for many of these dates. Parents are encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation with their children regularly so that their children will associate this experience with family worship rather than as a school experience.

All of the above components, as well as a prevailing atmosphere of faith, contribute to the process of internalizing values that are distinctively attributed to the Catholic faith.

Academic Instruction

Ave Maria Academy's Classical Catholic education, rooted in the Institute for Catholic Liberal Education's pillars of Wonder, Wisdom, and Virtue, is lived out in the daily life of the classroom. Learning begins in wonder as teachers invite students to observe, listen, ask questions, and encounter beauty through storytelling, nature study, sacred art, music, and thoughtful conversation rather than constant worksheets or screens. Students grow in wisdom as they engage rich language, Scripture, great literature, and meaningful content that is intentionally sequenced and revisited, helping them see connections and understand truth more deeply over time. Virtue is formed through clear expectations, consistent routines, respectful dialogue, and opportunities to practice self-control, kindness, responsibility, and perseverance. Teachers model Christian charity, guide students in reflecting on their choices, and integrate faith naturally across the school day. In this way, parents will see a classroom environment that is calm, joyful, orderly, and purposeful—one that forms both the intellect and the heart in service to Christ.

The Ave Maria Academy Difference and Why it Matters

Academic delivery is aligned with the Ohio Catholic School Accreditation Association operating standards and reflects our commitment to Classical methodology.

[Institute for Catholic Liberal Education](#)

What Parents Will Notice

Calm, orderly classrooms with consistent routines and clear expectations

Teachers who lead with questions and discussion rather than worksheets alone

Rich language and storytelling through Scripture, saint stories, great literature, and oral narration

Learning shaped by beauty, including sacred art, music, and carefully prepared classrooms

Prayer woven naturally into the school day, not isolated to religion class

Intentional formation of virtue through daily habits, language, and expectations

Meaningful repetition and thoughtful review of important ideas

Why This Matters

An orderly environment reflects a school culture intentionally shaped by Catholic values, supporting the dignity of the child and creating conditions for authentic learning and formation of the whole person.

Instruction that invites wonder and thoughtful dialogue demonstrates the intentional integration of faith, reason, and inquiry—key to a Catholic school's mission and identity.

Exposure to Scripture and the lives of the saints supports catechesis, moral development, and the transmission of the Catholic intellectual and spiritual tradition.

The use of beauty in the learning environment supports Catholic identity by helping students encounter God through creation and the sacred arts, fostering reverence and attentiveness.

Regular prayer reflects the centrality of faith in school life and demonstrates that Catholic identity permeates all aspects of the educational experience.

Explicit teaching and modeling of virtue fulfills the Catholic school's responsibility to form moral character in alignment with Gospel values and Church teaching.

Purposeful repetition supports wisdom and understanding, ensuring learning is ordered toward truth and not fragmented or superficial.

Limited and intentional use of technology, especially in early grades

Prioritizing human interaction and attentiveness supports developmentally appropriate practice and reflects a Catholic vision of the human person and authentic community.

Teachers who model Christian charity, patience, and joy

Faculty witness to the faith through their conduct, fulfilling OCSAA expectations that staff actively support and model the mission and values of the Catholic Church.

Students growing in independence, responsibility, and self-discipline

Formation in self-governance and responsibility reflects education of the whole child and prepares students to live as faithful, contributing members of the Church and society.

Together, these practices demonstrate Ave Maria Academy's commitment to a strong Catholic identity, where faith is intentionally integrated across curriculum, relationships, and school culture in accordance with OCSAA Catholic Identity standards.

All learning will be measured against the Diocese of Columbus Office of Catholic Schools Record of Standards:

[OCS Record of Standards - Kindergarten](#)

[OCS Record of Standards - Grade 1](#)

[OCS Record of Standards - Grade 2](#)

[OCS Record of Standards - Grade 3](#)

[OCS Record of Standards - Grade 4](#)

[OCS Record of Standards - Grade 5](#)

[OCS Record of Standards - Grade 6](#)

[OCS Record of Standards - Grade 7](#)

[OCS Record of Standards - Grade 8](#)

[6-8 Grade Compacted Math Standards](#)

Assessments

Form indicates required assessments for 2025-2026 school year. Form will be updated in August 2026

[OCS Assessment List By Grade Level](#)

Grading

Ave Maria Academy follows the Diocesan courses of study developed by the Office of Catholic Schools.

We partner with parents in the holistic formation of the human person; therefore, our approach to grading supports parents in the following ways:

1. The purpose of academic report cards is to communicate to the student and parent what a student knows, understands, and is able to do based on the Diocesan Courses of Study.
2. Because character, behavior, and work habits are essential to the formation of the Catholic understanding of the human person, they are monitored and recorded separately from academic achievement.
3. The purpose of assessment and feedback is to improve student learning by identifying benchmarks achieved and communicating to parents and students areas for growth.
4. The reporting of student performance should be up to date, meaningful, consistent, easily available to students and parents, and supportive of learning. (Policy 6201)

Ave Maria Academy uses a standards based grading system which supports the points stated above.

Reporting To Parents

A report of pupil progress (report card) is given at the end of each quarter (4 times a year) in grades PK through Kindergarten. Ave Maria Academy implements the approved Diocese of Columbus Report Cards. Interim reports will be issued to individual students on an as needed basis. Additionally, each student will receive at the end of each quarter a discipleship rubric. This form has been designed by the faculty of our school and aligns with our mission statement and statements of belief.

All parents are invited to attend student-led conferences in the fall and spring. Parents may contact the school office at any time to schedule a conference or to request a phone call from a teacher.

Homework

The four major purposes of homework are:

1. An extension of class work - to practice and reinforce skills or concepts introduced in the classroom.
2. A preparation for class work - to prepare for in-class discussion or experiments; students are often asked to read or study materials.
3. An enrichment - to allow students to explore in-depth subjects of personal interest and to allow individual creative forms of expression.
4. A basis for developing responsibility - to encourage self-discipline, to establish good study habits, and to motivate students to want to learn more.

Homework assignments may include memorization, practice exercises, outside reading, research, art projects, or family activities. Homework is the responsibility not only of the student, but also of the parents. Parents are not expected to do the work for the student, but their guidance and support are needed to see that the student has enough time and a suitable environment in which to do assignments. It is helpful to check on homework on a regular basis to encourage quality work and provide the parent with information regarding curriculum areas.

Promotion/Retention ([Diocesan Policy 5320](#))

Promotion

The promotion of students shall be based on completion of academic work and mastery of academic skills. Credit for courses shall not be given solely on the basis of class attendance.

Retention

It shall be mandatory to consider various factors when making a retention determination. The primary consideration is whether or not a second year in the same grade will enable the

student to gain the skills and knowledge not learned in the first year. Other factors that must be considered are academic progress, knowledge of the English language, possible learning disabilities, and social and emotional maturity. When reviewing academic progress, multiple indicators should be used including daily work, assessments, progress reports, standardized testing, Academic Support Plans, Services Plans/IEPs, and Written Plans.

A student who has not met a significant number of benchmarks in language arts and/or mathematics (primary grades) OR language arts, mathematics, religion, social studies, and science (Grades 4-8) should be considered as a possible candidate for retention.

Certain issues concerning retention apply to all grade levels. Although the principal makes the ultimate decision about promotion or retention, below are essential procedures to follow when considering retention of a student:

1. The student's lack of progress must be clearly documented and communicated to the parent(s)/guardian(s) by the teacher.
2. Lack of student progress toward meeting a significant number of the benchmarks must lead to an intervention process, based on the flow chart in the Diocesan binder "Procedures for Identifying Special Needs Students."
3. A meeting with the parent(s)/guardian(s), teachers, and school administration at the beginning of the third quarter should address student progress in meeting the benchmarks. The intervention plan should be reviewed at this time to determine if the plan has been followed and if retention should be considered as an intervention.
4. A meeting with the parent(s)/guardian(s), teachers, and school administration is required by the interim of fourth quarter to determine if retention is the appropriate intervention at this time. School requirements for summer intervention should also be made at this meeting.

Attendance

Regular attendance is essential to a student's success in school.

If your child will be absent or tardy, please call the school office that morning before 8:30 a.m. or email avemariaacademy@spsjoa.org. The teacher will be notified of the student's absence.

Parents should give the student's name, teacher's name, and reason for the absence. If a parent forgets to call or email, the school will call the home to confirm the reason for the student's absence. Absence for more than one hour will be recorded as a half-day's absence.

The following circumstances are the only recognized excused for school absence:

- Personal illness
- Family illness
- Death in the family
- Quarantine of the home
- Medical or dental appointment
- Religious holiday
- Emergencies

Any absence due to illness for more than three days will require a note from a physician.

Doctor and Dentist Appointments

Students are encouraged to make every effort to schedule doctor or dentist appointments outside of school hours. However, when this is not possible, students will be excused for these special appointments.

If a student has an appointment during school hours, a written note must be brought to the office in the morning. The note must indicate the person who will be meeting the student. This person must meet the student in the school office and sign the student checkout sheet. Students and their parents/chaperone must again report to the office upon returning to the building. If the appointment is before the student comes to school, notification of this late arrival is requested the day before.

Absent Make-Up Work

In the event of an absence, the student is expected to make up any missed assignments. Generally, the school allows the same number of days to make up work that the student was absent. Within the limits of a student's maturity, it is his/her responsibility to obtain, complete, and return to the teacher any work missed due to absence. Parents may pick up daily assignments in the office between 3:00-3:30 PM. If you will be picking up your child's work, please notify the office by 10:00am. No classroom is open after 3:30 PM, Monday-Friday.

Planned Absences

In the event that there is a planned absence (vacation, etc.), the parent is required to give advance notice to the school. Students are also to bring a written excuse upon return to school. This note is to explain the absence and must be dated and signed by the parent or guardian. The practice of taking students out of class for a prolonged trip is, of course, something that is beyond our control since such a practice is the decision of the parents of our students.

Please complete the [Planned Absence Form](#) and kindly provide a two week notice prior to any planned absence. **Vacations are not necessarily considered an excused absence.**

We believe that regular attendance is an important part of our educational program because the lesson taught follows a progressive course of studies. If you wish to take your child out of class for whatever reason, please do not ask for work to be given while the child is out. Good teaching demands that one change with the needs of the class, thus what a teacher has planned for a given week is not always accomplished. We will be happy to provide make-up work upon the return to school, but will not give work in advance of it being taught.

Excessive Absences

Absences will be monitored, and excessive absences will be addressed by the teacher and the principal. If a student is absent from school for any reason for more than a total of 28 days, the student will not receive credit for that year at the discretion of the principal. According to EdChoice policy, any recipient is allowed no more than 20 unexcused absences.

Tardiness

One of the purposes of education is to develop habits and patterns of behavior for life. In order to help the students form good habits of punctuality and courtesy, the following procedures are outlined.

School Tardiness

The school day begins at 8:30 AM. The student must report to the school office **accompanied by an adult** to obtain a tardy slip before entering the classroom. The student will not be admitted to class without a tardy slip. All students will be allowed to receive three emergency tardies per quarter in order to provide for inclement weather, traffic conditions, etc. Students arriving or leaving beyond one hour of tardiness will be recorded as a half-day absent.

Excessive Tardiness

Students who exceed the three emergency tardies in any given quarter will be considered to have an excessive tardiness problem. As these tardies accumulate during the quarter, the following penalties will be assessed, hopefully preventing and forestalling habitual tardy problems.

Fourth tardy of the quarter: Parent Contact by the teacher

Fifth tardy of the quarter: A meeting may be called for the student, parent, teacher, and/or principal to discuss the situation and devise an intervention plan.

Attendance Area

Criteria for Elementary Schools

1. A student shall attend the school of the parish in which the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) are registered members. As stated in policy, if the parish school is full, the student may attend another parish school if the student's pastor and the pastor of the chosen school concur. In the case of a consolidation, a number of parishes shall be assigned to a particular school.

2. If a parish has no school, the student may attend a nearby parochial school.

Arrival and Dismissal

Please use the avemariaspsjia.org link to access the daily arrival and dismissal directions.

Students should not arrive at school before 8:15 AM, unless they are enrolled in before care, and should leave for home promptly at 3:30 PM or when buses depart. The school day officially begins at 8:30 AM..

All car rider students must be picked up by 3:45 p.m.. Students not picked up by that time will be brought to the office for supervision. Please note that late pickups cause disruptions to end-of-day routines and staff responsibilities.

For students participating in after school care or other after-school activities, timely pickup is expected. After two late pickups, the student may no longer be permitted to continue participating in the program or activity.

Students should not enter the school building prior to 8:15 am unless previous arrangements have been made with a specific teacher. Since supervision of students does not begin until 8:15 am, students arriving before this time should be enrolled in before care. This service is offered from 7:15am - 8:30 am for a nominal fee.

No student may stay after school unsupervised to wait for sports practice, club meeting, scouts, etc.

Students being delivered to school should follow the drop off procedure described in the Parent Administration Day materials. Students being picked up after school should follow the pick-up procedures described in the new year orientation materials.

Students riding buses are supervised from the time they board the bus until the time they leave the bus at their designated stop.

Daily Schedule

Office Hours: 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM daily

School Hours: 8:30 AM - 3:30 PM (PK - K)

Cancellation of School

Ave Maria Academy will follow the decision of the Diocese of Columbus for cancellation of school and/or after school events. School cancellation takes place only during circumstances such as extreme weather, equipment failure, or public crisis. We are aware of the hardship which can be caused by an abrupt cancellation. Therefore, school will not be canceled unless a significant safety risk has been created by unusual circumstances. Every practical means will be used to notify parents of a cancellation.

In the unusual circumstances when school must be canceled during the school day, teachers and office staff will determine that all students have satisfactory transportation. Parents/guardians must arrange for proper supervision of the released student.

School closings will be announced on local radio and television stations. Parents will also be notified via an emergency notification service through our FACTS Management System. School days may need to be added to the school calendar in order to meet state instructional requirements.

Behavior and Conduct

Code of Conduct

School and Diocesan Policies on Suspension, Expulsion, Bullying and Harassment

The purpose of Ave Maria Academy's Code of Conduct is to maintain a Christian atmosphere of respect for human dignity and responsibility, as well as to provide order and to nurture self-control. Each person is expected to do his or her part to bring about this climate and to act as a disciple at all times and in all places. Each person is also expected to act as a disciple and to be a good ambassador of our school outside of the school day. Teachers and staff have the authority and responsibility to consistently maintain discipline in the classroom.

Ave Maria Academy's Code of Conduct reflects the expectation of disciple-like behavior in our classrooms, in our hallways, in our cafeteria, on the internet and when using technology, and on our playground as well as on busses, on field trips, at school-sponsored events, and in any place or at any time when students can be considered ambassadors of our school and of the Catholic faith.

Ave Maria Academy's Code of Conduct also reflects our four tenets of discipleship: kindness, respect, responsibility, and readiness for learning. These tenets are discussed in every classroom, and have a great impact on our students' understanding of their call to live as disciples in our school.

Code of Conduct

Students at Ave Maria Academy are called to live as disciples of Jesus Christ. Students will measure their actions by our four tenets of discipleship: kindness, respect, responsibility, and readiness to learn. Actions in keeping with these four tenets will naturally be in keeping with the mission of our school. Actions opposed to any or all of these tenets will naturally be against the mission of our school and therefore in violation of our code of conduct. Actions opposed to the mission of our school and in violation of our code of conduct will result in disciplinary action which takes into consideration safety, connection and problem solving.

Examples of actions that are opposed to the mission of our school and in violation of our code of conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Unkind behavior, actions, or language, including name-calling, threats, and bullying
- Disrespectful behavior, actions, or language, including profanity and class disruptions

- Personally disrespectful behavior, including drug, tobacco, and alcohol use
- Dishonest behavior or language, including cheating, lying, forging parent signatures
- Irresponsible behavior or actions, including mistreatment of or damage to school resources or property, and dress code violations.
- Any actions that are considered unkind, disrespectful, irresponsible, or impeding of learning that involve technology, electronic devices, and/or weapons of any kind
- Selling or trading items (homemade or store bought) may not occur on school grounds.

Consequences for actions that are opposed to the mission of our school and in violation of our code of conduct will be weighed based on the severity of the issue. Consequences include, but are not limited to:

- Oral warning
- Notification to parent/guardian
- Telephone call to parent/guardian
- Conference with parent/guardian
- Loss of privilege
- Behavior Contract between student, teacher and parent
- Demerit
- Detention
- In-school suspension
- At-home suspension
- Probation
- Expulsion

For middle school students grade 7 & 8 please use the link to access the [Middle School Code of Conduct](#).

Diocesan Policy on Suspension and Expulsion ([Policies 5406 and 5407](#))

Serious misconduct is cause for suspension and/or expulsion. Serious misconduct is that which disrupts the academic atmosphere of the school; threatens the safety of or endangers fellow students, teachers, or school officials; damages property; or flagrantly or repeatedly violates regulations or policies of the diocese or school. A student may be placed on suspension for serious misconduct occurring on-campus, during school related activities off-campus, off-campus behavior, or for continued misconduct after having been placed on probation. For such serious misconduct, the principal or administrator in charge may immediately suspend the student from school. Only an administrator has the authority to suspend a student. The student may be sent home during the school day provided that the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) has been notified. Expulsion shall not take place except as a result of the suspension procedure described below:

Suspension Procedures

1. At the time of the suspension, the principal or administrator in charge shall notify the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) of the suspension in a written format stating the reason(s) for the suspension and request that the student and the parent(s)/guardian(s) meet with the principal to review the matter.
2. Within three (3) school days of the suspension, the principal or administrator in charge shall meet with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s). The student and parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be given an opportunity to express their views.
3. By the school day following the meeting, the principal or administrator in charge shall advise the student and the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the decision, either to readmit the student to school, extend the period of suspension, or expel the student.

4. If the decision is to extend the period of suspension, the length of this period shall be indicated. The suspension period may not exceed ten (10) school days per incident. If the student has served an in-school suspension, the in-school suspension counts toward the total suspension time. An administrator's decision to suspend a student is a final decision.

Expulsion Procedures

The permanent dismissal of a student from a school is an extreme measure to be taken only as a last resort: a) after all other efforts of motivation and counseling have failed; b) where attendant circumstances of crime, scandal, immorality, or disruption constitute a threat to the physical or moral welfare of other persons; c) as set forth in the Student Withdrawal on Grounds of Parental Behavior, Policy 5408; or d) when the contractual relationship between the school and a family has been irreparably broken in the determination of the school.

The following procedures shall be observed:

- A record shall be kept of the previous measures of remediation, counseling, probation, conferences, and/or suspensions. This documentation should include written communication between the school and the family.
- Except in extreme circumstances of crime, scandal, immorality, or disruption that constitute a threat to the physical or moral welfare of persons, a student should be suspended prior to expulsion.
- A conference shall be held with the parents, student, administrator, pastor, and, if appropriate, teachers at which time the grounds for dismissal will be presented and discussed.
- The final decision to expel a student rests with the administrator and pastor in a parochial school and, in a diocesan school, with the principal with the knowledge and consent of the superintendent.
- If the decision to expel is made, the administrator shall notify the parent/guardian and the superintendent in a written format clearly stating, "[student name inserted] is being expelled from [school name inserted]", and include the reasons for the expulsion within three (3) days the decision to expel the student is finalized.
- The administrator shall notify the parents of the appeal process within the written expulsion letter (Policy 5409).
- The principal shall properly document all expulsion cases involving the grounds, record of conferences, and final notice. Such documentation shall be maintained in a file separate and apart from the student's permanent record.
- The student's permanent record shall indicate that the reason for transfer was expulsion.
- Consideration of admitting a student who has been expelled from a Catholic school will be done in consultation with the Office of Catholic Schools, the pastor, and the administrator of both the expelling school and the new school.
- Consideration of re-admitting a student who has been expelled from a Catholic school the year prior will be done in consultation with the Office of Catholic Schools, the pastor, and the administrator of the school.

Diocesan Policy on Bullying (Policy 5411)

The Diocese of Columbus schools and their staff shall not tolerate any bullying on school grounds or at any school activity on or off campus whether these actions are committed in person, written or electronically transmitted.

Bullying is defined as a conscious, willful, and deliberately hostile activity intended to harm, induce fear through the threat of further aggression, and create terror. Bullying includes these three elements: imbalance of power, intent to harm, and threat of further aggression. Bullying behavior may include physical intimidation or assault; extortion; oral or written

threats; electronically transmitted acts; threatening looks, gestures, or actions; cruel rumors; false accusations; and social isolation.

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices such as cell phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through SMS, text, and mobile applications (apps) or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else, causing embarrassment or humiliation. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behavior.

Staff members who observe or become aware of an act of bullying shall take immediate, appropriate steps to intervene. If a staff member believes that his/her intervention has not resolved the matter, or if the bullying persists, he/she shall report to the school principal for further investigation.

The Diocese expects students and parent(s)/guardian(s) who become aware of an act of bullying on school grounds or at any school activity on or off campus to report it to the school principal for further investigation. The principal will contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the aggressor and the victim. This investigation may include interviews with students, parent(s)/guardian(s), teachers, school staff, and reviewing records.

Consequences for students who bully others may include but are not limited to counseling, parent conference, detention, suspension, and/or expulsion depending on the results of the investigation. No retaliation shall be taken against a person who reports bullying.

Schools shall have a policy on bullying, which incorporates the essentials of this policy, printed in their parent/student handbook.

Teasing behavior alone does not necessarily constitute bullying. Children may regularly interact in a manner that would be unacceptable among adults. Students are still learning how to interact appropriately with their peers. It is understandable that, in the school setting, students often engage in teasing, insults, banter, shoving, and pushing that is upsetting to students. Teasing behaviors in and of themselves – while needing to be addressed by school officials – does not constitute bullying or harassment and the interventions and consequences are of another level.

Diocesan Policy on Harassment (Policy 5412)

1. The Catholic schools of the Diocese of Columbus shall maintain a working and academic environment, in all programs and activities, free of all forms of harassment and intimidation. No student, teacher, other staff member or volunteer (male or female) should be subject to harassment in any form, and specifically not to unsolicited and/or unwelcome sexual overtures or conduct, whether verbal, physical, or electronically transmitted.
2. Harassment can take many forms. Harassment can occur at any school activity, and/or can take place in classrooms, halls, cafeterias, or even at programs sponsored by the school at other locations. It does not include compliments of a socially acceptable nature. Harassment is verbal, physical, or electronic conduct that embarrasses, denigrates, or shows hostility toward a person because of his/her race, color, religion, gender, sex, national origin, age, disability, or other protected characteristics.
3. Conduct which constitutes sexual harassment is prohibited. Sexually harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. offensive sexual flirtations, advances, propositions; jokes;

- b. continued or repeated verbal abuse of a sexual or gender-based nature;
- c. explicit or degrading sexual or gender-based comments about another individual or his/her appearance;
- d. the display or circulation of sexually explicit or suggestive writing, pictures or objects;
- e. any offensive or physical conduct which shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of gender or sex;
- f. graffiti of a sexual nature;
- g. fondling oneself sexually or talking about one's sexual activity in front of others;
- h. spreading rumors about or categorizing others as to sexual activity.

Sexual harassment is not limited to conduct that is sexual in nature - it also includes harassment that is based on gender. Gender-based harassment, which is also prohibited, is conduct that would not occur except for the sex of the person involved. An example would be referring to a woman by or as a female body part, or a demeaning sex based term, or treating people differently because of their gender. The same prohibitions apply with regard to inflammatory or offensive comments or conduct which is based upon race, color, age, religion, disability, or national origin. In short, working relationships between employees and peer relationships among students must be based on mutual respect.

Sexual harassment also includes the taking of, or refusal to take, any personnel or academic action on the basis of a person's submission to or refusal of sexual overtures. No person should so much as imply that an individual's "cooperation" or submission to unwelcome sexual activity will have any effect on the individual's employment, assignment, compensation, advancement, development, academic evaluation, participation in school programs or activities, or any other condition of employment or academic achievement.

Not all physical conduct is necessarily considered sexual in nature. (For example, a coach hugging a minor after an accomplishment, a teacher consoling a minor with an injury, or physical conduct during athletic events would not be considered sexual conduct.) However, peer-based sexual harassment (e.g., student to student) can be a form of prohibited conduct where the harassing conduct creates a hostile environment.

4. A sexually hostile environment can be created by a school employee, volunteer, another student, or a visitor to the school.

5. Any person who believes he/she is the subject of harassment or intimidation must contact either the principal, assistant principal, or pastor at the elementary level; or the principal, assistant principal or Office of Catholic Schools at the secondary level. A complaint must be filed in writing. In the case of harassment involving a student or students, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the respective students shall be duly notified. In the event that an individual alleges harassment by a principal, assistant principal or a pastor, the individual shall file the complaint with the superintendent. All complaints will be promptly investigated, and the person initiating the complaint will be advised of the outcome of the investigation. A student who believes he or she has been sexually harassed (or a parent/guardian who believes that his/her minor has been harassed) must contact one of the appropriate persons as listed above.

6. Where it is determined that harassment has occurred, the appropriate authority will take immediate disciplinary action against any administrator, teacher, staff or student engaging in harassment. The response shall take into account the individuals and circumstances. Such action may include, depending on the circumstances, disciplinary measures up to and including termination of employment or expulsion in the case of a student.

7. No retaliation against anyone who reports harassment shall be tolerated. The Diocese prohibits such retaliation and will take appropriate responsive action if retaliation occurs.

Filing of Harassment Information

1. The investigator must keep extensive notes of all aspects of the investigation.
2. These notes must include what the investigator did, what the investigator concluded, and how the investigator followed up as a result of the findings and conclusion.
3. These notes must include verbal statements made by persons questioned and any written statements.
4. All of the above details must be summarized to include:
 - a. how the investigation was conducted;
 - b. what conclusion was reached and why;
 - c. what action was taken;
 - d. how, when, and to whom the conclusion was communicated; and
 - e. notification of warning against retaliation.
5. All of the above is kept only in the investigator's file.
6. If no action is taken, nothing is placed in the personnel file or student file.
7. If an action is taken against the accused (i.e. warning, restrictions, leave, or release from contract in the case of personnel, or warning restrictions, suspension or expulsion in the case of students), the action taken is:
 - a. formalized by putting in writing,
 - b. a copy is given to the person or student against whom the action is taken, and
 - c. a copy is placed in the personnel or student file.
8. The Harassment Complaint Form and Administrative Summary Form can be found on the Office of Catholic Schools website.

Harassment – School Responsibilities

1. Annually, at the start of each school year, the school shall publish the Diocesan Harassment Policy for Students in the parent/student handbook.
2. Each school shall follow diocesan procedures for timely investigation and response to complaints.
3. Each school shall periodically train administrators, teachers, staff, and volunteers and use age-appropriate classroom information for students to ensure that they understand which types of behavior constitute harassment and how they should respond in the event of experiencing such behavior. Records are to be kept of training dates and names of those in attendance.

Behavior Off Campus ([Policy 5404](#))

Students may be subject to the full range of discipline policies, penalties, and procedures that apply to unhealthy, dangerous, or immoral conduct that occurs off-campus, including conduct that adversely affects the education process or the mission of the school community. Examples of such off-campus behavior include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Electronic/internet or cell phone threats and harassment;
- Threats of violence;
- Alcohol use;
- Fighting;
- Hazing;
- Drug possession or sale;
- Reckless driving;
- Sexual assaults.

The Diocese of Columbus has a concern with conduct by students at school or away from school that may bring discredit or harm to the name of the school or the reputation of the

student body. Consequently, conduct at school or away from school that is inappropriate to Christian moral standards, conduct that is in violation of the law, including the use of social media, conduct that is detrimental to the common good, threatening, harmful, or offensive to other students or staff or conduct that is of such nature as to jeopardize the good name of the school, may subject a student to discipline. Discipline for such conduct shall be at the sole discretion of the school.

Bus Conduct and Bus Safety

It is a privilege to ride the school bus. This service is provided to the students through the public school districts. Students will maintain disciple-like behavior on the bus at all times.

Students will not be permitted to ride home on a bus other than their assigned route. In the case of an extreme emergency, permission may be granted for a transfer with permission of the school administration.

Students riding school buses should follow the below bus expectations.

Bus Expectations

Disciples are...	Expected Behavior	Unexpected Behavior
Kind	- Use kind words and quiet voices with others on the bus. - Help keep the bus clean and safe for everyone	- Using mean or hurtful language - Spitting, littering, or throwing objects - Excluding or bothering others at the stop or on the bus
Respectful	- Only open windows with permission. - Keep aisles and exits clear. - Stay quiet at railroad crossings. - Only bring items that fit in your lap	- Making loud or disruptive noise - Bringing animals or dangerous items - Opening or closing windows without permission - Using inappropriate language - Eating or drinking on the bus
Responsible	- Arrive at your stop 5–10 minutes early. - Turn in medical emergency card in a timely manner. - Go straight to your seat and stay seated. - Keep a calm body and stay visible to the driver at all times. - Use electronics as directed by the bus driver. - Keep all hands, objects, and items to yourself.	- Arriving late to the stop - Changing seats without permission - Damaging the bus or not reporting damage - Bringing unsafe objects - Putting body parts or objects out the window - Standing while the bus is moving - Touching or hitting others, throwing objects at others
Ready to Learn	- Listen to the bus driver and follow directions right away. - Follow the expectations set by the bus driver. - Follow all safety signals when crossing roads.	- Ignoring or talking back to the driver - Crossing the street before the driver says it is safe

Discipline On The School Bus

Student behavior on the bus is critical to the safety of all passengers. Please review the penalties for improper behavior with your child (children).

If the Bus Discipline Referral is for a MINOR MISCONDUCT CODE (eating on the bus, obscene language, student out of seat etc.) violation, the driver must have and document at least one driver to student intervention and document at least one driver to parent intervention before giving the Discipline Referral Report to the building administration.

If the case of a MAJOR MISCONDUCT CODE (fighting, weapons, etc.) violation, the driver may immediately give the Bus Discipline Report to the building administration.

The following are the typical steps the building administrators will use when they receive a Bus Discipline Referral Report from a bus driver:

- First Bus Discipline Referral: Warning from Administration
- Second Bus Discipline Referral: One-Day bus suspension
- Third Bus Discipline Referral: Three-Day bus suspension
- Fourth Bus Discipline Referral: Five-day bus suspension
- Fifth Bus Discipline Referral: Ten-Day bus suspension
- More than 5 Referrals: Repeat Ten-Day bus suspension, possible recommendation to the Superintendent of permanent removal from the bus.

****Based on the incident, these steps may need to be adjusted.****

Social Media Policy

Please use the link to access our [Diocesan Policy on Social Media \(2211.11\)](#)

Playground Guidelines

Playground Expectations

Disciples are...	Expected Behavior	Unexpected Behavior
Kind	- Share equipment and space - Include others in games - Use kind words, even when solving problems - Encourage others and be a good sport (win or lose) - Ask for help from a teacher if you need it	- Excluding others from games - Bragging, blaming, or arguing - Fighting or yelling
Respectful	- Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself - Use calm voices and follow teacher directions - Wait your turn and use equipment the right way - Stay within the designated play areas	- Grabbing or pulling clothing - Pushing, shouting, or cutting in line - Ignoring teacher redirection - Pulling or hanging on recess equipment
Responsible	- Play gently	- Tackling or roughhousing

	- Only play touch football - Use only school approved recess equipment - Stay off trees, hills, and parked cars - Keep rocks, sticks, and dirt on the ground - Recess equipment should stay on the blacktop or grass area - Keep the playground clean - Ask for help from a teacher if you need it - Leave electronics inside	- Jumping from the top of the playground structure - Throwing rocks, sticks, or snow - Bringing balls or toys from home - Digging or playing with sticks - Climbing trees or running on dirt mounds - Playing with recess equipment on the play structure. - Leaving the playground without permission
Ready to Learn	- When the whistle blows, clean up quickly - Line up right away, facing forward - Enter the building quietly and respectfully	- Ignoring the whistle - Being last to line up - Talking loudly in the hallway
Teachers have the right to make judgments on any activities they feel may be unsafe or in some way may jeopardize students.		

Students will have outdoor recess each day unless it is actively raining or the temperature/windchill is below 25°F. Please ensure your child is dressed appropriately for the weather.

There should be no playing on the playground after school (excluding childcare).

Cafeteria

Cafeteria Expectations

Disciples are...	Expected Behavior	Unexpected Behavior
Kind	- Say "please" and "thank you" - Speak kindly and respectfully - Include others in conversation - Help others who need support	- Using unkind words - Ignoring or excluding others - Complaining or arguing with others
Respectful	- Use an indoor voice - Raise your hand to get help or leave your seat - Stay silent during announcements - Leave the cafeteria quietly to respect learning spaces	- Yelling across the room - Leaving your seat without permission - Talking during Munch Time - Distracting others who are still eating - Running, shouting, or being loud when exiting - Disrupting classrooms in the hallway
Responsible	- Keep your food to yourself - Eat only what you brought or bought - Eat only in the cafeteria	- Sharing or buying food for others - Taking food out of the cafeteria - Bringing in fast food or any caffeinated drinks
Ready to Learn	- Focus on finishing your food during lunch	- Not listening to directions - Wasting time or taking too long on

	- Follow directions the first time - Clean up your space before you leave - Transition out of the cafeteria calmly and quietly	- purpose after lunch. - Talking loudly or disrupting others returning to class
Students are expected to bring a nut-free packed lunch from home each day.		

Students must pack their lunch daily. Afternoon snack will be provided by the school. Family members wishing to eat lunch at school must have completed Protecting God's Children and must notify the office by 9:00 AM of that day.

Dress Code

The purpose of the dress code is to minimize the influences that distract from the goals of the school while limiting competition among the students. The dress of our students should reflect the worth of and respect for each person in the light of Christian principles. Therefore, we expect each student to dress neatly and in good taste.

Uniform Guidelines Kindergarten - Grade 8

Category	Boys	Girls
Shirts	• Light blue knit polo shirt (short or long sleeve) • No logos • Only solid white undershirts may be worn under uniform shirts • Shirts must be tucked in at all times	• Light blue knit polo shirt (short or long sleeve) • No lace or eyelet trim is allowed either on the blouse or the knit shirt. • No logos • For all grades, only solid white or skin-toned undergarments may be worn under blouses • Shirts must be tucked in at all times
Jumpers		• Navy, light blue Jumper in Plaid 41 - Style 172 • Must touch the top of the kneecap
Pants	• Navy blue dress uniform trousers • No contrasting stitching or outside patch pockets • Corduroys not permitted	• Navy blue dress uniform trousers • No contrasting stitching or outside patch pockets • Corduroys not permitted
Shorts	• Navy blue walking shorts worn with white uniform socks and white knit shirt • Shorts must be between the top of the kneecap, and 2" above the kneecap • Shorts may be worn August to September 30th and May 1st through June • No logos	• Navy blue bike shorts may be worn under jumper • Shorts must be between the top of the kneecap and 2" above the kneecap • Shorts may be worn from August through September 30th and May 1st through June • No logos.

Layering Options	- The following layering options must be purchased at a uniform store: - Navy blue crew cardigan with school logo - Navy blue "V" neck vest Pullover with school logo - Navy ¾ zip fleece with school logo - An approved uniform shirt must be worn under a layering option.	
Shoes	- Solid black, navy, dark brown, or tan dress shoes. - Tennis shoes that are solid white, solid black, or black and white. - Silver and gray can appear on athletic shoes only as a slight border or outline. - No moccasins, slippers, boots, cloth shoes or cloth tennis shoes, canvas shoes or canvas tennis shoes, hightops, or crocs. - The newer mesh fabric tennis shoes are allowed. - Shoelaces must be the same color as the dominant color of the shoe. - No flashing or light-up shoes or any other type of embellishment. - Boots may be worn to/from school in bad weather only, and students must change into uniform shoes during school hours.	
Socks	- White crew socks that can be folded over and still reach the ankle - Navy blue or black crew socks may be worn with pants only, not with shorts - No low-show socks or no-show socks - No logos	- White crew socks (that can be folded over and still reach the ankle) - White knee socks, or navy knee socks with jumpers - Plain white, navy, or black opaque tights, not hose, may be worn - No low-show socks or no-show socks - No logos
Leggings		November 1 - March 1: Girls are permitted to wear leggings under their jumpers. Leggings must be solid navy blue or black, no logos. Leggings must be worn with crew socks; ankles must be covered.
Belts	- Required on shorts or slacks for grades 1-8 - Navy blue, dark brown, or black only - No ornamental belt buckles	

PE Uniform (Grades 5-8) *BEGINNING 2031-2032 SCHOOL YEAR*

Students will not change their clothes at school for PE but rather will come to school dressed for PE on their assigned PE days. Students in grades 5-8 will wear Marian gold Ave Maria Academy PE t-shirt with solid navy blue athletic pants and an **optional** solid navy blue athletic suit jacket.

Category	Required for Boys and Girls in Grades 5-8
Shirt	The Marian gold uniform PE t-shirt must be purchased through one of the uniform stores, or obtained through one of our periodic "Uniform Exchange" events at school.
Pants	Navy PE athletic pants can be purchased through a uniform store or online/in store at a local retailer (example: Morganheimer, Amazon, Target, Old Navy, etc.).

	• PE pants must be made of 100% polyester, a polyester-spandex blend with less than 10% spandex, or a poly/tricot blend. • Pants must be solid navy, with no other colors, stripes, or logos. • Pants must be open at the ankle, not cuffed or gathered. • Pants must be loose fitting. • Pants may have a short zipper at the ankle, but this is not preferred. • Fleece pants, tight fitting pants, leggings, jeggings, yoga pants, joggers or any other kind of athletic pants will not be allowed.
PE Jacket (Optional)	• PE jackets can be purchased through the uniform stores and are required to have the uniform crest on them. • PE jackets with the school crest that are purchased through the uniform store are approved to be worn for PE AND as a layering option to the uniform. • No other kind of athletic jacket will be allowed.

PE Uniform Options (Grades K-4)

Students grades K-4 are not required to purchase a gym uniform.

Options	Grades K - 4
Option A	• Students may wear their regular school uniforms on their PE days, with uniform tennis shoes.
Option B	• Students may wear PE athletic pants and jacket with the PE Marian blue and gold t-shirt. • All of the above rules for the pants and jacket must be followed.
	• Girls must wear a pair of shorts under their jumpers for modesty.

Personal Appearance and Accessories (This applies to all school days, regular and dress down.)

Category	Guidelines
Hair	• Hair should be kept clean and cut in a manner that is appropriate for school. • Hair may not cover the face or eyes. • Hair should not appear to be unnatural/artificially colored. • No etching is permitted • Hairbows and headbands must be subtle; no cat ears • The principal will make the final decision concerning any issue regarding the length of hair.
Makeup	• Natural make-up
Jewelry	• One earring per ear. Earrings are to be simple and small. Post type or small hoops (approximately ½ inch in diameter) are permitted. • One necklace, two bracelets per wrist, and two rings per hand. Excessive jewelry is not permitted.

Nails	• Clear or light pink nail polish, or french tips at a natural length are permissible. • Artificial/acrylic nails may not be worn.
Other	• No tattoos or body piercings (except earrings for girls) • 7th/8th Grade boys must be clean-shaven. • Smart watches that receive messages or calls may not be worn during the school day. • Students are not permitted to write, draw, or mark on their clothing, shoes, or body at any time during the school day. This includes permanent or washable markers, pens, and pencils. • All uniform items should remain clean, neat, and free of any decorations or additions.

Dress Down Days

Dress down days may be permitted throughout the year for various reasons (incentives, rewards, other special occasions) as determined by the pastor, Parent Advisory Committee, principal, and staff. On those days, students will be required to follow the Dress Down Days dress code:

Category	Allowed	Not Allowed
Tops	• Shirts must be long enough to tuck in.	• Crop tops, spaghetti straps, muscle shirts, halters, tank tops, undersized/tight/low-cut shirts • Rude messages/improper advertising
Bottoms	• Casual pants/jeans • Tight fitting pants, leggings, jeggings, and yoga pants, are permitted as long as the top is loose and of fingertip length. • Shorts (August-September, May-June)	• Sagging pants, oversized pants, and pants with holes • Shorts or tennis skirts more than 3" above the knee • Boys - leggings under shorts
Shoes	• School-appropriate closed-toe shoes with a back that covers the heel	• Clogs, Crocs, Uggs, slippers, sandals, and shoes without a back
Socks	• Are always required with all footwear	
Students in violation of the above-mentioned Dress Down Day Dress Code will call home for a change of clothing.		

General Information

Girls' and boys' uniforms are available online and in-store at the following locations:

Educational Apparel

3906 Brown Park Dr.
Hilliard, OH
614-876-3030

[Educational Apparel Website](#)

It is strongly recommended that parents use the school's suppliers for all uniform needs. This will allow students to strictly comply with the school's Dress Code.

Dress Code Violations

Students Grades K-4	Students Grades 5-6	Students Grades 7-8
1st Offense - Parent Contact 2nd Offense – Parent Contact 3rd Offense – A parent meeting to discuss the dress code	1st Offense – Warning notification with one week to correct the issue 2nd Offense - Parent contact with an infraction reflection sent home 3rd Offense – After school detention	Email notification to parent/guardian. After a 1-week warning to correct the issue, the student will lose recess until corrected. A parent meeting can be scheduled to discuss.

Student Services and Support

Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship Program

Ave Maria Academy is a provider of this scholarship. For scholarship information, please visit the following website:

<https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Other-Resources/Scholarships/Jon-Peterson-Special-Needs-Scholarship>

[Jon Peterson Manual](#)

SPiCE Program

The Special People in Catholic Education program (SPiCE) supports the education of children in our school with special learning needs. As we work to serve a broader range of student needs, the SPiCE program provides financial support to assist with our commitment that each child in our parish is a child of God and possesses his/her own unique spiritual and educational needs. Since we are committed to serving the needs of all of our children, SPiCE serves as a means to raise awareness, promote discussion, and raise funds to employ needed personnel and to provide specialized educational support.

Student Support Team (Response to Intervention)

The Student Support Team uses a group based problem-solving team which assists teachers in providing options or alternatives to meet the individual needs of students experiencing academic, emotional, or behavioral concerns.

After School Care

Ave Maria Academy offers a child care program to students. The daily hours of operation are Monday-Friday from 7:15-8:30 AM and from 3:30 - 5:30 PM. Ave Maria Academy Child Care Program follows the Ave Maria Academy calendar and is open when school is in session. If school is canceled at the beginning of the day due to inclement weather, Child Care is closed. Child Care is open at the normal time during inclement weather delays. The staff will be present if school is dismissed early. Registration and rates can be obtained by contacting the school office.

Please refer to the <Ave Maria Academy Care Program handbook> for additional details and information.

Personally Identifiable Information

Directory information regarding students will be released in various formats including websites unless a parent notifies the school that such information is not to be released regarding his/her child. Directory information includes names of students, grade levels, activities, sports, awards, and date of graduation.

A consent signed and dated by the parent(s) of a student must be obtained to release personally identifiable information. Personally identifiable information is information that makes the identity of a student more traceable. Personally identifiable information includes pictures with and without names, addresses, social security numbers, ID numbers, personal characteristics (height, weight etc.), and educational records.

The “Personally Identifiable Information Release Form” that is provided at the beginning of each school year must be signed and dated by the parent of a student prior to releasing personally identifiable information.

Health and Safety

Emergency Medical Records

Each student is required to have an Emergency Medical Record on file in the school office at the beginning of the school year. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to enter the information online in FACTS and keep this current throughout the school year.

Health Forms

Health forms are submitted once upon admission. Each student’s health file must contain the following forms:

1. Health History – signed by parent or guardian
2. Immunization Record – signed by parent or health care provider; due by the **14th day of school** on the year of admission, and when updated thereafter
3. Physician Form – signed by physician

Diocese Sick Policy

Diocese of Columbus
2026-2027 Sick Policy

Sick children often expose other students and school staff members to illnesses and germs. These illnesses are disruptive to the educational process and to other children and their families. Students who are ill should be kept home to help control the spread of germs. Please follow the guidelines below to help keep our school safe and healthy:

- If your child shows these signs of illness they must remain home (or will be sent home from school):
 - Fever - Fever is defined as having a temperature of 100.0 F or higher. A student needs to be fever free for a minimum of 24 hours without the help of fever reducing medication before returning to school. **
 - Diarrhea, Stomachache and/or Vomiting - Students must remain home for 24-48 hours after stomachache, diarrhea, and/or vomiting has stopped. The student should be feeling better and food intake has returned to normal before returning to school. **
 - Difficulty Breathing - Student should stay home until he or she is feeling better

- and activity level has returned to normal. **
- Sore Throat - Student should stay home if he or she has a red throat, swollen glands, or difficulty swallowing. **
- Red Eyes and/or Eye Discharge - Student should stay home until recovered or seek evaluation by a healthcare provider. **
- Loss of Taste and Smell - Students should seek medical evaluation. **
- Uncontrolled cold symptoms that interfere with the student's ability to learn (e.g. ie persistent coughing and/or persistent/active runny nose) - Student should stay home until symptoms are improving and can participate in class.**
- Undiagnosed Rash - Student should seek evaluation by a healthcare provider.
- Other Symptoms - Students exhibiting symptoms such as extreme fatigue, body aches and/or headache and are not able to participate in class should stay home until recovered or seek evaluation by a healthcare provider. **

THIS POLICY IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Communicable Diseases

Please report to the school principal if your child has a communicable disease, defined as a disease that can be passed from one person to another. Examples include but are not limited to upper respiratory tract infections including COVID-19, influenza, strep throat, pink eye, vomiting and/or diarrhea, and skin infections.

Children are expected to remain home during the communicable period of the disease as defined by a healthcare provider.

Before your child returns to school after an illness, please email the school office AND the school nurse with the following: your child's symptoms, the date symptoms started, and the best contact number for parent/guardian.

If your child sees a healthcare provider for any illness, please provide a note from the healthcare provider upon return that includes your child's diagnosis and the date when your child is able to return to school.

In the event a child becomes ill during the school day, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be called. If the parent(s)/guardian(s) cannot be reached, the emergency contact will be called. Student(s) should be picked up within 30 minutes of notification.

Please follow the [Communicable Disease Chart](#), especially those frequently seen like strep throat and pink eye. A student may return to school 24 hrs after the first dose of medications and symptoms improve to participate in class.

Accident, Injury, Surgery, or Hospitalization

If your child had an accident, injury, surgery, or hospitalization, please communicate with the school nurse so appropriate follow-up treatment and accommodations can be made. A student may only be re-admitted or re-enter school after an accident, hospitalization, surgery, or injury with the submission of the Release to Return to Ave Maria Academy form. [Release to Return to School form](#).

Immunizations

Ohio Law requires each student to demonstrate compliance with immunizations requirements via medical documentation. All students must provide a record of immunization compliance to their school by the 14th day from the first day of attendance. If no immunization record was provided when the student registered, a record must be submitted to the school showing compliance by the 14th day of school to avoid exclusion as required by Ohio law. Please see ORC 3313.671 for further information as to exceptions to immunization requirements.

Please refer to [Policy 7010](#) for exemption information.

For a complete list of required immunizations, click here: [Ohio Immunization Requirements for Schools](#)

Medications/Medication Forms

If a student must bring medication to school, the following requirements must be met:

Prescription Medications

- Must be in the original container.
- The medication label must have the child's name, drug identity, dosage instructions, doctor's name, and prescription date.
- Must be brought to school by parent/guardian.
- A Medication Administration form, dated and signed by the parent and prescribing physician, must accompany the medication, giving the child's name, dosage amounts, specific dosage times, and other instructions if necessary. Medication forms are available on the school website. Any time a change is made to a medication, a new prescription medication form must be filled out and signed by a doctor.
- Refrigeration is available for medications, if needed.
- Medication will be kept in the Health Office.
- Prescription asthma inhalers and Epi-pens may be carried by individual students if the permission form is completed by parents and prescribing physician. Forms are available in the Health Office. There is a separate FARE form (for allergy/Epipens) and a separate form for asthma/inhalers.

Non-Prescription Medications

- Must be in the original container (pill bottle, cough medicine bottle, etc).
- Must be clearly identified as to the name and type of medication and dosage instructions.
- A Medication Administration form signed and dated by the parent giving the child's name, medication name, dosage instructions, specific dosage times and other necessary instructions **must** accompany the medication. Medication forms are available on the school website.
- Medications will be kept in the Health Office.
- Students may carry 1-2 cough drops from home in their pocket. Additional cough drops should be kept in the health office.

No medication, prescription or non-prescription, will be dispensed to a student until the proper school medication form is on file in the school office. Please use the [School Medical Forms](#) link to access all forms needed for medication administration.

While waiting on a medical order, parents are welcome to come to school to administer the medication until the order is received.

Nurse

A clinic aide will be on duty from 8:00 AM - 3:00 PM every day in the health office. A registered school nurse will be on call each day from 8:15 AM - 3:45 PM.

Tuberculin Skin Screening

All new students to the school who have spent more than 30 consecutive days in a TB endemic region within the past five years or who were born in a TB endemic region must also present evidence of a negative Tuberculin (TB) test before they can attend school. The TB test must have been completed within the past year in the United States. Current enrolled students who spend 30 or more consecutive days in a TB endemic region will also be required to have a negative Tuberculin (TB) test before returning to school.

Vision and Hearing Screenings

Vision and hearing screenings are done on all new pupils without records from previous school and routinely in selected grades. If you receive a letter recommending further examination, please return the physician's report to the school.

Diabetes

Please refer to [Policies 7370 and 7371](#) for information regarding diabetic care and continuous glucose monitoring.

Suicide

Please refer to [Policy 7220](#) regarding the suicide intervention process.

General Resource List**Emergency Risk Assessment Locations**

Nationwide Children's Hospital

614-722-2000

Big Lots Behavioral Health Pavilion

444 Butterfly Gardens Dr. Columbus, OH 43215

Ohio State University - Harding Hospital

614-293-9600

1670 Upham Dr. Columbus, OH 43210

Sun Behavioral 614-706-2786

900 E. Dublin Granville Rd. Columbus, OH 43229

Outpatient

Spirit of Peace Clinical Counseling 614-442-7650 <https://spiritofpeaceclinicalcounseling.com>

Directions for Youth 614-888-9200

1515 Indianola Ave. Columbus, OH 43201

<https://www.directionscounseling.com>

Veritas Counseling & Consultation 614-398-3771

2029 Riverside Drive, Suite 201 Columbus, OH 43221

www.VeritasCounseling.org

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline – SB 234

Cardiac Emergency

Please refer to [Policy 7360](#).

Seizures

Please refer to [Policy 7340](#).

Acknowledgment of Risks and Pledge to Follow Health and Safety Guidelines – Family Handbook, Updated: October 25, 2025.

We, the parent(s) and student who are signing this student handbook for Ave Maria Academy, acknowledge and agree that, as a student at the School and as parent(s) of that student, entering into the School or being on the School premises or entering into the parish or being on the parish premises (as applicable), having personal contact with teachers, classmates, and other School/parish staff, involves a certain degree of risk, including contracting and passing on communicable diseases (such as influenza, colds, COVID-19, etc.), and then potentially passing it on to others, including family members. Due to the inherent risk and the close proximity of persons at the School, there is an elevated risk of student and parent(s) contracting a disease simply by being in the School/parish building, on the School/parish premises, or at any School/parish function. By signing this School Handbook, we acknowledge and agree that after carefully considering the risks involved, we voluntarily and willingly accept those risks of being in an in-person environment, including the risk of contracting communicable diseases. If I have underlying health concerns which may place me at greater risk of contracting communicable diseases, , and all reasonable accommodations have been met, I acknowledge and agree to assume these risks.

Asbestos in Schools

Ave Maria Academy will inform its families and stakeholders, on a yearly basis, as to the presence of any asbestos in the school building.

Allergies

Ave Maria Academy strives to provide a safe environment for students with life-threatening allergies. Parents should notify the school nurse and homeroom teacher of any life-threatening allergy on or before the first day of each school year or as soon as an allergy is diagnosed.

Each school year, parents and physicians will be required to complete, sign, and return an “Allergy Action Plan” specific to the student with life-threatening allergies. The school nurse will review all allergy information provided by the student’s parents and physician and share this information with the appropriate teachers and staff.

Parents will provide the school with the medications prescribed in the “Allergy Action Plan”. Medications will be kept in the Clinic or with the student as specific needs dictate.’

The parents of a student with a life-threatening food allergy will provide a supply of “safe” snacks for use by their child. Parents of children with life-threatening allergies are responsible for notifying bus transportation providers with information regarding their child’s allergy. Teachers and staff will attend training annually regarding life-threatening allergies.

With our nut and allergy free environment, we do not allow students/parents to bring in treats for any type of special occasion, such as a birthday, a holiday, or an end of the year festivity.

Wellness

Please use the link to access our [school wellness policy](#).

- Please note the students are only allowed to bring a capped water bottle or one that has a foldable straw.

Breakfast Program

Breakfast will not be served at Ave Maria Academy during the 2026-2027 school year. The school will provide a nut-free, healthy morning snack for students.

Safe Environment Program

As a community of faith, we believe that our children are the most important gifts God has entrusted to us and that the prevention of child abuse begins with each person.

Ave Maria Academy, in coordination with the Catholic Diocese of Columbus, is committed to the protection and safety of all children. This commitment follows the fundamental mission of the Church to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, to give authentic witness to the moral teaching of the Scriptures and the Tradition of the Church, and to uphold the human dignity of every person. Increased awareness and a willingness to take action are steps for every person to eradicate abuse in our society, in the community, in the neighborhood, and in the family.

At St. Peter St. Joan of Arc Parish, "Best Practice" policies have been established to ensure the safety of our children in every parish and school activity. Our Safe Environment Program was designed for the protection of our children. With that in mind, ALL VOLUNTEERS 18 years of age and older (Athletics, Club Sports, Nursery, School, Scouts, Religious Education, High School Youth Ministry and all other programs involving children) who have "care, custody or control," or regular supervised or unsupervised access to children must complete parish approved procedures prior to the first day of volunteering:

[<<Link to website "Safe Environment">>](#)

Ohio Code 2151.421: Mandatory Reporters

A mandated reporter is anyone who works in a professional capacity with children. Mandated reporters are required by law to report if he/she suspects or knows that child abuse is occurring.

The Ohio Revised Code Section 2151.421 clearly removes the option of choice, and requires immediate reporting of known or suspected alleged child abuse and neglect for the following professionals:

Attorneys, Audiologists, Child care workers, Children Services Personnel, Coroners, Day Care Personnel, Dentists, Nurses, Podiatrists, Social workers, Animal control officers/agents, Psychiatrists, School Authorities, employees and teachers, speech pathologists physicians, including hospital interns and residents

Although Ohio law encourages everyone to report alleged child abuse and neglect, in most cases it is an option left for personal and moral decision. The exception is those professions that have an

inherent responsibility to report. The ethical commitment to families and children that these professionals have accepted through virtue of their positions is recognized under Ohio law, and thus they are mandated to report alleged child abuse and neglect.

Safe School Hotline

Report concerns for student Safety using the Safe School Hotline: 844-723-3764.

Background Checks

Ave Maria Academy requires that all volunteers complete a Civilian Criminal Background Check through the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation by being fingerprinted electronically. We refer people to Fast Fingerprints (www.fastfingerprint.com).

Please use the Diocesan form found on our parish website at <<add>>

Results will be sent electronically to the Diocese of Columbus and then to St. Peter St. Joan of Arc. This is required regardless of previous fingerprinting by your employer.

A clear record is required for volunteering. A list of disqualifying events are outlined in [Diocesan policy 4120](#).

All parents will be required to participate in the Protecting God's Children course prior to October 30, 2026 and prior to engaging in any volunteer activity.

[Virtus Online - Protecting God's Children](#)

Weapons/Threats to Welfare and Safety ([Diocesan Policy 5410](#))

No student shall use, possess, handle, transmit, or conceal any object which is, or can be considered, a weapon or instrument of violence. Furthermore, no student shall make threats of any kind about the use of or intention to inflict harm by means of a weapon or instrument of violence. Objects which are explosive or incendiary in nature, or any object reasonably determined to be a threat to the safety or security of any person, are prohibited on school premises, and at school-related functions.

"Possession" is defined as a) physically holding and/or carrying a deadly weapon, weapon, or replica of a weapon, or b) the deadly weapon, weapon, or replica is under the control of a student whether it is located in a car, locker, backpack, or other location, or c) being under control of or belonging to the student while on the school grounds and/or participating in a school activity. Carrying, bringing, using, or possessing a deadly weapon, weapon, or replica on school grounds, when being transported in vehicles to/from a Catholic school, during a school sponsored activity or event, and off school property when the conduct has a reasonable connection to school or any school-sponsored event without the authorization of the school is prohibited.

A deadly weapon, weapon, or replica is defined as: a) a firearm, whether loaded or unloaded; b) any pellet, BB gun, or other device, whether operational or not, designed to propel projectiles by spring action or compressed air; c) a fixed blade knife with a blade that measures longer than three inches in length or a spring-loaded knife, or a pocket knife with a blade longer than three inches; d) any object, device, instrument, material, or substance – whether animate or inanimate – used or intended or threatened to be used to inflict death or serious bodily injury including, but not limited to, slingshot, nunchakus, spring gun, throwing star, bludgeon, brass knuckles, or any similar objects.

If a student is found to be in violation of the policy, a report will be made to local law enforcement.

Any or all of the disciplinary actions listed below may be imposed by the administrator, depending on the severity of the offense as well as the previous disciplinary record of the student. Consequences may include: counseling/family counseling; approved school/community service; in-school suspension; referral to Juvenile Court and/or other appropriate law enforcement agency; suspension from school; expulsion from school following suspension; and diversion programs.

However, expulsion without suspension is mandatory for the possession of a deadly weapon on school grounds.

Drug, Alcohol, and Tobacco Policy

Alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, harmful intoxicants, any illegal substance and/or paraphernalia are defined as banned substances. Banned substances are not to be used, possessed, or sold on the property of schools/parishes of the diocese. This also applies to all school-related events held off of the school property (e.g. away games).

Ave Maria Academy recognizes that individuals who are experiencing problems with drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or other intoxicants are in need of assistance. The type of assistance may vary; however, the school will try to assist these students and their families in finding alternatives from which they can benefit. Drug and alcohol education and referral to counseling shall be viewed as instructional and rehabilitative, NOT an alternative to the disciplinary measures specified in this policy.

Students shall not possess on their person, in their locker, or in any place under their control, use or distribute, or be under the influence of any alcoholic beverage, drug, or intoxicant of any kind. Violations will result in immediate notification of parents. This rule applies to all school activities and functions, whether or not on the school or parish grounds. This includes time on school buses, rented carriers, and student/parent transportation.

Offenses and Disciplinary Action:

The action set forth below will be considered routine disciplinary measures for tobacco, drug and alcohol abuse.

Students who voluntarily request assistance or counseling in situations where no offense, as specified below, has been detected by the school officials will not be deemed in violation of school policy based on information divulged.

First Infraction:

Students will be referred to the office, whereupon parents will be immediately contacted by the principal. The student will not return to the classroom until a conference has been held with the parent(s), principal, guidance counselor, and pastor. The police may be notified. Consultation with parent(s) and students will emphasize available counseling services. A drug-screening procedure may be recommended. The student will be placed in in-school suspension for a period of no less than 2 days.

Second Infraction:

Students will be referred to the office, whereupon, parent(s) will be contacted by the principal. The student will not return to the classroom until a conference has been held with the parent(s)/principal/guidance counselor/pastor. The police may be notified. The student will serve an in-school suspension of no less than 3 days. Prior to re-entry to the classroom, the school must receive written notification that the student has been entered into an approved Guidance Center Adolescent Alcohol and Drug Abuse Assessment Program. Parents must sign an authorization to have this information released to the school.

Third Infraction:

A third infraction will result in immediate removal from school. Parents and students must meet with the principal and the pastor. A determination will be made regarding the student's continued enrollment.

School Safety Drills

Fire drills and tornado drills are conducted regularly throughout the school year. Detailed escape plans are posted inside the door of each classroom.

During tornado drills, each class goes to a designated area within the building. All children sit with their heads covered and their faces toward a wall. For fire drills or other emergency procedures, each class has an escape route to an outside area a safe distance from the building.

A detailed emergency preparedness plan is available in the school office. The school is prepared for a variety of emergency situations.

If evacuation to another location is necessary, the students and teachers will proceed from the McEwan Center to the Church Building, or if necessary to Highland Presbyterian Church. Parents will be directed to follow the instructions that will be shared via phone and email through the school communication system. Additionally, if appropriate, local TV and radio stations will also broadcast necessary information.

Supervision of Students

Students must be supervised by an adult at all times during the regularly scheduled school day, on school sponsored field trips, during school sponsored activities, and at any other times during which the school accepts responsibility for supervision. All safe environment policies and regulations must be adhered to at all times.

Supervision requires both physical presence and attention to the students. Since emergencies will occur, it is not always possible for a teacher or staff member to be physically present to all students. It is important, therefore, that teachers inform students what they are to do if a teacher is not present.

Personnel charged with supervising students outside the classroom are to be provided with information relating to student supervision. This information may include the following:

- A basic or local in-service update on emergency procedures
- A written list of all procedures and rules to be followed relating to the conduct of students in the school or on school property
- A specific diagram of the outdoor space to assist in stationing supervisory personnel

It is the responsibility of the principal to ensure that adequate supervision of students is provided.

Supervisors shall be present and actively supervising students in a reasonable and prudent manner appropriate to the activities/classes to which they have been assigned.

Since Catholic schools are partners with parents in their children's formation and in providing for their safety, the school administration may notify parents when they become aware of concerns about student life or behavior, even when off-campus. Both civil law and the Gospel demand that whatever can be done to protect God's children must be done.

Event Policy

At Ave Maria Academy, the safety and security of our students, staff, and guests is a top priority. To help ensure a safe and respectful environment during school-hosted events, we have established an Event Attendance Policy. This policy applies to all non-staff visitors, including parents, guardians, and other community members.

Key highlights include:

- **Designated Entry & Exit:** All visitors must use the specified entrances and exits and may be required to show identification. Entrance time will be provided.
- **Check-In Required:** Visitors must register at a designated check-in point and may only enter the building at the approved time.
- **Access To Building:** Visitors are permitted in designated event areas only. Classrooms and administrative offices are off-limits unless otherwise approved.
- **Supervision & Conduct:** Visitors must follow staff directions, demonstrate respectful behavior, and uphold Catholic values at all times.
- **Siblings:** If a parent wishes to have a sibling attend an event, the parent must come to the front office, sign the sibling out, go to the designated entry for the event with the child, and sign the child back in after the event. Parents are responsible for a sibling during an event.
- **Dismissal After Events:** If parents wish to take their student(s) home after the event, a transportation change must be submitted by **10:00 a.m.** that day. Students will be dismissed with car riders at the regular dismissal location. **For safety reasons, students may not be taken directly from the event.**
- **Safety Protocols:** Security staff and volunteers will monitor all events. Any disruptive or unsafe behavior may result in removal from the premises.

To read the complete Event Policy, please view our [Event Policy Document](#).

Communication and Family Engagement

Communication

Effective and open communication helps to ensure the best working relationship between parents/guardians and school staff. “The Messenger”, the Ave Maria Academy weekly family newsletter, will be emailed to parents each Friday afternoon during the school year, and will include items of interest, news, updates, and announcements. In addition, photo stories will be added to our website on a regular basis featuring news from all grade levels.

Students in grades K-8 will either bring home Friday Folders containing their academic work, receive their assessed work electronically to share with parents/guardians, or a blend of both systems. We ask parents/guardians to please sign and return the Friday Folders by the following Monday. Each Friday, teachers in K-8 will also send out a weekly email which outlines what has been covered, what may be coming home, and/or any upcoming announcements.

Please see our Curriculum packets for each teaching team’s Communication Plan.

Conferences

Student-led conferences will be held three times yearly, typically in October, and February, or as requested by families or teachers. In addition, faculty members are always available for conferences throughout the school year. Please call the school office to schedule an appointment.

Phone Calls

The office telephone is a business phone and is not to be used by students except in an emergency. Students are not allowed to use the phone to make personal arrangements (such as requesting permission to go to another student's home after school).

Forgotten books, gym clothing, lunches, etc., may be delivered by leaving them in the school office.

Important messages by phone will be delivered to the student in case of an emergency.

Visitors

Parents and other visitors are welcome and encouraged to visit the school. State law requires all visitors, including parents, to report to our school office upon entering the building. Upon entering the building, parents and visitors must each sign in at the school office and present a photo ID that will be ran through our Raptor system. Raptor Visitor Management is a school safety software system that Ave Maria Academy uses to enhance security on campus. It helps schools manage who enters the building, ensuring a safer environment for students and staff. When visitors arrive on campus, he/she will provide a photo ID, which is scanned or manually entered into the system. The system compares the visitor's information against a national sex offender database and also checks against any custom alerts configured by the school or district, such as those for PGC and background checks. If cleared, the school office issues a visitor badge with the visitor's name, photo, destination, and the date and time of their visit. Upon departure, each visitor must sign out in the school office. Visitors wishing to observe a particular classroom must coordinate the school in advance so that appropriate arrangements may be made with the teacher(s.)

[Virtus Online - Protecting God's Children](#)

Volunteerism

Different kinds of knowledge, skills, interest, and experience are required to provide a well-rounded education for your children. Volunteers can participate in many ways by reinforcing skills, monitoring small groups of students, assisting in the Media Center or technology lab, and helping with the many planned activities and committees of Home and School. We welcome and deeply appreciate parent involvement. A volunteer application form can be found on the parish website at www.avemariaspsjoa.org. Please note that all volunteers are required to take Protecting God's Children training, complete a background check, complete the volunteer application form, and sign the volunteer code of conduct prior to volunteering with children. Please refer to the Safe Environment section of this handbook for further details.

Volunteer Code of Conduct

Our children are the most important gifts God has entrusted to us. As a volunteer, I promise to strictly follow the rules and guidelines in this Volunteer's Code of Conduct as a condition of my providing services to the children and youth at Ave Maria Academy.

As a volunteer, I will:

- Safeguard children and youth entrusted to my care at all times.
- Faithfully represent and practice the teachings of the Catholic Church with integrity in word and action.
- Treat everyone with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.

- Avoid situations where I am alone with children and/or youth at Church activities, ensuring that two-deep ministry is a standard practice.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition, or comparison when working with children and/or youth.
- Refuse to accept expensive gifts from children and/or youth or their parents without prior written approval from the pastor or administrator.
- Refrain from giving expensive gifts to children and/or youth without prior written approval from the parents or guardian and the pastor or administrator.
- Report suspected abuse to the pastor, administrator, or appropriate supervisor. I understand that I have a moral obligation to report suspected abuse.
- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of children and/or youth.
- Obey all traffic laws when driving children and youth and adhere to the Diocese of Columbus Volunteer Driver Form and Cell Phone Policy.

As a volunteer, I will not:

- Use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol at any time while volunteering.
- Use, possess, or be under the influence of illegal drugs at any time.
- Pose any health risk to children and/or youth (i.e., no fevers or other contagious situations).
- Strike, spank, shake, or slap children and/or youth.
- Humiliate, ridicule, threaten, or degrade children and/or youth.
- Touch a child and/or youth in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- Use any discipline that frightens or humiliates children and/or youth.
- Use profanity in the presence of children and/or youth.
- Drive a vehicle not in compliance with regulations and/or inspections while driving children.

Use of Name/Branding

Attaching the school's name, logo, or other insignia to an event, activity, or publication implies a close connection with the school, usually sponsorship or endorsement. However, involvement by individual faculty, staff, students, or parents is not, by itself, sufficient basis to title an activity, program, or event as "school" sponsored. Rather the activity, program, or event must be one for which the school takes institutional responsibility. Faculty members, staff, students, parents, and parish members may use or authorize the use of the school name, logo, or insignia (alone or in conjunction with the name of a specified organization or activity) only with the written approval of the Pastor or Principal or designee. No individual, company, or organization may seek to use the school name, logo, or insignia for any commercial benefit without the written approval of the Pastor or Principal or designee. In appropriate cases determined by the pastor/principal, permission for ongoing events, activities, or publications requiring approval under this policy may be given.

Student Life and Extracurriculars

Parish Sports Programs

Organized sports are offered through the [Catholic Central Youth Organization](#).

Band

Students interested in band may begin participation in fifth grade.

Field Trips

Field trips within our city and to nearby points of interest are scheduled by various classroom teachers throughout 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.

Parents will be asked to sign permission slips indicating that they will permit the child to join the class in this educational tour. Children having no permission slip will NOT be allowed to accompany the class.

Parents will occasionally be asked to act as chaperones for small groups. Parent chaperones will be asked to have a clear BCI fingerprint check and must have attended Protecting God's Children training sessions.

Fees for these field trips will be covered by the Annual Fund, with the exception of grade eight.

Classroom and Birthday Celebrations

The Home and School Association and the room parents help plan and provide treats for classroom parties. These parties and treats are simple because our academic schedule does not allow time for elaborate parties and activities.

A birthday is an opportunity for a student to celebrate his/her special day. As a school community, we will celebrate in the following ways:

Each student is invited to have a Birthday Special Dress Day. (Students may choose to "dress up" or "dress down." Please follow the dress code for special dress days.) If the student's birthday is on the weekend, on a vacation day, or on the day of a Mass, he/she is allowed to have his/her special dress day on the school day closest to his/her date of birth. Students with birthdays occurring during summer break may celebrate on their "half birthday".

Students' birthdays will be recognized on our daily Morning Announcements.

Each student will receive a birthday treat provided by the school during his/her lunch period. The treat will be presented to the student and classmates will be invited to sing "Happy Birthday!"

Parents are welcome to celebrate their child's birthday at school through the following options:

- Parents could make a donation to a service organization in the name of the student. Examples include: The Dublin Food Pantry, Furniture Bank of Mid- Ohio, Catholic Social Services, Feed the Kids, etc. or possibly to the Ave Maria Tuition Assistance Fund.
- Students could provide a classroom gift, such as a classroom game, a playground ball, or something from the classroom wish list.
- Students are permitted to bring a non-food treat for their classmates on their birthday. Please make sure that this is a non-food item. Examples: pencils, fun erasers, stickers, small coloring booklets, bookmarks, small key chains, magnets, etc.

Please be advised that these are just suggestions and none of the above is necessary or required.

Students must seek permission from the teacher for distribution of invitations to home parties. **These may be distributed in school only if ALL students will receive an invitation.**

In the case of a party for only boys or only girls, ALL boys or ALL girls must receive an invitation in order for those to be distributed at school.

Facilities and Resources

Lockers Beginning 2032-2033 School Year

A lockers will be issued to each sixth-eighth grade student at the beginning of the school year. The homeroom teacher will keep a record of locker assignments and combinations. Students are expected to keep their lockers locked and clean, and not abuse them in any way.

The school cannot be responsible for valuables left in lockers. Sometimes there may be special circumstances which require a student to carry significant cash or valuables to school. Cash or valuables can be safe-guarded by registering them with the classroom teacher or leaving them in the main office.

Any pictures used on the inside of a locker must reflect the mission of Ave Maria Academy. Ave Maria Academy is co-tenant of all lockers. Therefore, the staff may search lockers at any time with good reason.

Textbooks

A book bag of some durable, protective material must be used for carrying books and other supplies to and from school. Parental assistance in this matter is requested as textbooks can be easily damaged by weather and misuse. Lost or damaged books will be replaced by students.

As we move into the era of electronic textbooks (ebooks,) parents and students are reminded that electronic textbooks and their electronic delivery devices are also the property of our school and should be treated with the same care and respect as traditional textbooks. Misuse of an electronic textbook will result in the loss of a student's access privileges.

Technology

Ave Maria Academy students will use screens on a very limited basis to support some assessments in reading.

Technology Acceptable Use ([Diocesan Policy 2600](#))

Catholic schools within the Diocese of Columbus have implemented voice, data, and video electronic communication systems that will allow unprecedented educational opportunities for students and staff to communicate, learn, and publish information. These network resources provide students and staff access to electronic resources and are to be used for educational purposes. Communication over the diocesan network is not to be considered private. Network supervision and maintenance may require review and inspection of network activity.

Cell Phone/Smart Watches/AirPod/EarBud Policy

Students may not have cell phones/personal technology (may include smart watches, air pods, ear buds, Kindles, etc.) during the school day. Students may not use cell phones/personal technology at any time during school hours (7:45am- 2:50pm). Exceptions to this policy will be made for overnight field trips at the discretion of the Principal.

Students are not permitted to have or to use any type of cellular phones, iPods, iPads, smart watches, etc., during the school day. Photography or videotaping of any kind during the

school day is prohibited unless given permission by a teacher or administrator. If a student is caught photographing, videotaping and/or recording a teacher, coach, advisor, other students, etc., this behavior may result in suspension or expulsion. Plug-in headphones are acceptable with teacher permission. Prohibited items include any smart device (e.g. Apple Watch, FitBit) in which you can access the internet, take photos, send/receive messages, etc. Students will be asked to remove smart watches/devices during the school day.

This policy includes any event or activity that is school sponsored including, but not limited to, ALSO programs, the musical, field trips, special programs, etc. If it is necessary for students to have access to a cell phone/personal technology after school hours, the phone must be kept in the student's locker and turned off during the school day.

Cell phones/personal technology will be confiscated from students who are caught using them or whose cell phone/personal technology "goes off" during/the school day. Confiscated cell phones/personal technology will be turned into an administrator. Parents may reclaim the cell phone/personal technology at a mutually convenient time for the parent and the administrator.

Records and Administrative Information

School Records

Access to Educational Data

Principals must provide parents of students under the age of 18 or eligible students (those 18 years of age or older) access to educational data, including the right to review, inspect, and/or obtain copies. The request for access should be made in writing. A person seeking copies of school records may be required to pay the cost of reproduction, not to exceed the school's actual cost. Full rights of access are given to either parent (natural or adoptive) unless there is evidence of a court order, state statute, or legally binding document relating to such matters as divorce, separation, or custody, which specifically revokes these rights. Specifically, a student's "non-residential" (formerly "non-custodial") divorced parent is entitled access to all the student's school records, the same as the residential parent, subject to any agreement between them or court order limiting access by the non-residential parent to information pertaining to the student, the school should abide by the most recent order.

[\(Policy 2800\)](#)

Withholding of Student Records

A school may choose not to release the cumulative records of students whose financial obligations to the school have not been met. However, grade placement/credits earned, standardized test scores, and health information must be released to the receiving school. Unless an arrangement which is acceptable to both schools can be reached, a Catholic school should not accept a student whose financial obligations to another Catholic school have not been met. [\(Diocesan policy 2800\)](#)

Personal Identifiable Release of Information

Information regarding minors not considered personally identifiable information will be released in various formats, including websites, unless a parent/guardian notifies the parish/school that such information is not to be released regarding his/her child. Information not considered personally identifiable includes names of minors, grade level, activities, sports, awards, and date of graduation. Personally identifiable information for a minor may only be published or shared with the written consent of a parent/guardian. Record of consent must be retained on file for seven (7) years or until the consent is revoked by the parent or guardian. Personally identifiable information includes photographs, digital images, or recordings with and without names, addresses, email addresses, phone numbers, social

media accounts, and personal characteristics (height, weight, etc.). See form in Appendix. (Diocesan Policy SE 400.14)

Change of Address/Telephone/Email

It is very important that every student maintain an up-to-date address and telephone number record at the school office. Please notify the school immediately if you have a change of address, email address, home telephone number, or cell phone number during the school year.

Class Observation

Parents of Ave Maria Academy students are invited to observe the school program. However, parents need to call and schedule an appointment in order to avoid disruption of class. We also encourage prospective new students and parents to attend our school tours given throughout the school year by our tour committee.

Class Sizes

According to Diocesan Policy, Kindergarten classes will be no larger than 25 students and classes in grades one through eight will be no larger than 35 students, without pastor and superintendent approval.

Amendment Statement

Statements in this handbook are subject to amendment with or without notice. The school principal will attempt to keep the school families informed of all changes as soon as practical. Some changes might have to be made immediately due to unforeseen circumstances.

Acknowledgment Statement

I have read and agree to abide by the policies contained in the Ave Maria Academy Parent/Student Handbook. I acknowledge that the information contained herein is subject to modification, change, interpretation, and elimination at any time by the School in its sole discretion, without notice. The specific diocesan policies identified in this Handbook are summaries only. For complete copies of the policies referenced, refer to the Office of Catholic Schools Administrator's Manual. In the event of any conflict between the summary and the complete policy, it is the Administrator's Manual that governs. This agreement form must be signed by the parents/guardians and students in all grades and returned to the School Office no later than September 1.

Parent Signature

Student Signature

Student Grade

Date

Diocese of Columbus Catholic Youth Organization (CYO)
197 E. Gay Street Columbus, Ohio 43215

Parent's Consent for Release of Personally Identifiable Information
REVISED 8.2025

The undersigned parents of , a member of _____ hereby consent to the release of the Ave Maria Academy following personally identifiable information.

- Photos without names of the athletes will be released.
- Photos will be used to help promote the activities and acknowledge the achievements of the participants in the CYO.

Information will primarily be released through the Catholic Times and on the CYO website at www.cdeducation.org.

The undersigned consent to the transfer of the above information to a third or subsequent party.

Parent/Guardian Name:		
Parent/Guardian Signature:		Date:

A copy of the release is requested:

Please check one.

Yes ___ No___

RELEASE OF PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION
FOR RELEASE OF PHOTOGRAPHS, DIGITAL IMAGES, AND RECORDINGS

No photographs, digital images, or recordings of minors participating in youth events may be published or shared publicly written and signed with the consent of a parent or guardian. There is a release for this personal identifiable information within the parental permission and consent form (400.33), but if a form is not on file for the minor, then written consent must be obtained from the parents or guardians using the following form (also accessible for print in Section 6 of the Parish Resource Manual for Youth Ministry):

PARENT(S)/Guardian(s) CONSENT FOR RELEASE OF PHOTOGRAPHS, DIGITAL IMAGES, AND RECORDINGS

The undersigned hereby consents to the release of photographs, digital images or recordings, and name of the Participant to be used by the Diocese of Columbus and St. Peter St. Joan of Arc Ave Maria Academy for future promotional programs of the Diocese of Columbus and the St. Peter St. Joan of Arc/Ave Maria Academy. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Dottie Flanagan at 614-761-0903.

Parent/Guardian Name:		
Parent/Guardian Signature:		Date:

FOR ALL OTHER PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION

No personally identifiable information of minors participating in youth events may be published or shared without written and signed consent of a parent or guardian. To obtain consent for any personally identifiable information beyond name, photograph, digital images, or recordings, the following form must be used:

PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S) CONSENT FOR RELEASE OF PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION

The undersigned parent(s)/guardian(s) of , a minor at _____ hereby consent to the release of the Ave Maria Academy following personally identifiable information:

Specific information to be released:

Reason for release:

Information to be released via:

The undersigned consent to the transfer of the above information to a third or subsequent party.

Parent/Guardian Name:		
Parent/Guardian Signature:		Date: