

***MOUNT ST. MARY ACADEMY
STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK
2026-2027***



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MOUNT ST. MARY ACADEMY

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CHAPTER 1

BELIEF STATEMENT AND VALUES

Mission Statement

Mount St. Mary Academy, founded by the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur, is a Catholic, private, college preparatory school for young women. Within a nurturing and academically challenging and inclusive environment, the Academy strives to develop the whole person's gifts and potential. Guided by our Catholic tradition, and rooted in Gospel values, we empower scholars to be leaders dedicated to lifelong learning, moral integrity, social justice, and service to and inclusion of others.

Belief Statements

- *Catholic Identity:* We value education rooted in the tradition of the Catholic Church, with a special devotion to Mary. We are committed to the spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional, and physical wellness of the young women we serve.
- *Scholarship:* We are committed to intellectual growth and curiosity by challenging students to strive to achieve their full potential and to approach learning as a lifelong pursuit.
- *Personal Development:* We are dedicated to the development of the whole person in a safe, nurturing environment characterized by a strong sense of community and centered in Gospel values.
- *Inclusivity:* We strive to instill in our students a knowledge of and respect for all cultural and faith traditions, and the ability to use this knowledge to improve their community. We foster understanding, appreciation, and acceptance of all members of our diverse global community, as Jesus Christ does.
- *Integrity:* We challenge our students to embrace a sense of discipleship, respect, empathy, moral responsibility, and stewardship, thus providing the community with leaders dedicated to social justice and service.

Profile of a Mount St. Mary Graduate

Nurturing our students emotionally, academically, and spiritually. During her four years at Mount St. Mary Academy, a student will:

- Explore and embrace her unique identity and voice: self-reflection, self-direction, self-motivation
- Display intellectual curiosity and desire to challenge herself academically
- Being resilient and adaptive in the face of challenges
- Actively practice her faith and values
- Demonstrate a commitment to social justice and others
- Welcome collaboration with others by applying creativity and utilizing innovation
- Communicate effectively through speaking, writing, reasoning and listening
- Gather research, evaluate, and organize reliable information
- Exhibit technical competence, responsible digital citizenship, and media literacy.
- Lead with confidence, integrity, inclusiveness, and respect
- Root herself ethically, embrace diversity, and practice acceptance in the larger community

MSM Statement on Belonging, Equity, and Inclusivity

As part of our school's mission to "educate young women who are dedicated to lifelong learning, moral integrity and service to and acceptance of others," Mount St. Mary Academy is committed to ensuring an environment safe for learning, curiosity, and relationship-building. In that spirit, we are dedicated to affirming every student's identity and teaching them to embrace differences that include, but are not limited to, race, ethnicity, class, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, learning ability, physical ability, and family income. When a student enters our school, they become a part of a community of educators and learners who value, respect, and treat each other with dignity.

The school commits to ongoing training for our Board members, administrators, faculty, and staff members through purposeful professional development workshops and seminars so that every employee sets high expectations and a meaningful pathway to achievement. We engage our students in an inclusive school culture with anti-bias, antiracist curriculum, and programs so they learn to identify and dismantle prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination in their lives, their school community, and their society. Students will develop 21st-century problem-solving skills, such as racial literacy and communication across differences so that they leave our school with the confidence to work towards a more just and equitable society.

An identity safe learning environment is not one free from challenge. We recognize confronting racism, and discrimination can be an uncomfortable, but necessary, part of a well-rounded education. We encourage our students to approach this aspect of their education with courage, curiosity, and an open mind. Confronting discomfort in a supportive environment will lead to promoting equity amongst our entire school community. The school is approaching this work from a place of love, respect, and grace, and we are dedicated to encouraging the same in our students.

The Belonging, Equity, and Inclusion Lead help guide the important work of promoting multiculturalism and equity throughout the school community, particularly among the students. Student leadership opportunities and programming are supported through mentorship with the Black Student Union, Students Against Social Injustice (SASI), and Prism, as well as facilitating the selection of students for local student diversity leadership conferences, including the inter-school EdCo DEI Student Leadership program. The BEI Lead works with School Life to develop programming pertaining to issues of equity and inclusion for all students.

History

Mount St. Mary Academy was established by the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur in 1927 when the Town of Tonawanda was a series of farms, orchards, and some newly established homes in the Village of Kenmore. Its inception was the idea of Mother Veronica, the Provincial Superior of the sisters at that time. Since the sisters were already teaching at Annunciation School and St. Paul's School, they wanted to make a Catholic high school education available to the young women of this area. For over 95 years, Mount St. Mary Academy has been following the nurturing and academically challenging goals set by the Sisters of St. Mary. In 1992, school governance was turned over to a Board of Trustees by the sisters, so the future could be assured. The Board is responsible for the long-term goals of the school. The principal cares for day-to-day academic needs of your daughters. We see ourselves as partners in the education of your daughter, and we hope that this partnership will help your daughter grow into an intellectually, physically, morally, and spiritually skilled young woman.

Vision Statement

We are a dynamic school of excellence, set in a nurturing environment that enriches the minds, hearts, bodies, and souls of young women, who emerge as leaders in our changing world.

CHAPTER 2 PARENT INFORMATION

Transportation

All school districts (except Buffalo) require families to apply for transportation by April 1. An application for bus transportation will be sent to your family. For students in the Ken-Ton district entering grades 10-12, a yearly application is not necessary. All districts do not provide transportation for their students. For NFTA Metro busing, for a fare, a student may ride home with a friend. For other districts, permission to ride an alternate bus is generally not permitted by the public school district even if it is within the same district. You should contact the school district's transportation department for clarification.

Calendars and Special Schedules

On Blackbaud, a calendar of events, daily announcements, and news items are available. If there is a change in the daily schedule because of an assembly or a school liturgy, that schedule will be posted on the students' Google Classroom grade level page. The school calendar is located on the [MSM Academy School Website](#). If your daughter belongs to a sports team, there are individual tabs for each sport on the [MSM Thunder Athletics Website](#). This site contains games, directions to the various fields and competition venues, as well as team news. You can also sign up to receive texts and email alerts about game cancellations on the website.

School Counseling

Our counselors are available before, during, and after school to serve the needs of your daughter. Academic, personal, and social concerns may be discussed with their counselor. We encourage our students to make an appointment should they need some additional assistance in any of those areas.

Lunch

Lunch is provided at no cost daily for your daughter. Mobile delivery of food or drinks is never permitted under any circumstances.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

You may email or call a teacher to set up a conference. E-mail addresses can be found on the MSM website, under about, and [faculty & staff](#). Teachers should respond to voicemails within 24 hrs.

Cell Phones

Cell phone use is not permitted at any time during the school day. If you contact your daughter during these times, it puts them at risk for a disciplinary infraction, since it is a great temptation to answer a call from a parent. If you need to get a message to your daughter, please call the school's Main Office at 877-

1358 ext. 101, and we'll make sure they get the message. If the call requires a response, we will let your daughter use an office phone or an administrator's office to contact you. A parent can also send an email to their daughter's MSM email account.

Revisions for Handbook

This handbook may be revised or added to as necessary during the school year. Any written statements distributed to students and parents as supplements to this handbook automatically become part of school policy as stated in the handbook. The principal is the final recourse in all policy matters and disciplinary situations and may waive or amend these policies for just cause at her discretion.

School Liturgies

Parents are welcome at all liturgies and prayer services. Check the school calendar for dates and times. Liturgy is always celebrated on each feast day of the Blessed Mother.

Tutoring

Students and parents can contact the teacher to set up after school tutoring. Upon teacher and counselor's recommendation, students may receive tutoring in the ALC from a teacher or a peer tutor, offered by National Honor Society members.

Uniforms

If students forget a part of their uniform, the Main Office will offer (if available) items to wear and borrow. If this is done before school begins, there is no disciplinary consequence. Students out of uniform during the school day may receive a loss of dress down privileges and/or other disciplinary consequences. Any borrowed items must be washed and returned to the Main Office in a timely manner so we can continue assisting students with dress code.

Visitors

No visitors or guests are permitted for students in the building during or after school hours without administrator permission.

Volunteer Opportunities:

Campus Ministry and Student Life (through homeroom) oversees our community service program. Religion teachers have resources and contacts to help find a service opportunity that matches personal interests. Our service program is detailed at length in Chapter 10.

CHAPTER 3 ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

Academic Centers

Mount St. Mary Academy has many academic centers: Humanities, Innovation, Languages, Life Discovery and STEAM. Centers provide collaborative spaces for teachers and students to explore and deepen learning experiences. A student can go to a Center to receive extra help, enrichment, and work closely with fellow students. This is done with teacher's permission.

The Academic Learning Center (ALC) is part of the continued commitment to academic excellence. The purpose of the ALC is to aid in helping students achieve high academic success by developing their literacy

and test-taking skills in all content areas. Services include a focused environment for structured study halls and support in areas of test-taking, organization, and study skill strategies. Any student who has an IEP or 504 plan and has special testing accommodation will receive those in the ALC for all tests, quizzes, and exams. Students with IEP or 504 plans are required to have scheduled study halls each week in the ALC to best address their specific needs.

Academic Integrity

To maintain an atmosphere of respect for one another's work, and considering our Christian values and personal integrity, Mount St. Mary Academy maintains a strict policy regarding honesty in academic work and in all areas of school life. Dishonesty and cheating in any way are strictly forbidden.

Cheating is defined as "A dishonest violation of rules, giving or receiving unauthorized information in academic, extracurricular, or other schoolwork, so as to give or gain an unfair advantage" (The American Heritage Dictionary).

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Students who cheat (willfully giving or receiving information) on homework, assignment, project, test, or school exam
- Copying or allowing others to copy information from someone else's work
- Unauthorized use of study aids, cheat sheets, notes, books, formulas or information in calculators/computers or cell phones
- Unauthorized prior knowledge of an examination or assessment
- *Plagiarism* is defined as "To steal and pass off the ideas or works of another as one's own without crediting the source" (The American Heritage Dictionary). This includes, but is not limited to:
Using computer research, in any form, without proper citation
- Presenting as one's own, the works or the opinions of someone else without proper acknowledgment
- AI-based assistance programs are powerful and valuable tools, and we believe there is a place for them in helping generate and refine ideas. Students should use these tools in a manner that respects our school's academic and ethical principles. As such, use of AI in classes is at the discretion of the classroom teacher.
- Failing to follow teacher guidelines for classroom collaborative learning

Fraud is defined as, "A deception deliberately practiced in order to secure unfair or unlawful gain" (The American Heritage Dictionary).

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Attempting to pass off someone else's work, imagery, or technology as your own; purchasing or selling an assignment from another person or resource
- Forgery of signatures

Any student caught in instances of cheating, fraud, or plagiarism will receive a zero for that assignment. The assignment must be corrected and resubmitted. The teacher will contact parents. Additionally, this will be reported to school administration and the student's school counselor and will result in disciplinary

action. Serious and/or multiple violations of this may result in academic probation, ineligibility, failure of the course, or dismissal from Mount St. Mary Academy.

AI Policy:

AI-based assistance programs are powerful and valuable tools, and there is a place for them in helping generate and refine ideas. Students should use these tools in a manner that respects our school's academic and ethical principles **to not submit AI generated work as their own**. As such, use of AI in classes is at the discretion of the classroom teacher.

Academic Placement

The Principal, Assistant Principal, school counselors, and faculty are responsible for the placement of Mount St. Mary Academy students in course levels (Advanced Placement, college, honors and accelerated). An incoming ninth grader's placement is based on a careful study of academic potential as demonstrated by scores on the placement examination and grade school transcript. A transfer student's placement is based on careful study of academic potential as demonstrated by information from transcripts, standardized tests, and recommendations.

Academic Program

Mount St. Mary Academy offers a four-year course of study, accredited by New York State. For over forty years, the Academy has been accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. Students will be placed in a course of study with a sequence in math, science, world language, social studies, English, and/or arts. Students may be eligible for honors, Advanced Placement, and local college (Buffalo State University, Canisius College, Hilbert College and Niagara University) courses. Students enrolled in an AP course of study are required to take the Advanced Placement examination in May.

Assignment and Test/Quiz Policy

Please refer to the Course Expectations distributed by teachers for their assignments, late work and missing work policies.

Backpacks

Students may carry small backpacks, messenger bags, purses, or totes during the school day. Our schedule is designed with time between classes to allow access to lockers for class materials.

Blackbaud

Blackbaud is our web-based academic information center. Housed in the cloud and accessed through Mount St. Mary's website, [Blackbaud](#) allows parents and students to have up-to-date information on school news, activities and calendars. Registered users (students and their parents) can view individual progress reports, assignments and class attendance. Each student and parent receives a unique username and password, keeping student information private and secure.

Cafeteria Services

Students are expected to bring lunch from home or utilize the free breakfast and lunch provided by MSM.

The cafeteria provides a location where students can eat lunch and socialize with their friends. Students are expected to be respectful of the cafeteria staff, lunch proctors, and always portray courtesy and good manners. Cleanliness is the responsibility of all who use it. Students must leave the area where they have eaten clean and neat. Tables must be cleared after each lunch period. Students are not limited to capacities to tables but please make sure tables are not overcrowded. All should be seated on a chair - not on the floor. There is no sitting on tables, feet on tables, etc. Tables cannot be moved to create larger tables.

Students should be in full uniform in the cafeteria. At no time are students allowed to "order in" food or drink deliveries. No student is allowed to take orders and bring them into school for others. Students are required to spend the duration of their lunch period in the cafeteria unless prior arrangements have been made and they have a written pass from a teacher that is provided to the lunch proctor. Students, other than seniors, may not eat their lunches in any area of the school other than the cafeteria. Seniors are permitted to eat lunch in the lounge or outside during good weather.

Bell Schedule

Period	Start Time	End Time	Notes
Homeroom	7:45	7:55	Attendance, Prayer, Announcements
1st period	7:58	8:38	
2nd period	8:41	9:21	
3rd period	9:24	10:04	
Break	10:07	10:22	Open Campus
4th period	10:25	11:05	
5th period	11:08	11:48	
Lunch 1	11:08	11:38	
6th period	11:41	12:21	
Lunch 2	11:51	12:21	
7th period	12:24	1:04	
8th period	1:07	1:47	
9th period	1:50	2:30	
			*40-minute instruction periods

Frequently, MSM runs special bell schedules for assemblies, liturgies and school activities. Adjusted schedules will be posted to each grade level Google Classroom and Blackbaud. It is the students' responsibility to be aware of time changes.

Code of Conduct

Mount St. Mary Academy continues the educational and spiritual vision of the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur, our school's founders. Within a nurturing and academically challenging environment, the Academy strives to develop the whole person to help our students become dedicated to lifelong learning, moral integrity, and service to and acceptance of others. Mirroring the teachings of Jesus, Integrity,

Service, Tradition, Nurture, Respect, Scholarship, and Acceptance are the underlying values of the Academy and our Code of Conduct. All members of our community are expected to always be courteous and respectful and to develop self-discipline and assume responsibility for their actions. These standards apply whether they are on school property, on school buses, at school-related events or activities, or in other circumstances that could have an impact on the school climate. Who we are and what we do reflects Mount St. Mary Academy. All members of the Mount St. Mary Academy community are expected to always follow this code.

Members of the Mount St. Mary Academy community must represent our school by:

- Demonstrating honesty and integrity
- Respecting differences in people, their identity, their ideas, and their opinions
- Always treating one another with dignity and respect, and especially when there is disagreement
- Respecting rights of others and treating everyone fairly
- Taking appropriate measures to help those in need
- Seeking assistance from a member of the school faculty or staff, if necessary, to resolve conflict peacefully
- Showing respect toward all members of the school community, including all students, administration, faculty, and staff
- Respecting the need of others to work in an environment that is conducive to learning and teaching
- Respecting and complying with all applicable federal, state, and municipal laws
- Creating an environment that is free from discrimination and harassment
- Acting in accordance with the teachings of Jesus and the Gospel values Students who violate our Code of Conduct may be subject to discipline consequences.
- The Code of Conduct extends outside the walls of MSM, and into the world of social media as well.
- Before you do anything with Social Media **THINK** of this: *T – True? H – Helpful? I – Inspiring? N – Necessary? K – Kind?*

Prohibited statements and materials include, but are not limited, to:

- Defamatory content
- Racially offensive
- Discrimination
- Pornography
- Personal attacks
- Illegal activity
- Material that contains vulgar, obscene, and/or indecent language or images
- Proprietary and confidential information
- Insulting or disparaging remarks about members of the MSM Community even if specific names are not mentioned

Custody and Communication

Mount St. Mary Academy abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order, to the contrary, the school will provide the non-

custodial parent with access to academic records and other school information regarding his/her child. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the custodial parent's responsibility to provide the school with a court-certified copy of the order. If a student moves from the home of her parent(s), custodial parent or legal guardian(s), the school administration should be notified immediately.

Driving and Parking Policies

There is limited parking for students at Mount St. Mary Academy. Seniors will receive parking privileges before any other students, provided they register with Student Life for a parking permit once they fill out information and have a New York State driver's license. Then they may drive to school and park in the designated parking spaces. Students have a reserved section of two rows in the rear of the faculty/student lot, and they may also park along the western side of the faculty/student parking lot along the fence as well as along the gym wall. A parking permit must always be visible in the rearview mirror. The center two rows of the faculty/student parking lot are reserved for faculty, staff, and guests of Mount St. Mary Academy. No students may park in the center section, the faculty lot, or next door at the senior residence lot. Students who park illegally will receive disciplinary consequences, including the possibility of losing their on-site parking privileges. If all student parking spaces are full, students must park on Waverly or Ferndale Avenues.

Elevator Policy

The elevator is only for the use of students who have taken proper procedures with the Main Office to obtain a valid elevator key and pass. Students will work with the Nurse to provide a medical note and a time frame of dates permitted for the key. Additional procedures will be shared with the students in the Main Office and School Life office.

Emergency Drills

Fire drills are required by law at regular intervals as important safety precautions. It is important that students familiarize themselves with the fire evacuation plan posted in each room. All students and faculty are always to respond seriously to the fire alarm, including after school. Evacuation of the building should be immediate, quiet, and orderly. No running, talking or phone usage is permitted. No one should return to the building until the signal is given by the Principal, Assistant Principal, or recognized representatives. Mount St. Mary Academy has in place contingency plans for a variety of emergencies, should they arise. Drills to practice these procedures may occur sporadically throughout the school year.

Field Trips

MSM Field trips are privileges afforded to students. Students may be denied field trip participation if they fail to meet academic, attendance, or behavioral standards, as well as scheduled tests, poor academic performance, or disciplinary reasons. Students attending school field trips must have the MSM field trip form signed by their parent/guardian and turned into the Main Office by the date indicated on the form. Handwritten notes and phoned-in verbal permission are not acceptable. If a field trip is not turned in, students will not be allowed to participate in the field trip and must remain in school and complete assigned work. Non-MSM field trips are considered unexcused absences from school.

Health Services

Please notify the Health Office in writing of any health concerns. Counselors will be notified of health problems that may affect schoolwork when written consent from the parent is on file giving permission to do so. If modifications must be made in the student's program, Mount St. Mary Academy must be adequately informed about injuries or a chronic illness. Additionally, the Health Office must be informed of any medications a student is taking on a regular basis. The Health Office is staffed by a registered professional nurse employed by the Kenmore-Tonawanda Union Free School District. Services provided include screening for height, weight, vision, scoliosis, and hearing tests. Referrals to a student's private physician will be made for any deviation from the norm in any of the above. The nurse is also responsible for preparing and maintaining confidential health records on all students in attendance at Mount St. Mary Academy.

If a student feels ill during the day, they should follow these procedures:

- Obtain a pass from their classroom teacher
- Report to the Nurse's Office directly
- If a student is very ill, they must go home, the nurse will contact the parents and/or emergency contact person from the student's registration form to plan for the student's release
- If the nurse is present, the student may report to the Health Office for one period. If the nurse is not present, the student may sit in an area designated by the Main Office for one period. At the end of the period, determination is made as to whether the student can go back to class. If they are not feeling well enough, the secretary will contact their parent/guardian to plan for the student to be picked up immediately

Medications may be given in school if it is a physician's standing order that is necessary. Medication must be sent in the original bottle, properly labeled (name of medication, student's name, time and dosage to be given). Written physician's permission to administer medication in school is a must. This applies to pain relievers such as Tylenol, Motrin, or any other over-the-counter preparation.

Library Media Center Services

The Library Media Center fosters an environment conducive to learning and promotes student achievement. The Library Media Center helps students and staff become effective users of information. Teachers may reserve the library for instruction and class visits. No food is allowed in the library.

Students who enter the library must adhere to the library rules, which are:

- Have a purpose - Students must have a purpose to come to the library such as research, computer work, projects, or quiet reading.
- Be respectful - Students will be respectful of their classmates' right to work in an environment that promotes learning without disruption.

When Circulation is available: MSM permits books to circulate for three weeks. A fine of \$.10 per day is charged for overdue materials. Students are responsible for the current market replacement cost of any materials they lose or damage. E-readers circulate for two weeks and may not be renewed. A fine of \$1.00 per day is charged for overdue Nooks. Students are responsible for the current market value of the Nook and its cover if it is lost or damaged. Our Library Media Center is equipped with an Online Public Access

Catalog. Additionally, the library has a variety of online subscription databases and internet access for research purposes. Printers are available for use.

The MSM Library will open for quiet study daily after school from 3:00 - 4:30 pm with supervision by an MSM employee. Students will be asked to sign in and out with use and respect the guidelines for quiet use.

Lockers and Locks

Each student will be assigned a locker. Band students and student athletes may be assigned a second locker upon availability. The specific combination lock on the individual locker assigned at the beginning of the year must be used. Only these specific school locks may be used. If a student loses the MSM lock, a new one must be purchased in the Main Office. To ensure all student belongings are secure, lockers must be always locked. Mount St. Mary Academy is not responsible for lost or stolen property. The school is co-tenant of lockers and retains the right to inspect any locker at any time without notice. Students may visit lockers at the change of class.

Restrooms

Students are not permitted to use employee restrooms before, during, or after the school day. Please report to the Nurse if feeling ill to obtain medical treatment.

School Closing

When Mount St. Mary Academy needs to be closed for any reason, every attempt will be made to post the announcement on major television stations. A broadcast message via text and email will be sent to all families who supply the Main Office contact information.

Mount St. Mary Academy is in the Kenmore-Tonawanda UFSD. Therefore, if Ken-Ton closes due to inclement weather, MSM will automatically close. If Ken-Ton delays the start of the school day in their district, MSM will make its own assessment, and if it is deemed necessary to delay the start of our school day, we will make that announcement through our stated channels separately. If no announcement of a delay is made, parents should assume school is open as usual. We will make every effort to announce our closing in a timely manner.

Shadow Privileges

Shadow ambassadors/hosts must be in good academic standing and have met with the MSM Director of Admissions to review guest protocol. All shadow hosts must remain good stewards of our mission of integrity and acceptance of others.

Summer Reading Requirement

Reading is fundamental to education. At Mount St. Mary Academy, the educational process does not end with the school year in June. It is with this perspective that departments have adopted a policy of assigning books to be read by all students over the summer. Books are selected based on their literary merit. The summer reading list is evaluated and revised annually by the English department.

When school resumes in September, students are assessed on the required summer reading, and teachers lead students in discussion and analysis of the books. Reading lists are provided for students. All new students will receive their lists in the mail along with other pertinent information. The books may be acquired at any library or bookstore.

Textbooks

Textbooks used by students are on loan by their public-school districts. Students to whom they are issued are responsible for these loaned books.

- In June, all textbooks must be returned in the same condition in which they were received. Books not returned will be paid for by the student.
- Students who return a damaged textbook or who have lost a textbook will be charged a fee of \$125.00 per book.

Transportation

Mount St. Mary Academy is serviced by buses from many public-school districts as well as the NFTA Metro Bus. Information regarding transportation is given at the time of registration. Any additional information may be received by contacting your local public school district or the Main Office of Mount St. Mary Academy. Riding to school on a bus is a privilege, and proper behavior is necessary. Students are expected to cooperate fully with the drivers regarding rules, routes, safety drills, and procedures.

Wheelchair Policy

When medically necessary, a wheelchair will be provided for a student's use. A note, signed by a physician, is required for wheelchair use beyond one day. This note must state the reason for the wheelchair and the projected length of time for its use. If a student requires a wheelchair for more than one week, a wheelchair must be provided by the family for use in the school.

Working Papers

In most cases, working papers are obtained from the student's home school district. Application forms are available in the Counseling Office. Contact your local school district for the correct procedure. MSM will supply the "Physical Fitness Certification" through our Health Office. A current physical (within twelve months) must be on file in the Health Office.

CHAPTER 4 TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Mount St. Mary Academy 1:1 Device Program

The goals of the 1:1 program are:

- To facilitate mobile learning and provide tools for the 21st Century learner.
- To capitalize on the convergence of academic resources in conjunction with advancements in technology.
- To promote responsibility for one's own learning through increased access to technology resources.

Student use of any school one to one device falls under the guidelines of the Acceptable Use Policy for Technology. Students are expected to use their device respectfully, maturely, and professionally. Access to the internet is monitored through our school's content filtering software. All expectations and rules are applied to the use of these devices. Mount St. Mary Academy is not responsible for activity on other

networks. The 1:1 device, all applications, as well as all activities and documents stored on these devices are the property of Mount St. Mary Academy and subject to regular review and monitoring.

The 1:1 device remains the property of Mount St. Mary Academy for four years until the student graduates, at which time the device must be returned. If the student exits Mount St. Mary Academy for any reason prior to graduation, the device must be returned. If the device is not returned, full replacement costs must be paid to Mount St. Mary Academy. Students are expected to bring their device to school each day, charged and ready for use in each class.

Mount St. Mary Academy will make available a variety of technological resources to support learning and enhance instruction. Our goal is to provide access to diverse, educationally sound technology tools to facilitate resource sharing, innovation, and communication. The users (defined as any student, teacher, administrator, staff member, or community member utilizing a school computer) of these tools take on certain responsibilities, including use of technology in an ethical manner. Mount St. Mary Academy encourages use of available computers and technology; however, these privileges come with responsibility. Violations of the following guidelines will result in a loss of access as well as other disciplinary or legal action as deemed necessary by the school administration.

Guardians agree to their students' use of all Google, Microsoft, and 3rd party apps. Data and usage terms and conditions can be provided by the vendor or upon request. Guardians agree to receive electronic communication from Mount St. Mary Academy. A Student Technology Device Agreement (see copy at the end of this section) must be signed by both students and parent/guardian prior to student receipt of the device. The full AUP (Acceptable Use Policy) is as follows:

Borrower's Responsibilities

- I understand that Mount St. Mary Academy retains sole right of possession and ownership of the technology device and related equipment.
- I will follow guidelines established in the Acceptable Use Policy for Technology and I have signed the Acceptable Use Policy for Technology. I understand personal content placed on the 1:1 device by the user may be deleted at the discretion of the administration and/or technology staff.
- I will follow the guidelines for proper care of the device.
- I will not write on the 1:1 device, and I will not place a label or sticker over the serial number.
- I will use the protective case distributed to me by MSM. If the student decides to purchase their own, it is the student's responsibility to use a durable and suitable protective case for the device. This case should adequately cover the corners of the device and provide a durable cover to protect the screen.
- I will report any problems/issues I encounter while using the device to the technology department immediately.
- I understand the technology staff may set the device back to factory settings if it becomes unusable or unstable or at the end of the year.
- I understand that setting the device to factory settings may be a course of action for any repairs or modifications and this may result in the loss of data from the device.
- I understand the device may be requested to be returned periodically for inventory and/or firmware/application updates.
- I understand that there will be some updates that I will be responsible for, when advised doing so by the device manufacturer, and I will complete them as necessary and suggested.

- I understand that I should be using cloud-based storage locations for important data, not the physical device itself.
- I understand that school-related content takes precedence over personal content, (e.g., If the device's memory becomes limited due to personal content, the personal content must be deleted to allow for school-related content.)
- I will not exchange or loan the device with another student.
- I understand that teachers will have technological policies regarding use in the classroom. I will comply with those policies.
- I AI-based assistance programs are powerful and valuable tools, and we believe there is a place for them in helping generate and refine ideas. Students should use these tools in a manner that respects our school's academic and ethical principles. As such, use of AI in classes is at the discretion of the classroom teacher.

Customization of the 1:1 device

The student is permitted to alter or add files to customize the assigned device to her own working style. The MSM Technology staff will assist in all school applications required. Students are permitted to delete these applications once the classroom unit is completed. Students may not install their own applications and content from personal accounts. Non-school work will need to be done in the browser as students are not permitted to download apps. Due to space limitations, school-provided apps take priority, and personal content will be deleted if available space becomes an issue.

Damage or Loss of Equipment

- It is the expectation that each student will use a protective case for their device. If a student chooses to purchase their own case, it must cover all 4 corners of the device.
- In the event of damage, loss, or theft of a student's device, I will inform the technology staff immediately upon discovery of the damage or loss.
- If a device is damaged by neglect or abuse, it is the student's financial responsibility to replace and/or repair the device. Failure to use the provided protective case, throwing the device, using it inappropriately or neglectfully are considered examples.
- Disciplinary action may occur if abuse or neglect is determined as the cause of the problem.
- If a device is determined lost it should be reported immediately. It may be the financial responsibility of the parent/student to pay for the full cost of the device. A loaner will be given to the student to ensure that she is able to complete academic work.
- If a device is unusable due to a manufacturer's defect, the defective device will be either repaired or replaced at the discretion of the Technology staff. A loaner will be issued while repair/replacement is underway.

Expectations:

Respect the privacy of others

- Users will keep their passwords confidential.
- Users will not learn passwords from other users or network administrators.
- Users will not attempt to gain unauthorized access to networked or standalone systems.
- Users will not modify or read files of other individuals; however, it should be noted that network

and cloud storage areas, files and communications are owned by the Academy and may be reviewed by school administrators, or their designee, to maintain system integrity and ensure users are utilizing the system responsibly.

- Users should not expect files stored on school servers will always be private.

Respect the materials and resources of Mount St. Mary Academy

- Users will properly utilize computer time and not waste limited resources and supplies provided by Mount St. Mary Academy.
- Users will respect the legal protection provided by copyright laws and by software licenses held by Mount St. Mary Academy and will not make or distribute copies of site-licensed software.
- Users will always have a case on their school device. Failure to use a case will result in disciplinary action.

Respect the materials and resources of the internet and MSM email account

- Users will not use these resources to engage in bullying behavior—harass, ridicule, humiliate, hurt, or intimidate another person.
- Users will not send or receive offensive material over the internet or email.
- Users will not use obscene, offensive, harassing, insulting, or otherwise abusive language over the internet or in email.
- Users will not violate copyright laws.
- Users will not trespass in another user's folders, work, or files.
- Users will not employ the network or email for commercial purposes except when explicit permission is given and then only for school-run businesses and purposes.
- Users will not attempt to represent themselves as another person while emailing.

Guidelines for the Internet, Protected Network, and MSM Email

Mount St. Mary Academy will make access to the internet and a school email account available to its students, faculty, administration, and staff. Mount St. Mary Academy is the owner of the school network, and all accounts including email. At our discretion, we may monitor and review all content at any given time. Use of Mount St. Mary's internet, protected network, and email account and information contained in it is a privilege. While every reasonable effort will be made by Mount St. Mary personnel to monitor proper technology usage, students, parents, faculty, administration, and staff also must accept the responsibility of ethical usage of Mount St. Mary's facilities and internet account. We encourage students to use the internet, however, with this privilege comes responsibility. Violations will result in a loss of access as well as other disciplinary or legal action, as deemed necessary by school administration.

Network Etiquette

Users are expected to abide by generally accepted rules of network etiquette. These include but are not limited to the following:

- Be polite and use appropriate language.
- Illegal activities are strictly forbidden.
- Do not reveal your address or phone number of students or colleagues.

- All communications and information accessible via the network should be assumed to be property of Mount St. Mary Academy and held in confidence.

Personal Health and Safety

- Avoid extended use of the device while resting directly on your lap. The bottom of the device can generate significant heat.
- Take frequent breaks when using electronic devices for long periods of time. Look away from them approximately every fifteen minutes.
- Do not provide your personal information to anyone over the internet.
- Do not share your passwords with anyone.
- Keep the device secured when not in use.
- Keep the device in a secure location when it is not at school.

Proper Care

Proper care is always to be given to the students' device, including but not limited to the following:

- Give care appropriate for any electrical device.
- Keep food and drink away from the device.
- Do not leave the device out in extreme heat or cold.
- Do not attempt to repair a damaged or malfunctioning device.
- Document any software/hardware issues to the technology department as soon as possible.
- Keep the device in a well-protected, temperature-controlled environment when not in use.
- Clean the screen often with approved cleaning towels.
- Make sure hands are clean before using.
- Charge the device only with the included charger and use a standard wall outlet for your power source.
- Always use the provided case or one with equal protection.

Violation Consequences

Users found to be in violation of acceptable use will be denied technology access on appropriate equipment. Possible actions include the following:

- A user may be banned from access to specific technological equipment or facilities for a length of time.
- A user may be subject to disciplinary consequences, including conferencing with Administration.
- Users could face prosecution if criminal activity is involved.

Cell Phone Policy:

While we recognize cell phones have become an integral part of society. They can and do, however, cause a significant disruption in the education process and the school day. Mount St. Mary Academy strives to model appropriate and respectful cell phone use. Our goal is for all students and staff to be "present" during class instruction, conversations, and while interacting in the MSM community.

In accordance with the NYS Distraction Free Schools Law that prohibits the use of internet-enabled personal technology devices throughout the school day, not only in classes, but also in hallways, at lunch, and especially in areas such as bathrooms where privacy is a necessity is prohibited. The legislation has built-in exceptions for students with health needs or device-enabled learning plans which will be reviewed on an individual basis.

Our school life team has thoroughly reviewed the state guidelines to make a plan that best fits our overall community behavior expectations of our students. The policy that we are putting in place is an outgrowth of the cell phone policy that was already in use but also deepens the commitment to encourage relationship building in-person with the addition of cell phone free daily break and lunch. We believe that our students can manage the safekeeping of their personal devices and therefore students will be permitted to carry their cell phones in a personal backpack vs. school storage.

Cell Phone/Internet-Enabled Devices Policy

The following policy applies to all personal cell phones, personal tablets, headphones, ear buds, AirPods etc. At this time, students may still use smartwatches, however, the use of those items to engage in behavior that is prohibited will warrant consequences and further evaluation of school policy.

Cell Phone use will be prohibited during school days (7:45AM-2:30PM) anywhere on school grounds. This includes all instructional and non-instructional time, including but not limited to homeroom, passing time, study halls, break period, and lunch. School grounds mean anywhere within the building and on school property.

Exceptions may include:

- where necessary for the management of a student's health care
- for translation services
- where required by law
- if included in a student's IEP Program

Students are required to store their cell phones in their personal backpacks or purses. They must be placed in their backpack/purse out of sight by the beginning of homeroom at 7:45AM. Alternatively, students may lock their phones in their school-issued locker for the duration of the school day. Students will be instructed to turn off their device or set to "do not disturb" by their homeroom teachers.

Note: The classes of 2030-2028 are required to use their MSM issued 1:1 device during the entire school day. The class of 2027 may use their own personal device during the school day. However, misuse of this privilege will result in consequences and requirement to utilize MSM issued 1:1 device. If an MSM-issued device is not working properly, the student must sign out a loaned MSM-issued device from the Main Office.

Methods for Parent-Student Contact During the School Day

If a parent/guardian needs to communicate with a student during the school day, one of the following methods may be used:

- Main Office at 716-877-1358: School personnel will relay any messages to students or call students to the Office to speak with parents/guardians.
- Classroom telephone system: in case of an emergency, school personnel can use the classroom telephones to notify classroom teachers directly. Students can be asked to report to the main office
- School email system: all students have access to a school-sanctioned email account.

Should a student need to contact a parent/guardian during the school day, the student can report to the Main Office or any office in School Life to use the school phone system.

Consequences of Violation

- The first violation of the policy will result in 3 detentions.
- The second violation of the policy will result in 6 detentions.
- A third violation will result in alternative storage of device(s) for the school day.

Cell phone policy is subject to change upon further review by administration at any time.

CHAPTER 5 ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Attendance Requirements

Consistent attendance is expected of each student at Mount St. Mary Academy. One of the goals of the Academy is to give students the best educational experience possible. A student's attendance in class is an integral part of the learning process. For the benefit of the student's success, class attendance is a priority. In cases of extreme absenteeism, Mount St. Mary Academy is obligated to notify Child Protective Services of educational neglect.

Consistent with the importance of classroom participation, unexcused student absences, tardiness, and early dismissal may affect a student's grade including classroom participation for the marking period. The following are reasons for an excused absence from school:

- Documented medical or dental appointments
- Verified student illness
- Death in the family
- Documented court appearance
- School-approved field trips (with pre-approval by teachers)
- College visits (with pre-approval by Counseling Department)
- Suspension
- Military obligations
- Quarantine
- Religious observance

Students on official home instruction are not considered absent from class. If students are present for half of a class, they are considered present. All other reasons for absence are unexcused. All absences require a parental note giving the reason for the absence. Family vacations are unexcused absences and should be avoided during the school year. All notes should be handed in to the Main Office upon their return to

school, or it can be emailed to (attendance@msmacademy.org).

To keep families informed of their daughter's number of class absences, a student's absence record is maintained in Blackbaud which is accessible to parents at any time. Teachers are required to update attendance daily. Report cards and progress reports will also contain attendance information.

Absence Procedures

Parents/guardians must call the school attendance line or email to (attendance@msmacademy.org) any time prior to 7:40 a.m. and leave a message including the student's name, grade, and reason for the absence. If a phone call is placed, a written note is required upon reentry to school. If an absence has not been called in to the Main Office, the main office personnel must speak directly with a parent or guardian by placing a call home. If no one can be reached at home, the attendance office must call the parent's or guardian's work number until an absence can be verified. When the student returns to school, a written excuse from the parent or guardian must be presented to the Main Office indicating the date of and reason for the absence.

If this note is not provided to the attendance office, the School Life Assistant will continue to call home. After this notice, if a note is still not provided, the student will be subject to disciplinary consequences. If a student is out of school due to illness for more than five days, a note from a physician clearing the student for return is required.

Excessive Absences

The Dean of Students is the first contact in initiating actions to address excessive student absence.

- If a student accumulates five (5) absences, a parent will be notified.
- If a student accumulates ten (10) absences, a parent will be notified, a meeting will be held with the student, and The Dean of Students to discuss the student's excessive absenteeism. The students' school counselor will also be notified and may also schedule a meeting to discuss excessive absenteeism.
- If a student has fifteen (15) absences, a conference will occur with The Dean of Students, a parent, and the student's counselor.
- If a student accumulates (20) absences, a conference will be initiated by The Dean of Students, in conjunction with the MSM Principal, with the student and a parent/guardian to discuss the student's absenteeism. A written plan will be created by the Counseling Office. Additionally, the student may be excluded from extracurricular activities which may include, but are not limited to, sports, after-school clubs, play, musical, dances, proms, Student Council, etc., should administration and Student Life deem necessary.
- If a student accumulates twenty-five (25) absences, the student's educational viability will be reviewed, and a determination will be made by the principal on the student's future status at Mount St. Mary Academy.

The principal reserves the right to consider individual, unique, and compelling circumstances when applying the provisions of this policy. Any relief from the consequences outlined in this policy will be at the sole discretion of the principal.

Tardy Procedures

Students who are tardy to school (excused or unexcused) must sign-in in the Main Office to receive a pass to class. **Any student arriving at or after 8:00 am must have a note from a parent upon sign-in.**

Arriving late at school due to a doctor or dental appointment with written verification from professional, funeral, or court appearance is considered an excused tardy. Students are allowed five unexcused tardies to allow for family emergencies, traffic, power outages, oversleeping, etc. All other reasons for tardiness are considered unexcused.

Excessive Tardiness

- If a student accumulates four (4) unexcused tardies they will receive a warning through Blackbaud via email and possibly a verbal warning from The Dean of Students as well.
- If a student accumulates five (5) unexcused tardies an email will be sent home to parents/guardians via email through Blackbaud.
- If a student accumulates six (6) unexcused tardies, a detention will be assigned and a meeting with The Dean of Students will occur, and the students school counselor will be notified who may also schedule a meeting.
- Each subsequent unexcused tardy, seven (7) through ten (10) will result in a detention.
- If a student accumulates ten (10) unexcused tardies, a conference with The Dean of Students will be scheduled. The Counseling Office will be notified and a meeting is required with their school counselor. At this point the student will be subject to disciplinary consequences which may include, but are not limited to, loss of senior privileges, loss of extracurricular participation, and Saturday detention. Privileges will be revoked for a minimum of two weeks. The status of such privileges will be reviewed after and may or may not be reinstated based upon absences and tardies at that time, along with administration approval.
- If additional unexcused tardies continue after ten (10), those will be reviewed, dealt with, and additional consequences enforced at that time. This may be but not limited to permanent loss of co-curricular participation, continuing Saturday detentions, and in school detentions.

Early Dismissal Procedures

If a student needs to be dismissed early for any reason:

- A written note from the parent or guardian must be presented to the office on the day of the early dismissal before the start of classes.
- If a note is not brought in, parents must come into the school and personally sign the student out. No phone permission is acceptable—unless said parent has indicated otherwise with his/her signature under the FERPA/HIPAA Act section on the Student/Parent Signature Page, which is included in the mailing packet. In this instance, the principal would have the authority to sign to release a student after receiving verbal approval from a parent. Students must sign up at the Main Office before leaving the building. A written note must be submitted the following day from the parent or guardian documenting this early release. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action.
- Leaving school grounds without permission will result in disciplinary action.

Eligibility Participation

A student may not participate in any dance, co-curricular activity, Student Council, and/or athletic event if they are absent from school on the day of the event. To be eligible to participate in these activities, a student must report to school by 8:30 a.m. and be in attendance for the remainder of the day. Students who are dismissed early or arriving late for verified excused reasons are eligible for after-school activities provided the student is present for at least five academic periods that day. All documentation must be submitted to the Main Office upon return to school to obtain eligibility.

- **Participation in athletics, fine arts, extracurricular activities, college visits, and other enrichment opportunities are contingent on regular and consistent attendance in school.**

Excused dismissals or late arrivals include funeral (verified by administration), court appearance (written verification from professional needed), doctor or dental visit (written verification from professional needed), verified college visitations, MSM field trips, or permission from the administration. Students who are dismissed early or arriving late for unexcused reasons will not be eligible for after-school activities. The principal reserves the right to consider individual, compelling circumstances when applying the provisions of this policy. Any relief from the consequences outlined in this policy will be at the sole discretion of the principal.

Make-up Work Policy

When a student is absent from class, the student is obligated to contact teachers upon the day of return to arrange make-up work. The amount of time permitted for making up work after an absence is made at the discretion of the teacher and will be found in each teacher's course expectations. A student who receives an "incomplete" grade on their report card due to long-term illness or emergency must coordinate with their teacher and school counselor on an acceptable due date. An "incomplete" grade disqualifies a student for a place on the honor roll.

Mount St. Mary Academy discourages parents from making doctor or dentist appointments during school time. Vacation and travel arrangements should not be made during class time; however, if a parent makes such arrangements, the following should be noted: New York State Law mandates the school to inform parents that absences from school cannot be granted. It must then become the decision of the parent/guardian. If the parent chooses to do so, then it is recorded as an unexcused absence. Students are responsible for all work missed during their time of absence.

CHAPTER 6 DISCIPLINARY POLICIES

Alcohol Abuse Policy

Students may not be in possession of alcohol or show any signs of the use of alcohol, on school property or at any school function, whether on or off Mount St. Mary Academy property. Students violating any part of this policy will be referred to school administrators and will experience the following disciplinary action and potentially additional disciplinary consequences.

- *First Violation:* The student's parents will be contacted and required to pick up their daughter; a three day out of school suspension is assigned during which time all assigned schoolwork must be completed, and the student must provide proof of participation in or attendance at an alcohol

abuse program before being readmitted to school. Additionally, the student will be subject to disciplinary ineligibility for a period and or a specific event. A parent and student meeting will be required before any out of school suspended student is readmitted.

- *Second Violation: Expulsion.*

Bullying Policy

“Bullying” behavior, whether verbal, emotional, and/or physical, by any student at Mount St. Mary Academy is strictly prohibited. Such conduct will result in disciplinary action. “Bullying” means any act or acts by an individual or a group directed against an individual or group with the intent to harass, ridicule, humiliate, hurt, or intimidate the other party. Bullying behavior occurs with an intent to harm an individual student based on her race, class, ethnicity, gender, ability, gender identity/expression, family income. Bullying always involves a power differential and differs from normal peer conflict in the intent to harm, the intensity and duration, in the power of the bully, and the vulnerability of the victim. Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies like email, social networking sites, cell phones, sexting, webcams, blogs, or other devices used to send or post text or images with the intent to harass, ridicule, humiliate, hurt, or intimidate another person.

Types of conduct that could constitute “bullying” include, but are not limited to:

- Physical violence and/or attacks
- Verbal or written (posted on the internet, texted, emailed, etc.) taunts, name-calling and put-downs, including taunts based on appearance, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, handicap, etc.
- Creating rumors, shunning, labeling, or excluding a student
- Threats and intimidation
- Extortion or stealing of money and/or belongings
- Exclusion from peer group
- Taking recordings or pictures of others without their permission

As part of the Mount St. Mary Academy community, anyone witnessing bullying has an obligation to act. Bullying often takes place in front of peers, and as a reflection of who and what we are, we first need to tell the bully to stop and defend the victim or get help. Next, the bullying incident needs to be reported. Students, parents and teachers may file written complaints of suspected bullying behavior, and students shall be permitted to file verbal complaints or anonymously report acts of bullying to teachers, school administrators, counselors, and other school staff members.

Any report of suspected bullying behavior will be promptly reviewed. Individuals involved will be interviewed and evidence gathered. If acts of bullying are verified, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against the perpetrator, which may include but is not limited to anti-bullying training, meetings with MSM Counseling Department, parent conference, detention, disciplinary ineligibility, disciplinary probation, ineligibility from extracurricular sports and clubs, suspension, expulsion, and/or law enforcement involvement. As guided by our Catholic tradition, and rooted in Gospel values, we strive to develop the whole person. Considering our values, this zero-tolerance policy regarding bullying applies to our students in school or out.

NYS Nonpublic School Anti-Bullying Law: The [NYS “Jack Reid Law: Protect All Students Act”](#) was signed into law by Governor Hochul on October 23, 2025, and is mandatory for all Catholic Schools.

This bill protects all elementary, middle, and high school students in New York from harassment and bullying by extending many of the protections of the [Dignity for All Students Act](#) to nonpublic schools.

All Catholic Schools are required to implement the following:

- “Bullying and harassment prevention and response. No student shall be subjected to harassment or bullying, including cyberbullying, by other students on school property or at a school function.”
- “Adopt a written in plain-language and age-appropriate anti-bullying and harassment policy, which must be published on the school’s website or internal parent/student portal and shared annually with employees, parents, and students. Such policy shall include...information on how bullying and harassment is defined, how incidents will be reported, investigated, and documented, and an age-appropriate process for notifying the victim about the final outcome of the investigation.”
- “School employees who witness bullying or harassment, or receive an oral or written report of bullying or harassment, shall promptly notify the principal or head of school or the principal’s or head of school’s designee, orally not later than one school day after such school employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying and harassment, and must file a written report with the principal or head of school’s designee not later than two school days after making the initial oral report.”
- “Upon a report of bullying, harassment, or retaliation, the principal or head of school, or the principal or head of school’s designee, must investigate promptly, communicate their findings with the victim and take immediate steps and appropriate follow-up action reasonably calculated to ensure that such conduct has stopped and ensure the safety of the student or students including retaliation against any individual who in good faith reports such bullying or assists in the investigation.”

MSM Anti-Bullying, Harassment, and Hateful Speech Policy

Catholic schools strive to provide a safe environment for all individuals. All students and employees are to be treated with dignity and respect. Bullying, harassment, and hateful speech of any kind will not be tolerated on school property or at any school function.

Definitions:

- Bullying is defined as repeated or systematic abuse and/or harassment of another person or group that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. A person is being bullied when they are exposed repeatedly and over time to negative actions by one or more people.
- Harassment is the creation of a hostile environment by conduct or by threats, intimidation or abuse, including cyberbullying, that (a) has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student’s educational performance, opportunities or benefits, or mental, emotional or physical well-being; (b) reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for their physical safety; (c) reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause physical injury or emotional harm to a student; or (d) occurs off school property and creates, or would foreseeably create, a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment, where it is foreseeable that the conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse might reach

school property. For purposes of this definition, the term "threats, intimidation or abuse" shall include verbal and non-verbal actions.

Bullying and harassment may include physical, emotional, social, or cyber forms of harm, such as:

- Physical: Intentional harm to another's body or property
- Emotional: Intentional harm to another's emotional well-being
- Social: Intentional harm to another's group acceptance or relationships
- Cyber: Bullying or harassment that occurs through any form of electronic communication

Examples of behavior that may constitute bullying or harassment when they meet the definitions (repeated, power imbalance, harmful impact; would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for their physical safety, or cause physical injury or emotional harm) may include, but are not limited to; teasing, using derogatory nicknames or slurs, spreading rumors or demeaning stories, social exclusion, intentional destruction of property, or sharing demeaning content online.

- Note: Age-appropriate conflict, isolated incidents, or mutual disagreements do not automatically constitute bullying or harassment; these will be addressed through appropriate behavioral or restorative practices.

Definition of Retaliation

- Inappropriate behavior toward any individual who in good faith reports bullying or harassment or assists in any investigation of suspected bullying or harassment.

Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Bullying or Harassment

All reports of bullying or harassment will be taken seriously and addressed promptly.

Reporting:

- Any student who believes they are a target of bullying and/or harassment or has witnessed another student they believe is being bullied or harassed should immediately tell any school employee about the incident(s) either verbally, by email, or in writing.
 - If an online form or other program is used (Ex. "Stop It"), describe how it is accessed.
- Parents or guardians who have heard reports of bullying or harassment from their child or have witnessed incidents that could be bullying or harassment should report the incidents to any school employee verbally or in writing as soon as they are made aware of the incident.
- Any suspected incidents of bullying and/or harassment shared with or witnessed by a school employee must be shared with the school counselor, dean of students, and or vice principal by the end of the next school day.

Investigation:

- Upon receiving a report of suspected bullying, harassment, or retaliation, the dean of students will investigate the incident promptly by interviewing all parties separately, or in small groups if needed.
- The parents of all students involved will be notified.

- If it is determined that bullying or harassment has occurred, the child who bullied or harassed another student is subject to consequences as the school deems appropriate. The dean of students, vice principal, and principal will take immediate steps and appropriate follow-up action reasonably calculated to ensure that any confirmed bullying and/or harassment conduct will stop and ensure the safety of the student or students, including retaliation against any individual who in good faith reports such bullying or assists in the investigation.
- The dean of students shall notify the targeted student and his/her parent/guardian of the outcome of the investigation in an age-appropriate manner.
 - If bullying/harassment occurred, any specific consequences given to the student(s) who bullied or harassed the targeted student will not be shared.
- Parents should be advised to contact the appropriate law enforcement agency if warranted. If determined necessary, the principal should contact law enforcement.
- Referral to outside counseling should be made for all parties if deemed necessary.
- The school counselor and or dean of students must follow up to see that the offending conduct has stopped.
- All students will be notified that retaliation against anyone who makes a report will not be tolerated and those that retaliate will be subject to disciplinary actions.
- Any proven bullying or harassment incidents will be reported to the principal, including any escalation to law enforcement.

Documentation of Suspected Incidents

- Any school employee who witnesses or receives a report of suspected harassment or bullying, either verbally or in writing, will submit a written report of the incident to the dean of students and school counselors.
- Documentation of all reported incidents, investigations, and responses related to suspected bullying or harassment will be created and maintained by the dean of students, school counselor, vice principal, and principal.

False Reports:

Any student who falsely reports bullying or harassment may be subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension or expulsion, and, if warranted, referral to local authorities.

Hateful Speech and Inclusion Statement

Catholic schools are committed to fostering an inclusive community in which all individuals are treated with dignity, integrity, and respect. Harassment, hateful speech, or discrimination of any kind interferes with this mission and will not be tolerated.

Harassment is conduct that creates a hostile environment, interferes with a student's educational performance or well-being, causes fear for safety, or risks substantial disruption, including off-property behavior if it foreseeably reaches school property. Harassment may be verbal, physical, visual, online, or sexual in nature, and may be based on, but not limited to, a person's race, ethnicity, culture, religion,

age, gender, physical appearance, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, academic ability, disability, or language.

All allegations will be reviewed and investigated promptly, confidentially, and thoroughly. Counseling and support services will be made available to both victims and perpetrators as part of a restorative approach to healing and accountability.

Disciplinary Consequences

Infractions of school rules are liable to bring one or multiple of the following consequences at the discretion of a school administrator, or Dean of Students. Parents will be notified in writing via email, regarding infractions and consequences.

Detention

School Detention

School Life is responsible for assigning this based on conduct infractions which are required to be reported into Blackbaud by all faculty administration, and staff. When a school detention is assigned, the student, parent/guardian, and detention proctor are given a notification of the date. Below you will find an outline of school detention procedures and rules.

Classroom Detention

Classroom detention is assigned by an individual teacher for inappropriate classroom behavior, violation of classroom rules, and tardiness. Classroom detention is issued when a teacher notifies the parent in writing. A copy of that notification is sent to the Dean of Students. Classroom detentions require 24-hour notice in order for students to arrange transportation.

Academic Detention

Should students find themselves in a situation where they owe numerous outstanding assignments, failing multiple subjects, or are experiencing a major decline in their academic performance, they may be assigned weekday academic detention at the direction of the teacher & Assistant Principal. Students remain in academic detention until outstanding work is completed and/or grades show improvement. This determination will be made by the Assistant Principal in consultation with the students' teachers and school counselor.

Alternative Detention

Students may be assigned an alternative form of detention at the discretion of the MSM Leadership. Students are responsible for transportation to and from the alternative detention. Students who arrive late will be assigned an additional day of alternative detention. Students who cut, refuse to attend, or are dismissed from detention due to being uncooperative or disruptive will receive one day of out-of-school suspension. The use of personal electronic devices is prohibited.

Lunch Detention

Assignment of a student to a supervised room during lunch period may occur. The use of any type of electronic device, talking, or sleeping is not permitted.

School Detention Procedures

Students are required to show up promptly at 2:40pm. Administrative approval is the only exception. This will either be communicated with you beforehand or may require you to follow up with the Dean of Students should the student try and use that as an excuse. Any student that is more than five minutes late will need to make up that detention on a later date and will receive an additional detention.

- Students are expected to take care of all needs before detention starts. There are no dismissals for the water fountain, office, or cafeteria. Restroom dismissal is only permitted in an emergency.
- Students are expected to sit up in their seats. No heads down or sleeping.
- Students should be spaced out appropriately, not sitting next to one another.
- No food of any kind is allowed, unless noted on the Health Concerns List provided by the School Nurse; ONLY water is permitted.
- Students are not permitted to use ANY type of electronic device during detention. (i.e. 1:1 device, cell phone, headphones, smart watches, video games, graphing calculators, etc.)
- Students are not permitted to talk with one another.
- The detention proctor is not to talk with or interact with the students.
- Students are not permitted to do any homework, draw, write, etc., they are expected to sit up in their seats quietly for the entire duration of the detention.
- Students unable to comply with the rules will receive a warning. After that initial warning, please call The Dean of Students or contact the main office if DSL is not answering.

Disciplinary Ineligibility

A student may be withheld from participation in any or all student activities including but not limited to, school-sponsored social events, sports teams, field trips, clubs, dances (Winter Semi-Formal, Prom), graduation exercises, etc., or for a set length of time, or for a particular activity.

Disciplinary Probation

After careful review of a student's disciplinary record, and for serious and severe violations of school policy, a school administrator may recommend to the principal that the student be placed on disciplinary probation. A student on probation will be liable to the restrictions cited by school administrators at a conference with the student and their parent/guardian. The status of the student will be reviewed at the close of the following semester and a determination made whether the student may remain enrolled at Mount St. Mary Academy. A discipline contract, written to fit the individual involved, may be offered to a student as a final attempt to assist the student in developing a responsible and mature behavioral attitude. A discipline contract will be written following the conference. If the student violates any condition of this contract or commits any violation detrimental to the reputation of Mount St. Mary Academy or the good name of the student body, they may be asked to withdraw from the Academy.

Suspension

In school and out of school suspension penalties can be assigned for serious penalties. A student may be assigned an exclusion from school and privileges for no more than five consecutive school days, provided such exclusion shall not extend beyond the end of the school year in which such suspension was imposed.

Only the Principal or Assistant Principal may initiate suspension proceedings. In the case of a student's intended removal from school for out-of-school suspension, the following will be enacted:

- The student should be informed of the intended suspension and reasons for the proposed action.
- The student shall be provided with an opportunity to discuss this action and otherwise explain her actions.
- Parents will be called and required to pick up the student.
- A letter shall be sent to the parent or guardian within twenty-four hours stating the specific reasons for the suspension. A written notice shall be placed in the student's school record.
- A parent/student conference may be held before the student is readmitted to school.
- Classwork will be assigned for each day of the suspension and is due to teachers the day the student returns to school.

Expulsion

Exclusion from school permanently.

Drug or Synthetic Drug Abuse Policy

Students may not be in possession of drugs or synthetic drugs or show any signs of the use of drugs or synthetic drugs on school property or at any school function, whether on or off Mount St. Mary Academy property. Students violating any part of this policy will be referred to by school administrators and will experience the following disciplinary action and potentially additional disciplinary consequences:

- *First Violation:* The student's parents will be contacted and required to pick up their daughter. A five-day out-of-school suspension is assigned during which all assigned schoolwork must be completed. The student must provide proof of participation in, or attendance at a substance abuse program before the student is readmitted to school. Additionally, the student will be subject to disciplinary ineligibility for a period of time or a specific event. A student and parent meeting will be required before any out of school suspended student is readmitted.
- *Second Violation:* Should drug possession or use re-occur at any point in the academic career of a student, it will result in expulsion.

A student apprehended distributing drugs or synthetic drugs on Mount St. Mary Academy property, at a Mount St. Mary Academy function, to Mount St. Mary Academy students, or in the community, will be expelled and the appropriate law enforcement agency will be notified.

Protocol for Reporting Bullying, Racism, Harassment, and Discrimination

If students experience an incident of bullying, racism, harassment, or discrimination, they should report it to one of the following MSM employees: School Counselors, Belonging, Equity, and Inclusion Lead, or the Dean of Students. They may also report it to any employee. If they report an incident, no employee

can promise confidentiality to the student. The employee should encourage the student to report the incident to a School Counselor, Coordinator for Belonging, Equity, and Inclusion, or the Dean of Students. If the student is unwilling to report to one of these people, then the employee is required to report the incident in writing to one of the following employees: School Counselors, Dean of Students, or the principal. If any of these employees is the subject of the report, then that person should not be included in the email; instead, the Belonging, Equity, and Inclusion Lead should be included in the email.

Once an incident of racism, harassment, or discrimination is reported by any employee, the Principal, assuming that she/he is not the subject of the report, will call a meeting with the grade level School Counselor, the Dean of Students, and the Belonging, Equity, and Inclusion Lead to begin an investigation into the report. Severity of disciplinary action taken will be determined by the Principal, Assistant Principal, Dean of Students, and the Lead for Belonging, Equity, and Inclusion. Consequences may include, but are not limited to, counseling and restorative practice circles for all parties involved, suspension or dismissal, depending on the severity and the frequency of offense by the students or employees involved.

Once an investigation is completed, the school community cannot expect to know what disciplinary actions were given to the perpetrators. In accordance with FERPA protections of student and family privacy, the school is not permitted to disclose the details of a student's academic or disciplinary record to the wider school community, nor is the school permitted to release employment details.

If the student who was the victim of or witness to bullying, racism, harassment, or discrimination violated any codes of conduct detailed elsewhere in the Handbook, the Principal, Assistant Principal, Dean of Students, and the Lead for Belonging, Equity, and Inclusion will consider the context of their actions within the larger incident when determining if they will be subject to disciplinary action and what type of disciplinary action they will receive. For example, if a student uses a phone to record an incident of bullying, racism, harassment, or discrimination, even if not permitted to use a phone at that time of the school day, the committee determining disciplinary action will take into consideration the nature of the incident recorded when determining disciplinary action.

Pranks

Pranks are strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary consequences, including suspensions that may affect college admission. Students who participate in a prank during senior year may not be allowed to participate in prom or graduation exercises.

Racism, Discrimination, and Harassment Prohibition Policy

Every student should expect to learn in a safe environment, free from bullying, racism, harassment, and discrimination. Whereas bullying can be a single incident (as defined in the Bullying Prohibition Policy), harassment is the repeated infliction of bullying behavior by an individual or a group directed against an individual or group.

Bullying, harassment, racism, and discrimination cause an atmosphere of separateness, and Mount St. Mary Academy is committed to fostering an inclusive, safe community for all its students. Incidents of bullying, harassment, racism, and discrimination offend or threaten a student by creating hostile circumstances or interfering with one's academic performance, mental health, and/or full participation in the Mount community. It is important to understand when a student experiences an incident of bullying,

harassment, racism, and/or discrimination, the intent of the perpetrator is irrelevant; instead, the school will prioritize the result of this incident (including, but not limited to, hurt, isolation, ostracization, and threat).

Racism is a distinct group of behaviors and/or comments directed against an individual or a group because of their identification with a marginalized racial group (including those of Black, Indigenous, Latino, Asian American, Middle Eastern, or multi-racial identities). An incident of racism occurs when an individual does any of the following when interacting (either in person, on social media, or through text messages) with a member of a marginalized racial group: uses hate speech, slurs, or derogatory words; posts embarrassing photos or recordings; offensive comments and/or jokes; associates an individual with a racial stereotype; threatens, or enacts violence. If a student encounters an incident of racism, they should report it according to the protocol listed above.

Discrimination is defined as being bullied, isolated, or ostracized because of a student's race, color, national origin, class, family income, religion, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexuality, learning ability, physical ability, or age. Racism is just one form of discrimination. An incident of discrimination occurs when an individual does any of the following when interacting (either in person, on social media, or through text messages) with a member of a marginalized group: uses hate speech, slurs, or derogatory words; posts embarrassing photos or recordings; makes offensive comments and/or jokes; associates an individual with a stereotype about their marginalized group; threatens, or enacts violence. If a student encounters an incident of discrimination, they should report it according to the protocol listed above.

The perpetrator of bullying, harassment, racism, and/or discrimination can be any member of the Mount St. Mary community, including students, families, employees, Board members, alumnae, and guests. A safe environment is not one free from challenge. Students of Mount St. Mary Academy can expect that faculty and other students may challenge their prejudices and preconceived notions in a way that invites all students to recognize and accept the complex identities of each member of the MSM community.

Self-Reporting, Parent Reporting, or Teacher Reporting

If a student, parent, or teacher reports a student is having difficulty with drug or alcohol use, and/or abuse beyond the campus, the student will be referred to the MSM Counseling Department for assistance in addressing the concern. The school, parents, students, and outside professionals will work collaboratively to address behavior and all issues contributing to the behavior.

Sexual Harassment Policy

Mount St. Mary Academy Board of Trustees affirms its commitment to nondiscrimination and recognizes its responsibility to provide for all students an environment that is free of sexual harassment and intimidation. Sexual harassment is a violation of the law and stands in direct opposition to Board policy. Therefore, the Board prohibits all forms of sexual harassment by employees and students. Generally, sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to sexually harassing behavior is a condition for the successful completion of any course of study or educational or extracurricular activity, including the acceptance into or rejection from such course or activity.
- Conditions exist within the school environment that allow or foster obscene pictures, lewd jokes, sexual advances, unwarranted touching, requests for sexual favors or other harassing activities of a

sexual nature.

- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's academic performance or participation in an educational or extracurricular activity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning environment.

The Board acknowledges that in determining whether sexual harassment has occurred, the perspective of the victim as well as the offender's conduct and/or intention should be evaluated. Any student who believes that they have been subjected to sexual harassment shall report all incidents of such conduct to the principal. All such reports will be held in strictest confidence. Upon receiving a complaint, the principal will conduct a thorough investigation of the charges. However, if the principal has knowledge of or has reason to know of any alleged sexual harassment, the principal is obligated, even in the absence of a complaint, to investigate such conduct promptly and thoroughly. Based upon the results of the principal's investigation, immediate corrective action will be taken. Should the offending individual be a school employee, appropriate disciplinary measures will be applied, up to and including termination of the offender's employment in accordance with contractual and legal guidelines. Should the offending individual be a student, appropriate disciplinary measures will be applied, up to and including suspension/expulsion. The Board prohibits any retaliatory behavior directed against complainants and/or witnesses. Follow-up inquiries shall be made to ensure that harassment has not been resumed and that the victims and/or witnesses have not suffered retaliation.

Theft, Vandalism, and Other Criminal Acts

Any student who commits an act of theft or vandalism or other act that may be classified as a felony or a misdemeanor against the school, its personnel, or students may be subject to disciplinary consequences regardless of whether they are referred to an appropriate law enforcement agency. In addition, offenders and their parents shall be held financially accountable for the replacement of all property damage. Acts may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- An act of theft against a fellow student or any other party, while under the supervision of the school.
- An act of theft against the school building, lockers, locker rooms, classrooms, or other areas prohibited to students because of time and specific reasons.
- Unauthorized entrance into school property.
- An act of vandalism against school property, the property of school personnel, or the community which impacts the school climate.

Tobacco Abuse Policy

Students may not be in possession of tobacco, e-cigarettes, or smoking products, or show any signs of the use of tobacco or smoking products on school property or at any school function, whether on or off Mount St. Mary Academy property. Students violating any part of this policy will be referred to by school administrators and will experience the following disciplinary action and potentially additional disciplinary consequences:

- *First Violation:* a one-day out-of-school suspension during which time all schoolwork must be completed. Parents will be advised of the violation and consequences. A student and parent meeting will be required before any out-of-school suspended student is readmitted.
- *Second Violation:* a three-day out-of-school suspension during which time all schoolwork must be

completed. A parent/student conference will be required before the student returns to school.

- *Third Violation:* expulsion.

CHAPTER 7 DRESS CODE POLICY

Mount St. Mary Academy's dress code policy reflects and reinforces the MSM Philosophy by improving students' sense of belonging and respect, while allowing them to take pride in their own appearance and invites an encouraging atmosphere for increased academic success.

Below are the components for acceptable and unacceptable dress code. Any student who does not adhere to the dress code policy will be issued a warning first and aided assistance in resolving the issue. Additional infractions will lead to further and increased consequences. FlynnO'Hara Uniform Company is our sole uniform provider. You may access the MSM uniform store via the following link: [Mt. St. Mary Academy - NY122](#).

Uniform Requirements:

	Acceptable	Unacceptable
Black Watch Plaid Skirt: Flynn & O'Hara Uniform Company fingertip length from the knee		Any skirt other than FlynnO'Hara Uniform Company
Navy-Blue full-length dress pants		Any non-FlynnO'Hara full length uniform dress pants, unless approved by administration, no cargo pockets
Navy Blue Knee Length Uniform Shorts		Any non-FlynnO'Hara knee length uniform shorts, unless approved by administration
Navy Blue Polo Long or Short sleeve Plain or MSM logo		Polo shirt with any logo other than the MSM logo (e.g. store, brand etc.)
White Polo Long or Short sleeve Plain or MSM logo		Polo shirt with any logo other than the MSM logo (e.g. store, brand etc.)
White or Blue Oxford Blouse unfitted and tucked in short sleeves White or Blue Oxford Blouse unfitted and tucked in long sleeve		Shirt with any logo other than the MSM logo (e.g. store, brand etc.) Shirt with any logo other than the MSM logo (e.g. store, brand etc.)

		
Gray or Navy sweatshirt with “MSM” plaid stitching on the front		Sweatshirt with any logo other than the MSM logo (e.g. store, brand etc.)
Navy sweatshirt with “MSM” white screened on the front		Sweatshirt with any logo other than the MSM logo (e.g. store, brand etc.)
Navy blue cardigan sweater with embroidered MSM logo or plain		Cardigan with any logo other than the MSM logo (e.g. store, brand etc.)
1/4-Zip Navy Blue fleece pullover with MSM logo or plain		1/4-zip other than navy color and with any logo other than the MSM logo (e.g. store, brand etc.)
Navy, White, Black crew, calf, or knee socks		Any color other than those listed; Any designs, stripes, multi-colored; Mismatched
Solid Navy, White, Black tights		Any other color than specified
Plain opaque or Orlon knee-high nylon, Navy or White		Any style or color other than specified
Plain Navy or Black leggings - November 1 through April 1		Sweat pants, pajama pants, joggers
Black, Brown, Tan, Gray, Navy shoes with a full back / Any sneakers or high-top sneakers		Boots- full or ankle, Slippers, Crocs, flip flops, slides, and any shoe with low or no backs

Additional Options (Seniors Only):

Seniors may also wear Hunter Green polos, sweaters (plain), sweatshirts (plain, MSM logo, school-approved Senior crew neck or hoodie). If a hooded sweatshirt is approved, hoods should be always worn down in the building.

Spirit and Athletic Wear:

Any MSM branded gear that is Royal Blue, White, and/or Black is NOT daily uniform apparel and is reserved for spirit wear days only. Special days will be scheduled to allow students to show their school spirit by wearing their Thunder-branded sports gear.

School ID and FOB:

In adherence with school safety policy, all students will be required to wear their school issued ID's and FOBs daily. Should a student lose either, they should report that to the Main Office immediately. If a door FOB is lost it is imperative it is deactivated ASAP for everyone's safety. A new ID and or FOB will be issued upon making the main office staff aware. A fee will be incurred for any replacement FOB's, ID's, or lanyards.

Additional Information:

- Uniforms are to be clean, neat, and in good repair. Should a student forget a piece of the uniform, they may ask to borrow a piece from the Main Office prior to the start of the school day. Students should return the borrowed piece freshly laundered within a few days of borrowing it.
- Skirts should be no more than 3 inches above or below the knee. Students will be asked to change their skirts if the skirts worn are too short/too long. While many students choose to wear shorts underneath their skirts, these should not be visible.
- Sweatpants and pajama pants of ANY kind are not permitted to be worn under skirts at any time.
- Plain white, navy-blue T-shirts should be worn under sweatshirts, sweaters, polo shirts etc. No writing should be visible.
- Students are not permitted to carry around ANY blanket of any kind during the school day.

Dress-Down Days

- Students may wear jeans, casual tops, sneakers, or other comfortable, appropriate clothing. Mount St. Mary Academy is a Catholic institution and stresses modesty when dressing for school. Clothing that is excessively tight or revealing is not appropriate (no tops showing stomach are allowed). Shorts are not permitted, unless announced by administration. Tops must have straps at least one inch wide.
- Shoes must be flat and closed toe.
- If a student is unsure of the appropriateness of attire for "dress down" days, they should seek the approval of the administration. Sports uniforms will be allowed on special occasions with prior approval from the administration.
- Other dress down guidelines may be announced as needed.
- If students are found to be in violation of dress-down rules, they will be issued disciplinary action, including but not limited to, meeting with School Life and loss of dress down privileges.

Field Trip Dress Code

Students must be dressed appropriately for school. Dress pants, dresses of appropriate length, skirts, and/or sweaters should be worn. No revealing tops are allowed. Dress up regulations apply to all students on field trips unless the teacher issues guidelines.

Fob / ID / Lanyard

The student identification card and building access fob must always be with the student. It can be on their person or in their backpack. For the first violation, a student will receive a verbal warning, the second violation will result in a written warning, and third infraction and everyone thereafter will result in

disciplinary consequences. As a part of school safety and security, all missing fobs must be reported to the Main Office so that they may be deactivated and a new one will be issued at a \$10 replacement fee. Any lost lanyard can be replaced at \$5 fee, and if a student should lose their backup ID, a replacement fee of \$5 is issued.

Physical Education

Students are required to bring a complete change of clothes for Physical Education classes. These clothes should be safe and comfortable for exercise and should include a pair of sneakers. Dance Movement courses will have uniform requirements outlined on their class course expectation sheets.

Violations

A student who comes to school without their uniform must sign the “out of uniform” sheet in advisory. The Main Office staff will attempt to provide students with the uniform items they are missing. If this cannot be resolved, the student will receive a verbal warning. The first time a student is found to have an infraction in the dress code throughout the school day, the student will receive a verbal warning from School Life. The second time will result in parental notification as a written warning. All times thereafter, additional disciplinary consequences including but not limited to loss of dress down/up privileges, or mandatory inspection of the uniform before each school day, and conference with parent, student, and an administrator may occur.

CHAPTER 8 FINANCIAL POLICIES

Tuition Policy & Payment Plans

Tuition for Mount St. Mary Academy is paid through Blackbaud Tuition Management. Tuition may be paid via ACH bank account debit, check, money order, or credit card. Participation in the Blackbaud Tuition Management is mandatory; however, payment plan and payment method are flexible. The tuition for the **2026-27 school year is \$17,075 plus fees**. There is a non-refundable registration fee of \$500.00 for all students, which will be deducted from the tuition bill. There are three payment plans available:

- Plan A - Tuition paid in full due July 1st a 1.5% discount will be applied to accounts paid in full by such date.
- Plan B - 1/2 tuition payment due July 1st and 1/2 tuition payment due November 1st . If payments are received by the due dates, the following discounts will be applied: July 1st .75% discount; November 1st .75% discount.
- Plan C - 11 Monthly tuition payments are due on the first of each month, beginning with the first payment due on July 1st and the eleventh payment due on May 1st. Tuition due dates vary depending upon the payment method chosen.

Families who choose to receive a monthly statement and pay by mail will have a due date on the first of each month. Families who choose to pay by ACH bank account withdrawal or by credit card may choose a due date of either the 5th, 10th, 15th or 20th of the month. Only those seniors who have successfully fulfilled the academic requirements and financial obligations prescribed by Mount St. Mary Academy will participate in the graduation practices and the graduation ceremony.

Graduation announcements will not be distributed to individual seniors until all tuition, fees, and fines (library fines, lost or damaged textbook fines, lost key fob, etc.) are paid in full. If the regular payment(s)

due date for any graduating senior is scheduled to fall after the graduation date, that payment(s) due date will be adjusted to be due on May 1st.

Fees

The Administrative Fees for 2026-27 can be found here: [Tuition & Scholarships](#) on the Mount St. Mary Academy website.

Fees for Advanced Placement courses and Instrumental fee will be billed in October and due on November 1st. College Fees are paid directly to Niagara University, Hilbert College, Buffalo State, SUNY Erie and/or Canisius University at the start of each semester. Students who are enrolling for dual enrollment courses will be required to register online with the respective school and provide payment to the school(s) at that time. All fees are non-refundable.

The Senior Graduation Fee covers the cost of the following items: graduation announcements, graduation photo, diploma and cover, roses, Baccalaureate Mass, as well as several incidental expenses associated with the graduation ceremony. The Graduation Fee is due July 1st and will appear as such on the first tuition invoice. The Graduation Fee is non-refundable after December 1st. There is a \$50.00 insufficient funds fee charged by Blackbaud Tuition Management for all checks returned for “non-sufficient funds” or denied ACH payments.

All students are required to sell 10 - \$10.00 raffle tickets for the Chrysalis Auction Grand Raffle. Parents that choose to opt-out will have the \$100.00 charged directly to their tuition account. A letter will be sent home in fall of each year explaining the options and designating due dates.

Financial Aid / Scholarships / Grants

Financial Aid is determined based on need. There are limited in-house funds available for tuition assistance. Financial Aid that is awarded is not federal or state money. Applications for financial aid are available online at [FACTS Management - Financial Aid](#). Incoming Freshmen apply for assistance in Fall preceding the application year. Returning students may apply for financial aid with the partner program, FACTS Management, beginning February 1st preceding the application year and are due to FACTS by April 1st for the following school year.

Contact the Office of Enrollment and Family Engagement directly regarding any questions with the online application. Information will be shared regarding reapplying for all current students each February. Applications will be due April 1 of each school year for the upcoming school year. Recipients will be notified by June, when funds are awarded. All Financial Aid awards will be deducted from the tuition bill. Scholarships and Grants are based on predetermined qualifications at the time of Freshman acceptance. Scholarships and Grants will be deducted directly from the tuition bill.

Discounts

Catholic Educator Discount

Mount St. Mary Academy is dedicated to and firmly supports Catholic education. A 25% discount will be applied to the tuition accounts of those families who have at least one parent who is a full-time employee at a Catholic elementary school, a Catholic high school or a Catholic church. Families must have a demonstrated financial need to qualify for this discount. This discount will also be extended to full-time employees of Christian elementary schools, high schools, WNY Catholic Colleges, or churches, providing

that a financial need is demonstrated. Financial need is demonstrated by completing an application for Financial Aid via the FACTS Management. application. Applications for incoming freshmen are due by December 15th, prior to the start of freshman year; and for returning students, FACTS applications are due by April 1st. A letter of employment verification from the principal or pastor is required each year by May 1st. Discount determinations will be made at the discretion of the School Administration in conjunction with the policies set forth by the Board of Trustees.

Family Discount

The following discount schedule will be applied for families with more than one daughter attending Mount St. Mary Academy. Number of Daughters, (2) \$ 500.00, (3) \$ 1,000.00, (4) \$ 1,500.00

Student Withdrawal

If a student exits Mount St. Mary Academy for any reason, the tuition will be calculated on a pro-rated basis, broken down by semesters. If a student leaves at any time, for any reason, during a semester, the parent is responsible for that semester's tuition. Registration Fees, Administrative Fees, College, AP, and Band Fees are non-refundable and not prorated. The tuition account must be paid in full and all school issued materials (textbooks, mobile device and charger, etc.) must be returned prior to the release of transcripts and school records. If the student has been issued an electronic device, the full cost of that device must be paid if the device is either not returned or returned damaged. There will be a fee of \$125.00 per book for textbooks that are damaged or not returned.

Tuition Collection

- A tuition account is considered late when payment is not received by Blackbaud Tuition Management, Inc., by the date a parent has chosen on their Blackbaud Tuition Management account. A Late Fee of \$ 50.00 will be applied to any tuition account that is five days, or more, past its original due date. Additionally, Blackbaud Tuition Management, Co. will follow up directly with each delinquent account on a weekly basis, until the delinquency is resolved. Fees are assessed by Blackbaud Tuition Management.
- If tuition has not been received by the 15th day after its due date, a reminder letter will be mailed.
- If after 30 days the tuition has not been brought current, a 30-day letter will be mailed advising the parents of the late tuition and of the referral of the account to the Finance Committee.
- If this situation is not resolved within 15 days and the account is not current at the 45-day point, a dismissal letter will be sent advising the parent that the student will be dismissed from Mount St. Mary Academy. The student may not return to school until the tuition is brought current and a Promissory Note is signed.
- A Promissory Note may be signed at any time before or during the tuition collection process. The payment dates and terms will be determined by the payer in conjunction with the Finance Office. If at any time, a Promissory Note payment is delinquent, the student will be subject to immediate dismissal from school.
- If the delinquency cannot be resolved, Mount St. Mary Academy reserves the right to dismiss a student from school and to refer the account to a collection agency for further action. Interest charges and collection agency fees will be added to the account if it becomes necessary for these procedures to take place. The tuition account must be paid in full, and all textbooks returned prior to the release of transcripts and school records. There will be a fee of \$ 125.00 per book for textbooks that are damaged or not returned as well as the replacement cost of all electronic devices

that were issued to the student and not returned.

Re-registration

Mount St. Mary Academy has a continuous registration policy. All students are considered as returning for the following school year unless we are notified in writing by the parent or legal guardian. Mount St. Mary Academy will not require the resubmission of the Financial Registration Form each year. The re-registration fee of \$500.00 will be automatically added to the Blackbaud Tuition Management Tuition account in February, with a due date of March 1st. Mount St. Mary Academy reserves the right to amend the Tuition Policy as needed without prior notice.

CHAPTER 9 SCHOOL COUNSELING AND CAREER SERVICES

The school counselors provide individual counseling in a confidential setting; guidance of academic course selections; assistance in career, college, and scholarship research; testing and assessment; assistance with the college and scholarship application process; referrals to community resources; the means to create positive attitudes and choices; and guidance seminars which focus on the career and college selection process. The College and Career Center allows students to get direction and support on guidance-related issues such as scholarships, careers, colleges, and testing. The room may be used before and after school and during study halls for counseling related issues.

Students may see our school counselors as part of our goal of developing social and emotional wellness. If a parent does not want his/her child to receive these services, please send in a written letter indicating that. Otherwise, the students will have the services available to them in person. Please note information may be shared with appropriate school personnel for the care of the student. By signing the handbook, parents agree to have their daughter receive academic, social, and/or emotional counseling from Mount St. Mary Academy school counselors. Information on a need-to-know basis will be shared with other school personnel/parents as appropriate.

Academic Contract

Any student failing multiple subjects and/or not meeting academic requirements may be placed on an academic contract. The contract will define concrete expectations for the student to remain at Mount St. Mary Academy. Any violation of the contract will be reviewed by the principal. Contracts will be issued at the discretion of the School Counselor and the Assistant Principal.

Academic Ineligibility

Students' grades will be checked by the Counseling Department at the midpoint of each quarter (progress reports) and at the end of each grading quarter. Students who have below an average of 65 in two or more classes at either progress report or quarter close will be ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities and athletics until the next grade checkpoint (about every five weeks). A student may regain their eligibility after two weeks if they meet the following requirements:

- The student must meet with the teacher in the subject that they are failing on the first day of ineligibility and come up with an after-school schedule that will assist with remediation.
- Students must meet with the teacher on all assigned days.
- Students must complete all missing work and be current on assignments by the end of the two-

week review period.

- Students must receive a signature from the teacher stating the requirements have been met. The teacher will submit the signature sheet to the student's counselor.
- The students Counselor and the Assistant Principal will meet to determine if eligibility can be reinstated. The final decision will be determined by this committee in a timely manner. It is the student's sole responsibility to complete all requirements. Failure to complete any of these requirements will result in a student remaining ineligible until the next checkpoint.

Advanced Placement Course Information and Exams

The AP Program, administered by the College Board, allows students to take college level courses in high school and possibly earn college credit. Students in an AP course are required to take the AP exam in May. Scores on the exam determine whether credit is issued. Each college has its own criteria for if and how it will accept the credit.

It is important to understand the level of work and commitment involved with taking an AP course. The rich course material, class discussions, and demanding work help the student develop the critical thinking skills and knowledge base necessary to help succeed in college. Students enhance their writing skills, problem-solving ability, and confidence in their academic abilities. Colleges look favorably on students who challenge themselves with and do well in AP classes. AP exams are at least three hours in length. Students must remain in the room the entire time.

Advanced Placement Scores

AP scores are not reported on a student's transcript. It is up to the students to send them to the college of their choice.

Class Ranking

Students are not ranked unless they are first or second in the class. Valedictorian and Salutatorian are announced and determined after the student's third quarter of their senior year. We may indicate percentile ranks to a college or program if required.

College Board School Identification Number – 332675

College Level Courses

Each individual college determines if and how it will transfer the college credit students get for college courses taken in high school. Students are encouraged to contact individual colleges they are interested in to see how the credit will transfer.

College Visits

College visits are limited to two approved college visits. Juniors and seniors are permitted to make college visitations while classes are in session. To be recorded as in attendance for the day, students must return the College Visit Permission Form signed by teachers, parents, and guidance personnel to their counselor at least two days prior to the college visit. If any of these procedures have not been fulfilled, the student will be considered absent from school.

- **Participation in college visits is contingent on regular and consistent attendance in school. If excessive tardies or absences occur, and or the students' academic status is in jeopardy. The student will not be warranted an excused college visit.**

Course Challenge Policy

Should a student wish to challenge their placement into a course based upon a teacher recommendation, the student may obtain an application to challenge the placement from their school counselor. School counselors will confer with the department in question and render a decision. Decisions will be made in writing after reviewing the application. Changes will be reflected in the students' schedule and will be received after the completion of the school year.

Course Change Policy

When courses are selected, it is expected that there will be no further changes. There are no guarantees a request for course changes will be honored. Schedule changes for both semesters must be completed before the completion of the second week of classes in September. A student who drops a course after this time will receive a Withdrawal ("W") on their transcript for that course. Changes based on teacher preference, lunchtimes, or leaving early are not permitted.

Course Expectation Sheets

Every course will provide a course outline/statement of class expectations to be signed by both students and their parents. These sheets are to be returned to each teacher by the second full week of classes and will be kept on file by the teacher.

Course Selection Process

To provide as much guidance as possible and facilitate students' preferences, the course selection process is as follows: Teachers are asked to recommend students for specific courses and course levels for the next year based on their current academic performance. Students are given a Course Selection Catalog and meet individually with their counselor to determine course selections for the following academic year. Students need to have a minimum of 7 credits per year. Students need to have a minimum of 28 credits in total. If a reduced class schedule is possible in senior year, the student and school counselor must discuss in person. Classes taken over summer do not count as part of the required 7 credits. Counselors input course selections and course requests are mailed home for review. The master schedule is developed based on these individual schedule requests. Preference is given to senior requests, then junior requests, etc.

Individual schedules are generated from the master schedule. A list of courses for both semesters will be mailed to students in August. Please note that even though students request a particular elective, they may or may not be able to take it depending on whether it fits into their schedule and if the elective runs (based on student interest).

If students need to adjust this schedule, they are to see their school counselor. Any necessary schedule adjustments for the entire academic year must be made and finalized before the completion of the second week of classes. Schedules are given to students on the first day of classes. If a student is interested in participating in an NCAA Athletic Program, the Counseling Department must be notified. NCAA eligibility is contingent on courses taken during high school. Students must register with the Eligibility Center on their own no later than the end of junior year.

Examinations

Final exams are held in June. A project may be assigned at the discretion of the teacher in place of the

exam. All midterm and final exams and/or project grades appear on the student's report card. Final exams and projects must be kept on file by the school for one year. If a student wants a copy of her final project, they should make the copy before handing in the project. In the event of school closing on an exam day, the posted exam schedule shall remain in effect and missed exam(s) will be rescheduled for a later date.

Examination Guidelines for Students

- As a rule, exams begin at 8:00 a.m. for morning exams and 12:00 p.m. for afternoon exams. Students must be in the cafeteria by 7:45 a.m. for morning exams and 11:45 a.m. for afternoon exams. Students should follow the exam calendar. • School exams are two hours long.
- Students must leave all materials (book bags, books, purses, cell phones, etc.) outside the exam room. Students are not allowed at their lockers. Students are to always maintain silence in the exam room.
- The bus schedule remains the same unless announced otherwise. • Uniforms are not required during exam week. Neat, casual clothes are permitted, and all dress-down rules apply.
- Please see the Academic Integrity section for rules on cheating.

Grade Reports

A passing grade for each course is the average of the quarter grades and the midterm exam and final exam, or project. Students failing any course must attend an accredited summer school and repeat the course if offered. If a passing grade is not obtained, the student may be asked to withdraw from Mount St. Mary Academy. If a student fails two or more courses at the end of the year, the student's progress will be reviewed, and a decision will be made regarding her enrollment at Mount St. Mary Academy.

Honor Roll

A student is awarded First Honors if they maintain a 94.45% or higher average with no failures or an incomplete on the report card. A student is awarded Second Honors if they maintain an 89.45 to 94.44% average with no failures or incompletes on the report card. A student is awarded Merit Roll if they maintain an 84.45% to 89.44% average with no failures or incompletes on the report card. To compensate for the degree of difficulty among course levels, course averages and class ranks will be determined through a weighted grading system. Accelerated courses are weighted at 1.00, honors courses weighted at 1.02. Advanced Placement and college courses are weighted at 1.04. Course weighting appears in the student's overall average.

Letters of Recommendation

Letters of recommendation are confidential and intended to be honest and sincere evaluations of a student's performance, potential, and character. These letters are not shared with students, parents, or any other individuals unless the letter writer grants permission. It is the sole discretion of the writer whether he/she wishes to do this.

When completing a college application or mid-year report, school counselors may be asked questions regarding academic achievement, academic potential, character, extracurricular activities, and personal school conduct. Any student with an out-of-school suspension will be indicated as such on an application if asked. All information on these forms is considered confidential and school counselors will use the best judgment when disclosing information.

MSM Graduation Requirements

Subject Area	Total Credits Needed Notes
English	4 NYS requirement
Social Studies	4 NYS requirement
Math	4
World Languages	3* A 4th credit of EITHER World Languages or Science must be taken

Science	3* A 4th credit of EITHER World Languages or Science must be taken
Fine Arts (Art and Music)	1 NYS requirement
Health	0.5 NYS requirement
Physical Education	2 0.5 credit each year
Religion	2
Electives	3.5
Total Required	28

- A student must take Living Environment in 8th grade or during their high school career.
- Foundations of STEAM or Project STEAM (.5 credit) are required.
- Students must take 3 years of the same language.
- All students must participate in a school-sponsored Service and Justice Mission Week activity each year they are a student at MSM. Students will receive .25 credit for each experience completed.

Progress Reports

A student's academic progress is updated weekly on the portal. Progress reports may be sent home to parents/guardians when needed or when a student is failing. Ineligibility reports are generated at mid-quarters and at the end of the quarter. Parents are asked to consult the portal frequently for up-to-date

grade information. Progress reports are only mailed home if a student is failing a course.

SAT/ACT Score Reports

SAT and ACT scores are not put on a student's official transcript. It is up to the student to have scores sent directly to the college/program from the testing agency.

Transcripts

Official high school transcripts are sent directly to colleges, and/or scholarships for employers. This includes courses taken, grades, and overall GPA. No transcripts will be issued if an outstanding financial balance exists.

Resources for Families

Please contact your student's counselor, or Counseling Office for community referral information.

CHAPTER 10

MARIAN SERVANTS SERVICE REQUIREMENT

Our goal at Mount St. Mary Academy is to develop our students as servant leaders. Required service plays a significant role in fulfilling our Catholic mission to open the eyes of our students to become young people of integrity who are accepting of others and realizing that learning is a lifelong process. The goal of our service program is to challenge our students to develop a sense of discipleship, respect, compassion, and moral responsibility, thus providing the community with leaders dedicated to social justice and service with the spirit of the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur, founders of Mount St. Mary Academy: "In simplicity and joy have offered all to God."

Goals:

- To come to the realization service involves the development of relationships
- To experience and encounter God's love, grace, and wisdom in the margins of our society
- To be moved overtime from doing simple acts of charity to discovering the underlying **systemic** changes that need to take place
- To graduate from Mount St. Mary Academy with a clear sense of our call as Christians to do service and act with justice

Requirements:

- Each student must perform a minimum of 20 hours of service per school year.
- Service should be performed through a community organization and cannot be monetarily compensated. Working for and/or assisting family members, neighbors etc. is not considered service as part of this requirement.
- Hours performed as part of a Confirmation preparation program will be counted as part of this requirement.
- Students are responsible for logging their hours via the sheet provided in their Advisory Google Classroom. Each service experience must have verifiable contact with appropriate information (email and/or phone number).

- Total number of hours will be updated on student report cards for each marking period. Students should have at least half of the annual hours (10 hours) logged by the end of the second marking period.
- Seniors must have all their hours logged by the end of the third marking period. An additional reflection piece will be assigned and due prior to graduation.

Various service opportunities will be shared with the school community as they become available throughout the school year. Volunteering for school events is acceptable for the service requirement. Students who are struggling to find service opportunities are encouraged to talk with their school counselors, advisors, and members of the School Life team.

Service and Justice Experience

Each grade-level will participate in this experience during the school year. The hours served during that experience do not count towards an individual's hour requirements but are additional requirements. The SJ experience and the Marian Service requirement together will comprise the .25 credit hours gained each year towards graduation. We are proud that all our students will have completed a minimum of 100 hours of service during their time at Mount St. Mary Academy.

MOUNT ST. MARY ACADEMY STUDENT 1:1 DEVICE USE AGREEMENT

Each incoming student receives their own, dedicated MacBook Neo device. Use of said device is governed by the guidelines set forth in the “**Acceptable Use Policy for Technology**”, contained in the Mount St. Mary Academy Student Handbook.

On premise access to the Internet is monitored through our school's content-filtering software. Mount St. Mary Academy is not responsible for activity on other networks, including, without limiting thereto, networks utilized at each student's home.

The device, all applications, as well as all activities and documents stored on the device or in the cloud are the property of Mount St. Mary Academy and subject to regular review and monitoring by Mount St. Mary Academy staff, personnel and/or third-party consultants.

The device is considered the property of Mount St. Mary Academy. However, the device will remain in the student's possession throughout the student's enrollment at Mount St. Mary Academy.

Should a student exit Mount St. Mary Academy for a reason other than graduation, the device **MUST** be returned to the school. If the device is not returned, full replacement costs must be paid to Mount St. Mary Academy.

A student becomes the owner of the assigned 1:1 device upon graduation.

Acceptable Use Policy (AUP): Highlighted excerpts taken from the Student Handbook:

- Never share your password.
- School-provided “apps” will always take priority over personal content.
- Your device may be reset to factory default - at any time and for any reason.
- Repairs may require erasure of the device.
- All files must be saved to one of several cloud storage spaces (Google Drive, OneDrive, iCloud, etc.)
- Do not loan your device to anyone else.
- In the event a device and/or case is damaged, the device must be returned to the Mount St. Mary Academy Technology Department as soon as possible.
- In the event a device is lost, Mount St. Mary Academy Technology Department must be notified as soon as possible

PLEASE REFER TO THE STUDENT HANDBOOK FOR ALL TERMS AND CONDITIONS ASSOCIATED WITH MOUNT ST. MARY ACADEMY'S ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY.

BY SIGNING BELOW, IT IS HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT:

- I acknowledge and consent to the above-highlighted terms and conditions.

- I acknowledge that I have read and understand the expectations set forth in the **full** Acceptable Use Policy set forth in the Mount St. Mary Academy Student Handbook.
- I consent and agree to the use of all school-sanctioned applications by student.
- I consent and agree to receive email communications from Mount St. Mary Academy.
- I acknowledge receipt of an assigned MacBook Neo device.

STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Date: _____

Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____