

OUR MOTHER OF SORROWS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

JUNIOR HIGH STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK ADDENDUM

A supplement to the OMOS Parent Handbook

Required reading for Junior High parents and students

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Junior High Honor Code

We, the Junior High students of Our Mother of Sorrows Catholic School, have written an honor code which reflects our commitment to live our faith, to meet the goals of the OMOS Student Learning Expectations, to align our actions with the tenets of Catholic Social Teachings, and to practice the skills of Discipline with Purpose. We also pledge to CARE - to show courtesy, accountability, respect, and effort. As a member of this community, I affirm these statements.

1. I will live my life as a Christian by following in Jesus' footsteps and being a friend to everyone.
2. As a community, we can build a better community together.
3. I will help all of God's creation.
4. Life requires participation in activities.
5. We are all one family in Christ.
6. I will follow the rules and be responsible for my actions.
7. I will take care of myself and others by owning my actions.
8. I will put effort in school, work, and sports every day.
9. I should give everybody a chance to be themselves no matter what they do.
10. I will use the T-P-T test before I act.

OMOS Student Learning Expectations

Student Learning Expectations (SLEs) are defined by the Diocese as what students should know, understand, and be able to do by graduation. The SLEs “exhibit a culmination of their learning in a real world context that has significant purpose and meaning for them and others.”

Our Mother of Sorrows students are:

Active Christians who:

- live prayer in daily life
- actively participate in liturgical, paraliturgical, and sacramental celebrations
- read, comprehend, and spread the message of the Gospel

Active Community Builders who:

- develop and use life skills to build community
- show respect and tolerance toward diverse people and ideas
- demonstrate ethical and moral behavior and decision making

Responsible Global Citizens who:

- practice corporal and spiritual works of mercy
- recognize the dignity and worth of those whom we serve
- show consideration and responsibility toward God’s creation

Engaged Learners who:

- meet academic goals individually and collaboratively
- can apply problem solving techniques to a variety of situations
- use a wide variety of educational resources including technology
- participate in ancillary programs

Religious Education and Confirmation Preparation

The junior high religion classes also serve as a two-year preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation. We desire to send students to high school not just equipped with academic and social skills, but also confidently embracing their spiritual gifts.

Choosing to receive the sacrament of Confirmation is a matter of discernment. However, all students enrolled in the OMOS junior high program are expected to participate in formation activities, even if they do not plan to be confirmed in their 8th grade year. This is also true for students who may have already received the sacrament in another parish. As growth experiences related to the fulfillment of the SLEs, participation in the Christian service projects component of the program is required for all students.

Parents of 8th grade Confirmandi are expected to attend the sacrament preparation meetings organized by the Director of Religious Education. A detailed calendar of events is included in the packet parents receive at the August Confirmation meeting facilitated by Mrs. Stehle, the OMOS DRE. In general, all concerns related to the Confirmation program should be directed to Mrs. Stehle.

Junior High Classroom Management

Teacher Responsibilities:

1. To place SLE outcomes at the core of learning experiences
2. To create a positive learning climate in which students can achieve their unique potential
3. To treat students with respect and care
4. To maintain a moral and ethical classroom environment
5. To teach the skills of self-discipline
6. To teach the required subject content
7. To uphold the Junior High Honor Code

Student Responsibilities:

1. To strive to embrace the SLEs as primary learning goals
2. To treat teachers and fellow students with respect and care
3. To take responsibility for what you say and do
4. To practice the skills of self-discipline
5. To study, complete homework, and the learn to the best of his/her ability the subject content
6. To uphold the Junior High Honor Code

Classroom Expectations:

1. Students are to demonstrate respect for themselves and their fellow classmates by being supportive and positive.
2. After the gates open at 7:30 a.m., junior high students report to and are seated under the northeast ramada in the courtyard. Students are to remain in the ramada area until 7:40 when a junior high teacher will arrive and direct students to classrooms. Anyone arriving after 7:40 a.m. should report directly to homeroom. Early arrival is especially critical on Mass days.
3. Students should plan to arrive at school by 7:40 a.m. when classrooms open. By 8:00, students should be prepared for morning classes.
4. In general, students are not permitted to return to homerooms to retrieve materials that are left behind. Returning to a classroom once class has begun disrupts the learning environment. Obviously, when a student does not have the materials needed for class, he/she will not fully benefit from the day's lesson. As such, it will be the student's responsibility (not unlike a situation created by an absence) to attend to whatever consequences transpire as a result of having come to class unprepared.
5. **The previous night's homework is to be completed before students arrive at school.** Homework is DUE when the teacher asks for it and considered LATE thereafter.
6. Assignments from other subjects may not be worked on in class unless you have obtained permission to do so from the teacher whose class is actually in session.
7. **Students are responsible for obtaining and completing all assignments and gathering pertinent information that is missed due to an absence, tardy, mid-day appointment, or early dismissal.** To receive full credit for make-up work, assignments must be turned in within the time frame prescribed by school policy.

Junior High Discipline Cycle

OMOS All School Rules

These affect the daily living together of all members of the school community:

1. Show respect to self, others and your school.
2. Contribute to the learning environment.
3. Follow school and classroom procedures.

Discipline with Purpose

The 15 skills of Discipline with Purpose are foundational life skills that, when practiced, lead students to a mature level of self-discipline reflective of our values and faith. The skills of self-discipline must be taught and modeled, and students need guided opportunities to practice these developmental skills. When a student is in need of such a growth opportunity, teachers will exercise options to teach skills and redirect the student to self-discipline. When a student is unable or unwilling to demonstrate progress in practicing a skill, teachers reserve the right to defer to the school administration for further action. Teacher response will be geared toward individual need, but the following plan exemplifies a potential course of action.

We acknowledge and respect the parents' right to be informed of formal disciplinary actions taken in response to student's behavior. Minor issues that simply involve the student's opportunity to self-correct or redirect behavior will not likely result in parent contact unless the behavior is repeated, is happening in more than one class, or is beginning to look a pattern.

STUDENT ACTION:

Student is not practicing self-discipline or contributing positively to the learning environment.

Student is still not practicing self-discipline skills, despite teacher redirection and self-correction opportunities.

Desired results have not been achieved.

Violations of the "Big Three" automatically fall outside this protocol. Administrative intervention may be called upon at any time in the process.

RESPONSE:

Teacher communicates to the student that his or her behavior/conduct requires modification. Student is made aware of the teacher's expectations as to what constitutes appropriate behavior in the given situation. There is an expectation of self-correction and redirection.

Teacher options include:

- 1) The teacher may engage the student in a formal one-on-one conference. Parents will be notified that a conference occurred.
- 2) Detention may be served during the lunch period. When a student serves a lunch detention, his/her parents will be notified via Renweb email.
- 3) The student may be asked to formally articulate his or her plan for behavior modification and address any need to make amends.
- 4) Loss of a privilege, such as a dance.
- 5) A 45-minute after-school detention may be assigned. A Notice of Detention will be sent home via student for parents to sign and return. Detention will be served on the day following its assignment or on the following Monday in the case of Thursday or Friday assignment.

Parent/teacher contact will be formally made. An action plan will be devised.

The “Big Three”

There are times when an adult may have to take immediate disciplinary action:

1. When a student is in or places others in physical or psychological danger.
2. A student is abusive in tone, gesture, or word.
3. A student’s behavior is out of control.

The T-P-T Test

Test your behavior by asking yourself three questions BEFORE you act:

1. Is this an O.K. thing to do?
2. Is this an O.K. place to do it?
3. Is it an O.K. time to do it?

If the answer to any of these questions is **NO**, then... **STOP!**

Clarification of Detention-Related Issues

After-school detention is a potential consequence of a student’s lack of self-discipline. Detention will be served Monday through Thursday from 3:15 - 4:00 p.m. Detention will be served on the day following its assignment or on the following Monday in the case of Thursday or Friday assignment.

In instances where a student is required to serve detention, the detention will be served on the day following the issue of the Notice of Detention. The Notice of Detention will be given to the student by the teacher assigning detention, and the student will take the notice home for parent alert and signature. The form must be returned the next day, or the student will be required to call a parent to rectify the situation. A student’s failure to notify his or her parents that he or she has received detention will not change the fact that detention is expected to be served on its assigned day.

Generally, detention dates will not be altered to accommodate student or parent schedules. Detention is a behavior modification strategy, and making it convenient for a student or parent defeats its purpose. That said, exceptions will be made for medical appointments. Other exceptions may be made for urgent circumstances, but parents must communicate with teachers before rescheduling will be approved.

Should a student-athlete have to serve detention on a practice or game day, the student will forfeit the right to participation on that day. A student-athlete who usually reports to practice after school would be required to check into the after-school program rather than arrive late for practice. Parents may choose to pick their son or daughter up after detention if they prefer their child not attend the after-school program; either way, participation in any sports-related activity is forfeited for the day if a student serves detention. Forfeiture of other after school activities, such as Student Council or any other after-school activity, will also be enforced.

If a student does not serve detention on the assigned day and time, then detention will be served for the next two consecutive days. Should detention be missed a second time, the matter will be referred to the principal.

Public Displays of Affection (PDA)

The nature of a preschool through Grade 8 setting presents unique challenges in defining "appropriateness" in terms of developmentally normal behavior. By the junior high years, young teens may develop attractions for one another, and it is appropriate that they engage in well-supervised group activities such as our school dances or skating parties. It is inappropriate, however, especially in view of the range of ages of our school population, for students to engage in public displays of affection anywhere on school property or at any off-campus OMOS-sponsored event.

Hugging

Again, while showing affection for one's friends by exchanging brief hugs is perhaps age-appropriate, hugging at school can be problematic for several reasons. The "no PDA" policy is aimed at disallowing overt displays of affection between boys and girls who see themselves as a "couple." Teachers, however, cannot be expected to judge when hugs at school are being exchanged between "just friends," as opposed to those who view themselves as something more exclusive. Another concern is that hugging, especially among girls, often becomes a means of publicly indentifying alliances while socially snubbing others. Public hugging declares who is in favor and who is out, and can be used as a bullying strategy. Finally, the hugging that goes on in the courtyard in the morning and at dismissal time can be disruptive. The dismissal process in the courtyard is hectic and crowded, and the area in front of the north building double doors tends to become congested as students dart around to collect hugs before exiting the courtyard.

Dance Decorum

Three dances are calendared each school year for currently enrolled OMOS junior high students. Guests are not permitted. The dances are chaperoned by OMOS personnel. Dances are viewed as developmentally appropriate opportunities for students to practice acceptable social skills. To that end:

- In a spirit of fellowship, all invitations to dance should be accepted.
- Students will be gracious in accepting and in declining invitations to dance.
- Students may not engage in dance moves that are overtly sexual. No body slamming or "mosh-pit" behavior is permitted.
- When "slow" dancing, hands will be placed at the waist or upon the shoulders.
- Song dedications are not permitted.

Homework Policies

Diocesan guidelines define the amount of time suggested for homework in Grades 7-8 as 60-90 minutes per day. Many factors, however, can affect the actual time an individual student requires to complete homework. Key to a student's efficiency is time management, both in class and out of school. Students who do not use class time efficiently often take home unfinished class work, adding to the time needed for actual homework and for preparation for the next day's classes. Procrastination on assignments given several days to complete or on long-term projects can also give the appearance that homework has been "piled on" on any given evening.

It is essential that students learn to effectively manage time before making the transition to high school. The use of the school-issued agenda is mandatory. Organization is a fundamental DWP skill that must be taught, practiced, and learned.

Students are in error when they view homework as strictly the completion of "hard-copy" assignments. Students who say they "have no homework" are, in effect, telling parents that they have no unfinished work that will be collected the next day. While such may be true, time still should be devoted to study and review. The goal is to establish a routine and develop a work ethic that clearly marks school work as a student's top priority.

General Homework Guidelines/Policies:

- Homework is the student's responsibility. The parents' responsibility is to provide a quiet study space for students.
- All homework must be complete and of acceptable quality. **Incomplete, sloppy, and/or quick work may be required to be redone and/or subject to lower grading.**
- Homework is expected to be complete when the student arrives for school. The 7:40 – 8:00 a.m. homeroom period is not a time to finish homework that should have been done the night before, nor can students hope to find time in the course of a new school day to complete a previous day's assigned work.
- Homework that is not complete when class begins is subject to a late grade. Students may not fill in answers for unfinished work if the assignment is reviewed in class before the teacher collects it (answers may be filled in with red ink, if the teacher permits). **To do so would be an honor violation and would result in the assignment's receiving a zero.**
- Work that is turned in late is subject to penalty. As the interval between the due date and the time an assignment is actually turned in grows, the paper's value continues to decrease.
- Some assignments may not be eligible to be accepted for late credit.
- Students present for any portion of a school day are expected to turn in all homework, whether or not they attend all classes. Students are responsible for the work's delivery to teachers.
- Students present **for any portion** of a school day are also responsible for getting any materials or worksheets needed for that evening's homework in any class they miss due to late arrival, early dismissal, or mid-day pull-out.
- Students who will experience a planned-absence on a stated due-date for a long-term assignment are expected to turn in all work before leaving school.
- In preparation for the rigors of high school, some homework may be assigned over week-ends and on special event nights.

Integrity Issues and Homework

Generally, homework is assigned to promote independent mastery of content and skills. During the learning phase of any content or skill, however, it is reasonable for students on the road to mastery to require help from others. As such, cooperative learning can be an effective teaching strategy. What students are wont to understand, however, is that there is a world of difference between cooperative learning and simply exchanging answers.

Students are encouraged to:

- Seek out partners who will truly help facilitate learning
- Discuss processes that lead to solutions
- Teach others methods that will enable them to solve problems on their own

An honor violation occurs when:

- A student copies answers directly from another person's work
- A student allows another person to copy their work
- A student verbally gives or receives answers

No student should be in possession of another student's homework, worksheets, or workbooks. Any honor violation will result in disciplinary action and grade reduction for the assignment in question. This will be true for both/all parties involved.

All of these statements address violations that would occur in the classroom setting. There are, however, perhaps more challenges to integrity and honor outside of the classroom. It is equally dishonest to share answers over the phone or via computer/internet. The tenets of the Junior High Honor Code should extend beyond the classroom.

Absenteeism

Students are to avoid being absent, if at all possible. While it may be possible to complete some assignments missed due to absence, many classroom learning experiences cannot be truly replicated. **While absence due to illness cannot be avoided, parents are urged to avoid taking students out of school when it is not absolutely necessary.** This is also true for both late arrival and early dismissal.

General Policies Related to Absences:

- If a student is absent one day, he/she must turn in the homework for the missed day on the day after returning to school. If a student is absent two days, he/she must turn in all work two days after returning. If he/she is absent three days, all work must be turned in within three days, etc., not to exceed five days.
- In the event of a planned absence, parents should alert all teachers (not just the home room teacher) with as much notice as possible. Only with plenty of advance notice can teachers organize work that may be done while the student is away. It might not be possible for all learning experiences to be prepared for completion outside of school. Teachers may require that some assignments/quizzes/tests be done BEFORE the student is absent from school.
- A student present for any portion of a school day is expected to turn in all homework, whether or not he/she attends all classes. The student is responsible for the work's delivery to teachers.
- A student present for any portion of a school day is also responsible for getting any materials or worksheets needed for that evening's homework in any class missed due to late arrival, early dismissal, or mid-day pull-out.
- If a student is absent, whether due to illness or because of a planned absence, on a day that a long-term project or assignment due, the work must be delivered to the school office by 8:00 a.m. on the stated due-date. A student who will be experiencing a planned absence on such a due date must turn in the project prior to leaving school.

Homework Requests

When a student is absent, it is not necessary for junior high parents to request homework when calling the school office to report their child's absence. Homework sheets are prepared and materials are gathered for absent students in the course of general junior high procedure. Parents may pick up their child's homework at dismissal time; the collected materials will have been placed in a storage unit marked "HOMEWORK" which sits in the junior high hallway between Rooms 13 and 15.

Parents should make every effort to pick up homework when their child is absent from school. If, however, materials are not picked up for the absentee, the student must retrieve their gathered books and materials from the storage drawers upon his/her return to school.

Participation in School Activities Following an Absence

Anytime a student is absent from school, the absence precludes the student's participation in any on-site or off-site school-sponsored event scheduled for the day of the absence. This includes sports practices and games, dances, skate parties, play practices or performances, field trips, or any other event or activity affiliated with Our Mother of Sorrows Catholic School.

Test Taking Policies

During a test, the student will:

- Face forward while sitting properly in the desk
- Sit with feet on the floor and hands on the desktop
- Keep eyes focused on his or her own paper
- Come prepared with all tools/materials allowed for use during the test
- Clear the desk surface of all superfluous materials and place all other personal possessions on the desk rack under the seat or on the floor
- Remain seated at all times; permission to leave the desk must be granted by the teacher
- Raise his or her hand if assistance is needed

It will be considered an honor violation if a student

- Looks on someone else's paper or allows another student to look at theirs
- Has in possession or on their person, notes or information pertaining to the test
- Leaves notes or other materials exposed within sight
- Uses information from any external source; all work during test time must be the product of the student's own brain

An honor violation may result in a student's receiving a zero on the test.

Test Taking Following an Absence

Junior high teachers give anywhere from four days to two weeks notice for each major test. Students are responsible for being prepared for the tests on the days they are given. **If a student is absent on the day a test is given, they should be prepared to take the test on the day they return to school. Policy, however, will allow students a minimum of one school day to prepare for a make-up test.** Students must confer with teachers on the day of their return after an absence to schedule make-up tests. Teachers will decide when a reasonable expectation of preparedness can be achieved. Quizzes may be given without notice. **Generally, all make-up tests will be administered after school.**

If a student is present for any portion of a school day on which a test is to be administered, the student must make arrangements to take the test in the course of that same school day. If a test is missed due to a late arrival, or will be missed because of a planned early dismissal or mid-day pull-out, it is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with the teacher to take the test at another time during that same day.

Plagiarism

The American Heritage Dictionary defines *plagiarism* as “the use and passing off as one’s own the ideas or writings of another.” Plagiarism is a serious offense. Junior high students generally understand that copying directly from published works constitutes plagiarism, but frequently they mistake other acts as permissible. Plagiarism also occurs when:

- Text is cut from a web site or document and pasted into one’s own document
- An author’s words are simply rearranged and placed into one’s paper
- The student substitutes a few synonyms for an author’s original word choices
- Ideas found elsewhere passed off as original ideas

Students are taught how to acceptably paraphrase, cite sources, and attribute credit. As such, students who plagiarize will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include the nullification of the any grade earned on the assignment found to be plagiarized.

Communication/Conferencing Procedures

Both RenWeb and the OMOS school website are key tools in our communication network. By accessing RenWeb, parents may:

- Check gradebooks for student progress
- Check homework posted for the week
- Read announcements posted by teachers
- Post e-mails to teachers

The OMOS school website is your source for the principal’s newsletter, announcements, monthly calendars, hot lunch menus, down-loadable files, and links. Teacher web pages may be accessed at this site, as well. Teachers are most easily accessed via e-mail. Calls may also be placed to the school office, and a message will be left for a teacher. Every effort will be made to respond to a parent within 24-hour during the school week.

Parents are asked to check their email regularly, if not daily, to ensure they are informed of and act upon time-sensitive issues. If a parent does not have an email account and must receive hard copies of school letters and other notices, it is their responsibility to notify the school office and the student’s homeroom teacher of such need. A student’s verbal request for hard copies will not suffice; parents must make a written request to be placed on a “hard copy” list.

Formal Reports

RenWeb provides parents with the most current grade averages available at any given time. A progress report will be sent home at mid-trimester. Progress reports must be signed by parents and returned to the student’s homeroom teacher. A parent may request a hard-copy update of grades at any time. Allow 24-hours notice to fulfill the request.

Report cards will be issued three times per year. Report cards for the first two trimesters of the school year must be signed and returned to school.

Conferences

A conference may be called by a student, parent, teacher, or other school official. Since it is a primary goal of the Engaged Learner to share responsibility for learning, students are often included in formal conferences. Frequently, a conference will consist of several teachers on the junior high team with parents and the student. Such “group” conferences often give the best picture of the situation at hand and yield the best strategies for goal-setting and improvement. Conferences must be formally scheduled with the teacher with whom a parent wishes to speak. Unscheduled “drop-in” conferences cannot generally be accommodated.

First-Trimester Conferences

First-trimester progress report conferences are attended by the student and parents. Students are active participants in the conferences, and they share their insights as to their accomplishments, weaknesses, and future goals. Therefore, student attendance is mandatory.

Observing a "Chain of Command"

Good communication between home and school is essential for the well-being of students. It is inevitable, however, that situations will arise where miscommunication or simply a lack of communication will lead to parental concerns. In situations where parents are concerned about a classroom matter or where there may be a conflict, parents are expected to first contact the teacher involved and attempt to settle the matter at this basic level.

Contacting the school administration or the parish pastoral staff should not be the parent's first step in resolving classroom concerns. Should a parent contact the principal or pastor as a first step toward any conflict resolution involving a teacher, he or she will be redirected back to the teacher. Such high level intervention should only be sought when the parties directly involved cannot mediate a satisfactory solution.

Conflict Resolution

In general, conflicts between and among those affiliated with the junior high will be mediated in a manner closely aligned with policies outlined in the Parent Handbook. The goals of all conflict resolution are to bring about justice, to seek reconciliation among aggrieved parties, and to facilitate the making of amends.

Administrative Actions

The general OMOS Parent Handbook contains detailed policy statements regarding matters related to probation; suspension; expulsion/required withdrawal; student withdrawal on grounds of parent behavior; harassment; tobacco, drugs, and alcohol; pregnancy; weapons; searches; and promotion and retention. While all junior high policies are in alignment with these Diocesan mandates, there are some policy statements that refer specifically to the junior high student. Those statements are reiterated here. Also included are policies unique to the OMOS Junior High.

Probation

All junior high students new to Our Mother of Sorrows Catholic School will have at least a six-week probationary period. Probation for new students is both academic and social. At the end of the probationary period, a formal review of student progress will be made. Teachers will determine whether the student has assimilated well and is making satisfactory progress. If progress is unsatisfactory, teachers may recommend that the probationary period be extended or, if circumstances warrant, a Resource evaluation be done. In some cases, the principal may recommend that the student voluntarily withdraw.

Harassment

Harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, or disability is prohibited. Harassment would include verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward a student because of his/her race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age or disability, or that of his/her relatives, friends, or associates. General harassment that is intended to intimidate, belittle, or erode self-esteem will not be tolerated. Any form of harassment that is repeated over time may fall into the category of bully behavior.

Sexual Harassment

Our Mother of Sorrows Catholic School will not tolerate and prohibits sexual harassment of its students at school by any person (including fellow students) and in any form.

During the adolescent years, there is a heightened awareness of matters related to sexuality that is developmentally appropriate. Many behaviors with sexual overtones or implications displayed by teens, however, are inappropriate in our setting. In addition to policy statements regarding sexual harassment set by the Diocese, the OMOS Junior High adds the following points:

- No jokes, remarks, gestures, drawings, or photos with sexual connotations will be tolerated. This is true whether or not the content or action is directed at a person associated with Our Mother of Sorrows Catholic School or not.
- Name-calling that is rooted in gender or sexual denigration is prohibited. Specifically, using the word “gay” in any negative context, or any slur with a connotation related to sexuality, is prohibited. While such language is prevalent in modern culture, its use will not be tolerated in any context at school, regardless of the speaker’s intentions.
- For some, touching of any kind is unwelcome. Students must respect each other’s “personal space.”

OMOS Bullying Policy

The OMOS Bullying Policy is enforced school-wide. The complete text of the OMOS Bullying Policy can be reviewed in the OMOS Parent Handbook. As the policy has implications related to off-campus behaviors that spill over and impact the school learning environment, parents of junior high-aged students should be aware of the increased incidence of cyber-bullying that can occur at this age. Parents are urged to closely monitor their children’s cyber-activities.

Promotion and Retention

Policies related to promotion and retention are detailed in the full OMOS Parent Handbook and are in accordance with Diocesan policies. Additionally, a student who is not promoted at the end of seventh or eighth grade year will not be allowed to re-enroll at Our Mother of Sorrows Catholic School the subsequent year.

Transition to High School

In late May, the students’ completion of their 8th grade year is marked with a Baccalaureate Mass and an evening scripture service. These are events at which all 8th graders and their families may celebrate this transition milestone.

Promotion to 9th Grade

A student is promoted to the 9th grade if minimum 8th grade coursework requirements are met. A student’s academic record will not indicate promotion to 9th grade if a student earns **as their final year-end grade** a 64% average or below in two or more core subjects. Core subjects include English, religion, social studies, algebra, and science. Students who do not receive a Certificate of Promotion will be issued a Certificate of Attendance. This distinction in no way impacts the student’s inclusion in the Baccalaureate Mass or the evening scripture service.

The fact that a student does not earn promotion from OMOS will not necessarily prevent him/her from enrolling in high school as a 9th grader. Any implications (e.g., the requirement of summer school, exclusion from some activities during the freshman year, or retention in 8th grade) will be determined by the high school at which the student plans to enroll. Earning a failing grade in any subject, however, can have serious consequences for a student admitted to a Catholic high school, a private school, or TUSD’s University High School (UHS). Acceptance to these schools is conditional until receipt of final transcripts and may be rescinded.

High School Planning

The seventh and eighth grade years are foundational in transitioning to the high school setting. For those interested in attending a high school that is selective in terms of admissions, it will be critical for the student to establish him or herself as well-rounded and dedicated to fulfilling academic potential. Parents and students should keep the following points in mind as they navigate the high school matriculation process:

- The primary responsibility for keeping abreast of high school registration procedures falls to parents. OMOS will post notices as they are received from various high schools. Parents should make inquiries directly to the high schools in which they have interest. Admissions packets must be obtained from the high schools or downloaded from their websites.
- Admissions/placement testing is required for Catholic high schools and for admission to UHS. Parents will be notified of upcoming testing dates and venues, but it is the parents' responsibility to make arrangements for the actual testing. School missed for admissions/placement testing is considered an excused absence.
- Parents must provide the school with written requests (usually form letters supplied by the high school) for transcripts. OMOS will mail transcripts directly to the high school.
- Copies of report cards requested by high schools must be provided by parents.
- **CRITICAL POINT: In evaluating a student's application for admission, high schools examine grades earned during the second half of the 7th grade year and the grades earned during the first half of the eighth grade year. All admissions, however, are contingent upon the receipt of a final transcript after the completion of 8th grade.**
- Catholic high schools will require parish verification. The admissions packet will include a form that must be signed by the pastor of the parish to which the family belongs. Parents must send this form directly to their parish office.
- All Catholic and most private high schools require teacher and administrator recommendations. Again, these forms are included in admissions packets. As a courtesy, a student, not a parent, should give the recommendation form directly to the person who is being asked to complete it; also, a student should make a *request* of the writer, not just hand the teacher the form.
- Parent releases must be signed on the teacher recommendation form or it will not be completed. The form should also have the student's name on it.
- All OMOS 8th graders may participate in visitation days to Salpointe and St. Augustine Catholic high schools if invitations are issued. "Shadow Days" may be scheduled at San Miguel Cristo Rey and Immaculate Heart for interested students.
- Students who will enroll in local public schools are excused from class for scheduled orientation days and for registration.
- Magnet schools in TUSD are filled by lottery. Contact any school in TUSD for magnet school information.
- The neighborhood high school that services the area where a student lives will have special registration procedures for those wishing to enroll in honors and GATE classes. Teacher recommendations will be required; parents should forward any paperwork to be completed as soon as it is made available.

8th Grade Trip

The “8th Grade Trip” is an event that is scheduled year by year, and is calendared by the principal only after it is determined to have sufficient parent support for the fund-raising that will be required and after a minimum number of travelers for economic feasibility have committed to the trip. The itinerary for the trip itself may vary from year to year.

Parents and students should note that individual attendance on the class trip is privilege, not a right. A student may lose the privilege to attend the class trip as a consequence related to administrative disciplinary action. Any decision to revoke a student’s travel privileges rests with the principal.

Parents and students must understand that the fees set for a class trip are based upon the number of travelers who commit to the excursion. The loss of even one student who commits to the trip can impact the costs for the other travelers. As such, any student who loses the privilege to travel as a result of disciplinary action may forfeit fees already paid and be asked to pay in full if their removal from the roster would force classmates to pay higher fees.

It is policy that only teachers and school administrators/staff may serve as chaperones for the class trip.

Junior High Uniform Dress Code

The OMOS Uniform and Dress Code has been established to maintain appropriate dress for students. A student's appearance cannot be a distraction from the learning environment; students are expected to dress cleanly and modestly without reminders. Dress code is in effect before, during, and after school hours when students are determined to be in the control of school personnel. Compliance with the uniform and dress code is not voluntary. A dress code violation may result in a disciplinary action. OMOS teachers and administrators make the interpretation of what is acceptable or unacceptable, and the consequential disciplinary action for objectionable dress.

Our Mother of Sorrows Junior High will strictly enforce the school's uniform and dress code. There are, however, some privileges extended to junior high students:

- Junior high students may wear maize (yellow) polo shirts purchased through Lands’ End. Additionally, the Drifter pullover sweater is also available in maize.
- Junior high students, both girls and boys, may wear traditional long-sleeved or short-sleeved Oxford shirts in white, blue, or chamois (yellow); blue and chamois Oxfords must carry the *Junior High* logo and be purchased through Lands’ End. Ties are recommended with Oxford shirts on Mass days.
- Traditional ties for boys and girls must be in dress code colors, either solids, stripes, or small patterns. Theme ties (Disney, NFL, etc.) are not permitted.
- Girls may also wear criss-cross Lands’ End neckties in OMOS plaid or in solid dress code colors.
- When purchasing logo items through Lands’ End, indicate “Junior High logo” on your order. Junior high students may wear logo items with the plain OMOS design purchased in previous years or handed down from older siblings, provided the items are in good repair and still fit appropriately. New purchases made from Lands’ End specifically for a junior high student should be ordered with the junior high logo.
- Girls may wear ballet flats with peds. Tattered-fabric styles are prohibited. Athletic shoes must be worn for P.E.
- In addition to small post and hoop earrings, girls may wear small drop-style earrings that hang no more than a 1/2-inch below the lobe.
- 7th and 8th grade girls may wear lightly applied make-up in a natural color. Eyeliner (no product of any kind may be used to outline eyes), pencil, colored mascara, and other than neutral shades of eye shadow are not allowed. No glitter products (including lotions or moisturizers) may be used at school.
- Girls may wear clear nail polish on both fingers and toes; acrylic nails and French manicures are not allowed.
- Chapstick, lipgloss etc. must be clear. Again, glitter products may not be used.
- Make-up may not be applied at school, nor may it be reapplied at school after PE.
- Bows and other hair ornaments (flowers, attachments to headbands, etc.) must be small, no more than 3” in diameter, and must be in dress code colors. Red hair ornaments may only be worn with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit shirt or on other spirit/free dress days.

Dress Code Restrictions

- Shirts will be neatly tucked.
- Undershirts must be solid (dress code-approved) colors. Undergarments for girls, including t-shirts or camisoles should be white or flesh-toned.
- Wristwatches may not be wide-band fashion styles. A wristwatch, including its face, should be of a plain, traditional style.
- Headbands and other hair accessories must be in dress code colors.
- No visible tattoos (either permanent or temporary), brands, piercing or other body art is allowed.
- Male students may not wear earrings.
- Students may not draw upon themselves or others with markers, paints, or other staining products.
- Students may not wear strongly scented body sprays or lotions.

Friday T-shirt Days

- Any OMOS t-shirt, with the exception of a PE shirt, or current YouthFest shirt may be worn with dress code bottoms. T-shirts may not be tight fitting, or pulled and secured in some way to alter their original shape.

Game Days

- Athletes on OMOS sports teams may wear their uniform jersey to school on game days. If a game day falls on a Mass day, students must wear a regular uniform shirt to Mass and change into the team shirt afterwards.

Reminders (copied from the school's main dress code)

- **Blouses:** Long or short-sleeved, collared blouses in white only. They must remain tucked in at all times. Collars should be free of frills.
- **Shirts:** Lands' End collection *or* solid white or navy non-logo 2 or 3 button polo shirts (boys or girls) are allowed in either long or short sleeves. Shirts should be of the classic polo style, with traditional sleeves and cut so as not to be form-fitting. Shirts must be of a sufficient length to remain tucked in at all times. If desired, white or navy turtlenecks and white t-shirts may be worn under shirts.
- **Pants/Slacks:** Navy or tan/khaki pants/slacks must be ankle length, belted if it is a belt loop style and kept at waist level. Pants should be made of a traditional gabardine/twill fabric. Pants/slacks may not be ripped, torn, ragged, oversized, or skin tight. Denim material, low rise, cargo pockets, or rivets are also not acceptable.
- **Capris:** Navy or tan/khaki Capri pants are subject to the same requirements and restricts as stated for pants/slacks. Capri length is acceptable at **mid-calf** only. Regular length slacks may not be rolled up to Capri length.
- **Shorts:** Navy or tan/khaki shorts are subject to the same requirements and restrictions as stated for pants/slacks. Shorts should be a modest length of not more than 4" above the knee and no longer than knee length. They may not be oversized or skin tight. Cargo pockets are not acceptable.
- **Skirts:** School uniform vendor, Lands' End collection; navy, tan/khaki, or plaid skirts should be a modest length of not more than 4" above the knee and no longer than knee length. Spandex shorts may be worn underneath.
- **Skorts:** School uniform vendor, Lands' End collection; navy, tan/khaki or plaid skorts may have a front panel or not. They should be a modest length of not more than 4" above the knee and no longer than knee length.
- **Sweatshirts:** Only Lands' End collection *or* solid white or navy sweatshirts **without front pockets or hoods** are permitted (no sport or other logos are allowed) to be worn in the classroom.
- **Sweaters:** Only standard white or navy button up or zippered sweaters **without front pockets or hoods** are permitted to be worn in the classroom. Boys may wear navy v-neck sweaters or sweater vests.

- **Coats/Jackets:** Coats and jackets may be of your choosing, however, no outerwear that has reference to drugs, alcohol, is considered racist or contains sexual innuendo will be allowed. Coats or jackets are to be worn **outside** of the classroom (unless under special circumstances).
- **Socks or Hosiery:** Socks, peds, or tights must be worn with all shoes, must be visible, and must be either white, black, or navy color.
- **Belts:** Belts must be in black, brown, navy, tan, or white, and are mandatory if there are belt loops present on the slacks, Capri pants, skorts, or shorts. Leather or leather-like belts are acceptable, but no chain belts, belts with studs, or colored cloth belts are to be worn.
- **Jewelry and Accessories:** There shall not be excessive ornamentation (heavy necklaces, large wallets, wallet chains or key chains extending outside the pants or shirts, etc.). Earrings are not to be worn by male students. Female students may wear one pair of small post or small hoop earrings (no larger than dime-size.) A small religious medal or crucifix neck adornment is permitted. No rings or bracelets are to be worn. No sunglasses are to be worn indoors. Hair barrettes must be plain, in dress code colors, gold, or silver and only 2 allowed. Hair accessories must also be of dress code colors and not excessive.
- **Hats:** Hats may be worn on the field during the school day. Hats may be of your choosing, however, no hat that has reference to drugs, alcohol, is considered racist or contains sexual innuendo will be allowed. Hats must also be worn so that their bill covers the student's face.
- **Hair:** Students must keep their hair neat and clean. No dyed hair color, no ornamental cuts or staining/streaking/highlighting is allowed. Male students must wear their hair above the collar and are not allowed to wear ponytails/tails. Spiked or exaggerated mousse, and shaved or partially skinned haircuts are not allowed. Any hairstyle or ornamentation that is outlandish, inappropriate, or gang-related, in the judgment of the administration, is prohibited. Male students must be clean-shaven, with no mustaches, beards or goatees. Sideburns must be trimmed.

No-Dress Code Days (or Special Dress days)

Occasionally, students have No Dress Code days or special-dress days. Dress code for the special-dress themes will be dictated by the school administration and communicated to students and parents in advance of the event. On all such occasions, all clothing shall be within the guidelines of decency and good taste as appropriate for Our Mother of Sorrows Catholic School. Clothing should maintain a level of modesty. All clothing shall be sufficient to conceal undergarments at all times.

Furthermore, no garment may be worn that is cut-off, ragged or torn. Bare midriffs, spaghetti straps, sleeveless tops, tank tops, low cut or revealing tops or bottoms are not acceptable. Shirts for girls must not be so short that movement results in the midriff or back exposed. Necklines must be high enough so that cleavage is not exposed. Dress, skirt, or shorts length must not be shorter than 4" above the knee, the daily uniform standard. "See through," "fish net," or shredded styles are not acceptable. Denim blue jeans may be worn during these special occasions, however, they must be free of holes and decorative patches. In other words, jeans must be in a neat and acceptable condition. Shirts may not feature messages or images related to alcohol, drugs, or sex, or anything deemed inappropriate or unwholesome in a Catholic school setting.

Dance Dress

Dances give students opportunities to practice age-appropriate social skills. This practice extends to their ability to choose appropriate clothing/costumes to wear to a junior high dance. While each dance generally has its own specific theme, the same dictates with regard to good taste and modesty that are in place for special dress or no-dress code days are in force for dances as well. Boys may not wear earrings or clothing generally disallowed under the "special dress" guidelines. Girls must wear leggings under outfits or costumes that are shorter than what is allowed under the regular dress code. Girls should not wear heavy make-up, and they are warned not to wear excessively high heels, especially if not accustomed to wearing them.

Students and parents are warned that if a student comes to a dance inappropriately dressed, he or she will sit with teachers at the PAC door until parents arrive with suitable clothing.

Junior High PE Dress Code

Students must be dressed out for every PE class and follow PE dress code guidelines for Junior High, unless they have a written doctor's excuse. "Dress cuts" will result in a loss of points and may impact the student's grade in PE.

The dress code for Junior High PE class is as follows. Clothing must fit properly: not too tight or too loose, not too short or too long. Waistlines must be kept at waist height.

- **Gray OMOS PE shirts** (with OMOS logo). In cold weather, a plain **navy or gray sweatshirt** without hood or pockets may be worn **over** PE shirt. This sweatshirt may or may not have the OMOS logo.
- **Navy PE shorts** must be mesh and of a sports/basketball style. They must be dress code length. **Navy or gray sweatpants** may be worn in cold weather. No low slung sweatpants or butt slogans are allowed.
- **PE shoes** must be a true athletic shoe for the safety of the athlete. They do not have to be expensive. They must tie snugly or have Velcro clasps. White socks or white peds **must** be worn with PE shoes.
- **Stick deodorant** must be used after PE. No aerosol deodorants, no body sprays, no cologne or heavily scented body lotions are allowed.
- **No gum chewing** is allowed on school grounds at any time.

Miscellaneous

Gum policy

Gum is not allowed on school grounds, period. Students caught chewing gum at school will not receive a warning prior to receiving lunch detention. **This notice constitutes the only warning students will get.** This rule is in effect at dances, field trips, and any other time students are considered to be under a teacher's supervision.

Party policies

In order to continue our emphasis on religious and academic pursuits, the following guidelines have been instituted:

- In the Junior High, in order for invitations to be distributed at school or anywhere on OMOS property, an invitation must be extended to every student in the grade. Gender specific invitations will be distributed as long as all girls or all boys in the grade are included. This supports the SLE of Active Community Builder by not excluding any students. To ensure this, **no invitations may be handed out at school by anyone other than the student's homeroom teacher.** Invitations must be given to the teacher, who will then hand them out once it has been determined that there is an invitation for every student.
- Monthly birthday celebrations are held on calendared dates throughout the year. The celebrations will occur in the lunchroom. Tradition holds that the birthday celebrants bring the treats. Cupcakes, brownies, or be assigned so that there will be enough for each student in the junior high to be served. In some months, not all birthday children will need to bring food for all to receive a treat (as we will adhere to the Diocesan Wellness Policy), so their parents might choose to honor their child's birthday by bringing an offering for the St. Vincent de Paul pantry. All celebrations will comply with Diocesan Wellness Policy.
- All junior high special events held at school will be planned with the oversight of a junior high teacher(s).

Additional Dance Notes

- Attendance at a dance is a privilege and not a right. A student may lose the privilege to attend a dance as a consequence of the disciplinary cycle.
- When students arrive at the dance, they must sign in with teachers who will be at the door. Parents do not need to sign a student in.
- When picking a student up from a dance, a parent or designated party must sign the student(s) out. If a student is not signed out, the student will forfeit the right to attend the next scheduled dance. When a student is not signed out properly, teachers are required to make phone calls until it is confirmed that the child is safe.
- Refreshments for the dances are provided on a rotating basis by the members of each homeroom.

Lunch

- Parents are asked to limit the frequency with which they provide their child with a special lunch delivered to school. Please avoid bringing the soda that comes with the “combo meals” if you are bringing restaurant fare. If you plan to treat your child to a special lunch, make sure he or she knows to check at office for pick up. Lunches are not delivered to classrooms.
- While it is certainly age-appropriate for students to pack their own lunches, parents must be mindful about what students are actually bringing to school. Soda and energy drinks (those which pack additional caffeine) are not allowed as snack or mealtime beverages. Often students pack candy (especially after holidays) and large bags of chips or cookies, while omitting nutritious fare. Parents are asked to set guidelines regarding what their child must and may not pack for lunch and then monitor the packing process until habits are established.
- All students must eat something at lunch. If a student has nothing to eat at lunch time, an emergency lunch consisting of cheese, crackers, fruit, and a beverage will be provided and \$5.00 billed to parents. On Fridays or other early dismissal days, a junior high student may forego lunch if he/she brings a signed note from his/her parents indicating that lunch will be eaten off-campus after dismissal. **If the student has no note, the emergency lunch will be provided, regardless of whether or not the student says that other plans have been made.** Only written notes will be accepted.

Snacks

- A 10-minute snack/bathroom break will be taken mid-morning. Parents/students must very intentionally provide a nutritious snack every day. Young teens need to eat at mid-day. The snack should be a healthy one: fruit, yogurt, a low-fat granola bar, cheese sticks, a half-sandwich, or crackers are appropriate choices. Sugary snacks, finger-staining (Cheetos/Doritos/barbeque-flavored chips), potato/corn/tortilla chips, and excessively salty products are discouraged. If students bring such things to eat, teachers may confiscate the food and provide healthier alternatives.
- Water bottles are encouraged (but please avoid disposable bottles – choose a refillable bottle instead). Water brought to class must be plain – no vitamin water, flavored drinks, or water with additives.
- Students may not share snacks.

Lost or stolen items

If an item is lost or stolen, it should be reported to a teacher immediately. However, the school is not responsible for any lost or stolen items. Please do not bring to school items of value.

Cell phones and electronic devices

Cell phones and other electronic devices are to be kept off and stored in the students' backpacks during the school day. A student may not carry a cell phone on his or her person during the day. If a student stores his/her cell phone without turning it off and the phone goes off during class, the cell phone will be confiscated. Students may use cell phones or other electronic devices on school property before or after school hours **ONLY IF GIVEN PERMISSION** by school staff. Cell phones may not be used as cameras or to connect to the internet. Unless a cell phone is a necessity, we discourage students from bringing them to school. The school office phone is available for student use.

Laptops, tablets, Kindles, Nooks, iPads and iPods may not be brought to school without the expressed permission of a teacher as they constitute a security liability. There is no secure area for their storage, and it is impossible for students to carry their property at all times during the day. Only under special circumstances, agreed to by a teacher, will students be allowed to use such devices at school. These devices, when approved for use at school, are subject to the rules for acceptable use of technology at school, including those established for COW laptops.

Any use of an electronic device at school without expressed permission from a teacher or school staff member may result in the device's confiscation. All confiscated items will be turned over to the principal or the assistant principal. The conditions under which any item will be returned to the student will be determined by them.

COW (Computers on Wheels laptops) Privileges

The laptops stored in the COW are subject to all terms and conditions outlined in the Acceptable Use Policies document signed by parents and students alike. Students may not go off task while using the laptops; students may not access online games nor may they visit websites not specifically related to the parameters of the assignment for which they were given the laptop to use. The screen may not be obscured from the teacher's view at any time. Any violation of the acceptable use policies or rules either stated in the handbook or made by a teacher specific to an assignment will cause the student to forfeit laptop privileges and may result in disciplinary action. A student may be charged for the repair or replacement of any laptop damaged by his or her negligence or irresponsible behavior.

Confiscated items

Any confiscated property, such as electronic equipment or inappropriate reading material or pictures, will be sent to the principal or assistant principal and held in the school office. All confiscated property must be retrieved from the principal or assistant principal by the student and parent, and done so by appointment only.

Supplies

As indicated on the supplies list issued to families with the acceptance packets, certain supplies must be maintained all year. Students and their parents should communicate regularly as to whether or not the student continues to have adequate supplies or if replenishment is necessary.

All backpacks, sport bags, and lunch boxes must be labeled with the student's first and last name, and grade. Backpacks should have luggage-tags with student information attached.

Notebooks/binders

Student notebooks, binders, or other educational tools are to be free of photographs, magazine or Internet pictures, excessive personal ornamentation, or other markings deemed a distraction.

Handbook changes

Due to unforeseen events, some aspects of this handbook may be changed or be modified during the year. Any changes made will be communicated to parents in a timely manner.