

Nativity Catholic School



Family Handbook **2019-2020**

Mission Statement

The Mission of Nativity Catholic School, in partnership with our families, is to prepare and inspire each student academically and spiritually to serve the Body of Christ.

Revised Summer
2019

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From the first moment that a student sets foot in a Catholic school, he or she ought to have the impression of entering a new environment, one illumined by the light of faith, and having its own unique characteristics." (The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, 1988, para. 25)

THIS HANDBOOK HAS BEEN REVISED. PLEASE READ THE ENTIRE HANDBOOK, SIGN THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, AND RETURN IT TO SCHOOL BY THE INDICATED DATE.

I. General Information

A. History of Nativity Catholic School

Nativity Catholic School has a long and celebrated tradition as part of the community of Brandon, FL. Faith Formation is the centerpiece of all that happens on the Nativity Catholic School campus, and the Lord has richly blessed the efforts of the many dedicated people who have made Nativity what it is today.

In 1961, Nativity Catholic School first opened its doors to 95 students enrolled for grades one through six. Four Sisters of the Most Holy Trinity were assigned to open the school. At that time, portable buildings and the church were used for classrooms.

In the fall of 1962, construction began on six classrooms. Enrollment continued to climb with each successive year of Nativity's early history. By 1969, the school had outgrown its six classrooms, and three additional portables were used for classrooms. The social hall was built in 1970, and by 1972 the need for additional space warranted the building of a second floor on the original building. The Nativity Catholic School community was being blessed with many new members each year!

It was in 1977, two years after the "pod building" was added that the Sisters of Holy Cross came to Nativity. At the time Sister Irene St. Jean, C.S.C., began her leadership of the school, the enrollment had reached an impressive 593 students. Once again construction was needed in 1985, when nine classrooms, a chapel, media center, art studio, science lab, technology center, and administration wing were added to the school complex. In 1997, a second floor was added to house the media center and an enlarged technology center. Construction of the youth center, gymnasium, and meeting space was completed in 2010.

The Lord has abundantly blessed this school community through the more than fifty years of its existence. Because of its excellent reputation in the Brandon area, Nativity Catholic School now maintains an enrollment of approximately 600 students. Nativity alumni have gone on to have successful careers, started their families, and many remain active members both of Nativity Parish and School. At present, nearly 15% of currently enrolled students at Nativity are second generation Nativity students whose parents also attended school here. Nativity Catholic School is grateful for the loyalty and commitment of all its alumni!

B. Vision/Values/Mission Statements

Vision:

The Vision of Nativity Catholic School is to form the saints and scholars of the 21st century.

Values:

To achieve our vision, we:

- **Model** Jesus and the Catholic Church
- **Respect** the Diversity of all God's Children
- **Learn** because it is our Vocation
- **Achieve** our God-given Potential

Mission:

"The Mission of Nativity Catholic School, in partnership with our families, is to prepare and inspire each student academically and spiritually to serve the Body of Christ."

C. Florida Catholic Conference Goals for Student Learning

Nativity Catholic School is fully accredited by the Florida Catholic Conference (FCC) and in compliance with all FCC standards and applicable Florida State Statutes. The educational goals of the FCC are to foster the following:

- Formation of faith
- Learning to learn
- Expanding and integrating knowledge

- Communication skills
- Thinking and reasoning
- Interpersonal skills
- Personal and social responsibilities.

D. Enrollment

As openings become available, the following priorities will be used to accept students to Nativity Catholic School:

- Families who are practicing, supporting members of Nativity Parish
- Families who are practicing, supporting members of other Catholic parishes
- Families of other faiths who support the concept of Catholic education and the moral teaching, discipline, and Christ-centered academics it provides.

A concrete sign of being a practicing Catholic is the offertory envelope received at Sunday Mass. Family accounts may be audited each quarter to ensure that each family is fulfilling their commitment to the parish. Not fulfilling your commitment can result in your account being assessed at Non-Affiliate/Parish rates.

E. Calendar

The official school calendar, which follows the diocesan school calendar, is posted on the school website. **Any changes and additions to the calendar are updated as needed. It is wise to consult the Calendar (on the school website) regularly since this is where changes will be shown.**

II. Spiritual Development

“The Catholic school loses its purpose without constant reference to the Gospel and a frequent encounter with Christ.” (*The Catholic School*, 1977, para. 55)

Nativity recognizes that it is first and foremost a Catholic school, a community of faith. Religious education and faith formation are of the utmost importance and form an integral part of school life. All students attend daily religion classes that provide the foundation for a clear understanding of the Catholic faith and the living of a faith commitment.

The student body has the opportunity for prayer, Eucharist, and the sacraments. Liturgical all school celebrations are scheduled weekly and for major feasts and holy days. Students attend weekly Mass with their Prayer Partners. Every effort is made to lead the student to live his/her Christian commitment daily in all he/she does. Parents are asked to cooperate in the faith formation of their children, especially through the example of their own Christian living in the circumstances of each day and in their faithful observance of their Sunday Mass obligation.

Stewardship is a way of life for Nativity Catholic School students. Children learn from the earliest grades that service and outreach are a hallmark of the community. Opportunities for stewardship to the Body of Christ, both within and beyond the school community, are built into all students' educational experience.

A. Mass Attendance

The Eucharist is the heart of the Catholic community. The cooperation and re-enforcement of the family's witness regarding Christian values, liturgical worship, and the sacramental life are indispensable. Catholic families are expected to attend Mass regularly and be active participants in the school and parish community. Additionally, each family is asked to support by use of 1) the envelope system, 2) Nativity's Online Offertory, or 3) Online Giving. The In-Parish tuition rate and the possibility of receiving tuition assistance are contingent on weekly Sunday Mass attendance which is tracked through the use of the Sunday envelope.

B. Stewardship Opportunities

Stewardship is a philosophy which recognizes the abundant blessings given by God and responds with gratitude by praying and serving the Body of Christ. The students of Nativity Catholic School grow in a spirit of stewardship as they practice works of charity for the parish, school, the local community, as well as missions elsewhere, specifically Nativity's sister parish, La Victoria, in the Dominican Republic. Additionally, Nativity students raise money monthly for charities chosen by the school's Student Leadership Board, known as Charity N.U.T. days (NUT = No Uniform Today). Some examples of activities through which the students demonstrate stewardship school-wide and as grade levels are as follows:

- Classes take turns making seasonal gifts for the homebound.
- Classes make rosaries to donate to soldiers.
- Students raise funds for victims of natural disasters.
- Students donate new toys for families who visit the food pantry during the Christmas season.
- Students promote Respect for Life by supporting expectant mothers through prayer and baby items.
- Students donate school supplies to the San Jose Mission.
- Families participate in a canned goods collection for Thanksgiving.
- Students contribute to the Lenten Rice Bowl project for the missions.
- Students make peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for the homeless.
- Fifth-grade students serve their school as safety patrols.
- Middle school students MODEL Jesus and the Catholic Church through our Faith in Action Program.
- Students participate fully in all school Masses by being altar servers, gift bearers, lectors, and choir members.

III. Policy and Procedure

A. Entry dates shall be in accordance with the following schedule:

- Prekindergarten-Three: 3 years of age on or before September 1st
- Prekindergarten-Four: 4 years of age on or before September 1st
- Kindergarten: 5 years of age on or before September 1st
- First Grade: 6 years of age on or before September 1st and successful completion of Kindergarten

B. Parking Lot Safety

Safety in the parking lot is always a priority. Please always obey ALL the following directions.

- DO NOT PARK IN THE SCHOOL'S FIRE LANE. This area is clearly marked in red and is adjacent to the school buildings.
- Between the hours of 6:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., park your vehicle in a designated parking spot and turn off the engine before getting out of your car. Never leave any unattended children in your parked vehicle.
- **Designated parking will ONLY be in the first section of the parking lot on the EAST SIDE of the main lot. The middle section will be left open for safety and the area outside of the gymnasium is for faculty and staff arriving before 7:30 a.m.**
- DO NOT USE A CELL PHONE WHILE DRIVING THROUGH THE CAR LINE; this includes hands-free devices.
- Use the sidewalks or marked crosswalks when approaching the school buildings from the parking lot on foot.
- The 5th-grade students serve in the roles of safety patrols each year. Please allow them to perform their service by opening your vehicle's door and helping your child in or out of your vehicle.
- For the car line to proceed efficiently, it is mandatory that you display your family's nameplate clearly in the windshield of your vehicle.

C. School Hours

School Office Hours are from 7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Bell Schedule	7:30 a.m.	Main School Entrance Opens
	7:47 a.m.	Warning bell and main school entrance gate closes.
	7:50 a.m.	School day begins
	2:55 p.m.	Report to Carline/Walkers/Extended Day
	3:00 p.m.	Dismissal

School doors open at 7:30 a.m. Students arriving **before 7:30 a.m.** are to **report to the Extended Day Program** and **will be assessed** for this service. NO students should be left unattended before 7:30 a.m. Students arriving after **7:30 a.m.** are to go directly to their respective classrooms. The school day begins promptly at **7:50 a.m.** Students should arrive early enough to have ample time to put books and lunches away before Morning Prayer.

Prekindergarten-Three	Daily	7:50 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Prekindergarten-Four thru Grade Eight	Daily	7:50 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

The parking lot gates close at 7:45 and the main school building entrance gate closes at **7:47 a.m.** **ALL** students must be in their classrooms by 7:50. Students arriving after the main gate closes **must be signed in at the School Office by their parent/guardian.**

Carline and Walker line dismissal begin at **3:00 p.m.** It is imperative that each car utilizes their assigned lanes. Please note that car line ends promptly **at 3:15 p.m.** Students who have not been picked up by the end of carline will be taken to Extended Day and checked in with a beginning time of 3:00 p.m.

***Please note: the car lines at the beginning of the school year often run a little slower.

D. Attendance Policy

Success in any field requires a continuous daily effort. Nowhere is this truer than in education. The quality of learning for any student reflects the regularity with which he/she attends classes. Our attendance regulations have been formulated as a means of helping our students develop habits which will serve them best while in school and in later years.

State of Florida law requires those children between the ages of five (5) and sixteen (16) attend school. Regular attendance and punctuality have a marked influence on scholastic achievement. Attendance is an essential element to good progress in school.

School calendars are distributed to families to aid them in planning family vacations. Schools strongly encourage families to plan vacations during scheduled school vacations. Any vacation related absences will be included in the student's total number of absences.

Parents/guardians must notify the school office of a child's absence at **(813) 689-3395** before 8:00 a.m. As a safety procedure, if a child is absent and the parents have not called, the school will attempt to contact the parents. When a student is absent, the school must receive communication from parents/guardians explaining the reason for the absence, either voice message or electronic. The communication must include 1) the child's full name, 2) dates of absence, and 3) the nature of illness or reason for absence.

In the case of prolonged medical absence, three or more days, parents should call the office before 8:00 a.m. for missed class work and homework, so the work can be prepared and be ready for pickup at dismissal time. Due to teaching schedules, it may take up to 24 hours to have materials prepared for pick up in the school office. Based on the number of days absent and the amount of work missed, a reasonable amount of time will be allowed for its completion.

Students should not be permitted to return to school unless well enough to participate in school activities. Students must be present for at least four (4) hours of the school day to be considered present that day. To participate in any after-school activities, including the extended day program, students must be present on that day. Students who are absent more than 20 school days during the year may be under administrative review for academic retention and may be asked to withdraw from Nativity Catholic School.

Students who are absent are required to make up missed work in each class. If a student is out for only one or two days, upon return to school, the student should meet with the teacher about the missed work. The student will be given a deadline by the teacher to complete and turn in these assignments. It is the responsibility of the student to see that the work is completed. The student may log on to the portal to check the missed homework. If work is not made up by the deadline specified by the teacher, the grade for missed work will be recorded as a zero. See Make-Up Work for further details.

Any student who is absent on the day of a scheduled summative assessment will be expected to make it up upon his/her return to school. For every day a student is absent, he/she has that number of days to make up the summative assessment (Ex. 1 day missed = 1 day for summative assessment). It is the student's responsibility to speak with his/her teacher regarding missed assessments. In the event of multiple-day absences, the teacher will determine when all assessments will be taken.

E. Early Dismissals

To ensure that your child can attend all each day's lessons, please avoid early dismissals if possible. **Students will not be dismissed after 2:30.** After 2:30 Students must use regular dismissal procedures. Students who leave even 20-30 minutes before dismissal may miss valuable instruction or assessments. In addition to your child missing lessons, when a student leaves early, it also disrupts the other students' instructional time.

It is understood that early dismissals and changes of dismissal transportation plans will occasionally be unavoidable. If it is necessary to dismiss your child before the end of the school day, please send in a written note so that the classroom teacher is aware and may have your child waiting in the office at the appropriate time. If an emergency arises and your child must dismiss early unexpectedly, call the School Office as soon as possible so that the message may be delivered to the classroom teacher promptly and avoid interrupting lessons. **NO dismissals or messages will be permitted after 2:30 PM.**

To further preserve the instructional time at the end of the day, students participating in sporting events will not ordinarily be excused early from class to attend games, unless approved by the school administration. Athletes and their siblings can leave during regular dismissal and meet at a designated location to leave on time for most sporting events. **Athletes leaving early for a sporting event without prior approval will not be allowed to participate in that event.**

F. Releasing Students During the School Day

Students will be released only to a parent/guardian or to an individual authorized by the parent/guardian. The parent/guardian's authorization to release a student to a non-parent/guardian must be listed on the Emergency Information Card and must be prepared to show proper identification. An ill student will be released only to a parent or other authorized person. The student must be signed out at the School Office.

The school abides by the decisions of the court with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents (see the note above). When a court order is served, divorced or separated parents are required to provide the School Office with a court-certified copy of the custody section of the court order. Unless this documentation is on file, the school will recognize the parents as married, and both parents are invited to participate in all areas of their child's development and progress as a student at Nativity. Parents are not to attempt to involve school personnel in their personal legal issues.

G. Department of Children and Families

The welfare of children is important to the faculty/staff of Nativity Catholic School, as well as to parents. Under Florida law, anyone who has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect is legally obligated to report that abuse to the

Department of Children and Families (DCF), even if there is no definite proof of abuse/neglect (Florida Statutes 415.504).

The school will reasonably cooperate with any investigation by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) pertaining to allegations of child abuse. Since the school is on private property, DCF will be precluded from reasonable access to students at school unless the consent of a parent or guardian is obtained. Absent such consent, the school will cooperate in allowing DCF to have access to students if DCF obtains, according to law, an appropriate court order or other legal authority, such as the presence of a Police Officer or Deputy Sheriff.

H. Blood-Borne Pathogens

To comply with federal law attempting to control the spread of disease by exposure to blood and other bodily fluids, the staff, and faculty, receive training every year in the use of those health practices of good hygiene and protection that significantly reduce or eliminate the exposure to blood-borne pathogens. These practices are called “universal precautions.”

IV. Extended Day Program

The Extended Day Program provides a safe and pleasant facility for the continued care of students before and after the regular school day. The program maintains the high standards of care set by Nativity Catholic School. Students have the opportunity for socializing, playing, completing homework, doing arts and crafts, and enjoying sports and activities based on age level and interests.

Operating hours are from 6:00 a.m. until 7:30 a.m. (before school), and 3:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. (after school), on most school days. Extended Day also operates from 11:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. for PreK3 students. Extended Day is open on most abbreviated school days. Students may come directly to Extended Day at dismissal or arrive after extracurricular activities. Extended Day closings are posted on the school calendar. **Students arriving before 7:30 a.m. must be accompanied by a parent and are to report to the Extended Day Program and will be assessed for this service.**

V. General Safety and Procedures

Nativity Catholic School is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all students. To this end, the following safety procedures are in place on the Nativity campus:

To ensure the safety of all:

- All school doors are locked during the school day; admittance is through the School Office only, and MUST be for a scheduled appointment or scheduled volunteering opportunity. No others will be permitted.
- Individuals are not permitted to interrupt classes with messages and/or deliveries.
- For safety reasons, neither parents nor students may re-enter the school building after dismissal to retrieve forgotten items, unless permitted and escorted by an administrator or teacher.
- *Rediker* provides immediate contact with all students' families. In the event of an emergency, it is essential that families always keep Rediker information current.
- In keeping with the Diocesan policy, Nativity Catholic School has procedures in place for handling emergencies. It is the expectation that parents and students will follow the directions of the school in the event of an emergency.
- In a weather-related emergency, Nativity Catholic School follows the school closing guidelines set by the Diocese of St. Petersburg. The Superintendent of Catholic Schools monitors weather and county emergency management offices to determine if any schools or early childhood centers need to close for safety reasons. This is evaluated on a case by case and county by county basis in consultation with pastors and principals as needed. However, it is critical that evacuation orders are followed. If a school is in a mandatory evacuation zone, the school will close. In all cases, the superintendent will make recommendations about closures to the Bishop, who will make the final decision. If the decision is made to close a school (or many schools), the superintendent notifies the principals and the Executive Director of Communications. The principals will notify parents using their parent notification system and social media channels. Parents always retain the right to keep their children at home due to individual circumstances related to the weather; they may submit a note in writing to the school after the emergency passes to excuse any absences.
- Safety procedures such as fire drills, lockdown drills, and tornado drills are routinely conducted throughout the school

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year with the students.

- Nativity abides by the U.S. Council of Catholic Bishops' *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, which mandates training for individuals who come into contact with children and youth and to help recognize, report, and prevent child abuse, including sexual abuse.
- As directed by the Diocese of St. Petersburg, Nativity Catholic School has a school-wide Safe Environment Curriculum for students. This multimedia curriculum integrates a broad variety of resources into a comprehensive program and is presented to the students through a cooperative effort of the classroom teacher and School Counseling Office.

A. Emergency Procedures

Evacuation

In the event of an emergency (fire, bomb threat, chemical spill, etc.) requiring evacuation, all students will be evacuated from the building to a safe location. The location will be determined by the situation. In the event of an emergency, *Rediker* will provide immediate contact with students' families and will provide details regarding dismissal location, if warranted. Nativity Catholic School practices emergency procedures, such as evacuation, with students throughout the school year.

School Closings

Nativity Catholic School will follow the Diocesan directions for school closings in case of emergency. Parents will be notified by *Rediker*.

- Cancellation of school takes place only during extraordinary circumstances such as extreme weather, equipment failure, public crisis, etc.
- If school must be canceled during the school day, alerts will be posted via the Rediker Notify system.
- All students must have satisfactory transportation and supervision before being released from school.

Hurricanes or Other Severe Weather

Students will remain in the classroom and follow the directions of the teacher. If severe winds arise, students on the upper level will be moved downstairs and will take shelter within the classrooms on the first level or in the social hall.

Lock Down

In some situations, it may be necessary to perform a school lockdown. Law enforcement recommends the following procedures which Nativity performs during a school lockdown:

- All interior and exterior doors will be locked;
 - No one (including parents) will be permitted to enter or leave the buildings;
 - The lockdown will continue until the school receives an "all clear" signal from emergency personnel;
 - Parents should not call the school during a lockdown; the phone will be used by emergency personnel only.
- Lockdown drills will be performed with students.

Inclement Weather Dismissal

Inclement weather that requires a change to indoor dismissal will be communicated to all parents/guardians by 2:30 p.m. Please note that the safety of our children is our number one priority when making this decision.

Quiet in the Halls

- As a courtesy to other classes which may be in session, and in respect for the learning atmosphere present in the school building, all students will observe quiet in the hallways and other campus areas when moving from class to class, going to the restrooms, physical education, Mass, lunchroom, during fire drills, other emergency situations, and any other time that they leave their classroom.

B. School Visits

The following security procedures are in place for all visitors on campus:

- All visitors and volunteers to our campus are required to check in at the School Office.
- Visitors and volunteers that possess up-to-date Safe Environment Training (SET), Level II Background check, a valid blue badge and a driver's license, may be on campus after checking in at the School Office. Upon presenting this

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documentation, you will receive a pass from the School Office, which must always be prominently displayed along with your volunteer badge while on campus.

- Visitors are welcome to our campus. However, if any of the above security criteria is missing, the visitor must be escorted throughout the school by a member of the staff.
- No parent may chaperone for field trips or other such event without current SET, Level II Background check, and a valid blue badge and driver's license.
- The lunch period is a time for students to build social skills with their peers. For this reason, parents are not allowed to come to the cafeteria to have lunch with their child.

VI. Academic Information

A. Curriculum for Prekindergarten

The program for three-year-old's through Kindergarten readiness is designed to lead a child from wonder to discovery, developing, and mastering a wide range of skills with which to meet future educational challenges. This program strives to provide the basis of all Christian goals developed throughout the entire school.

The curriculum for three-year-old students consists of a basic religion program, beginning language skills development, math readiness, and motor skills development; art, music, technology, media, Spanish, and physical education are integrated into the curriculum as well. At this level of the Prekindergarten program, the greatest focus is on social and emotional development. Nurturing these skills prepares the child for positive interactions with both family and peers.

The curriculum for four-year-old's focuses on creating Saints and Scholars. Specifically, the *Creative Curriculum* program is utilized in PreK4. The curriculum uses a research-based, thematic approach to promote the development of the whole child. All subject areas, including religion, language arts, math, science, social studies, motor development, music, art, technology, media, Spanish, and physical education are integrated into the curriculum.

B. Curriculum for Kindergarten through Grade Eight

The Kindergarten program builds on the learning readiness fostered in the first two years of the Prekindergarten program. Religion, language arts, and math are developed more extensively to prepare the child for the primary grades. Enrichment classes include art, technology, Spanish, media, music, and physical education.

Nativity Catholic School offers an excellent course of studies designed to foster the holistic development of the children it serves. The curriculum utilizes the academic guidelines set forth by the Diocese of St. Petersburg's Office of Catholic Schools and Centers.

Core curricular subjects include:

- Religious Education (taught daily)
- Language Arts/English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- Spanish (core subject in 8th grade only)

Core curricular subjects are primarily taught in self-contained classes for children in grades Prekindergarten through grade five. Core curricular subjects are departmentalized for students in grades six through eight.

Additional special subject areas include:

- Spanish
- Art

- Music
- Physical Education/Health
- Media
- Technology

In addition to the above subjects, Nativity also provides:

- A STREAM Enrichment Program that is provided on a weekly basis for students in grades 2-5 who meet specific criteria.
- Additional optional elective offerings for Middle School students that cultivate their love of learning.
- A school-wide intervention time to work on any skills students may need additional support in mastering.
- A comprehensive reading interventions program for struggling reading in grades K-2.
- Push in and Pull out services provided by our Resource Teacher for students that have been identified as needing additional academic supports beyond the traditional classroom.

The fifth-grade academic program is supplemented by Enterprise Village, a program of economic education developed by the Pinellas County School System and the Stavros Institute, which provides training and practice in real life consumer skills.

The seventh-grade academic program is supplemented by Finance Park, an economic education program developed by the Pinellas County School System and the Stavros Institute, which enables students to build foundations for making sound personal financial decisions.

Curriculum resources include:

- Diocesan Standards & Benchmarks
- Next Generation Sunshine State Standards
- Next Generation Science Standards

C. High School Credits

Nativity Catholic School offers three high school credit courses to all eighth-grade students. These courses are Algebra I, Spanish I, and Introduction Physical Science (IPS). These courses follow the curricula prescribed for Hillsborough County high schools, and county approved texts are used for these classes.

Algebra I and Introduction Physical Science (IPS) are awarded honors points. For example, if a student has a 4.0 GPA for these two courses, the weighted GPA due to honors points may be 4.16. Students may receive a total of three high school credits for these classes. Students may have to test at an area high school to receive these credits.

D. Agenda Planner

All students in grades 1-8 are expected to have an Agenda book. Assignments are written daily in the Agenda. The Agenda is an excellent home-school communication tool. Teachers may write notes or comments to the parent in the agenda, just as the parent may write notes to the teacher. Students that lose their Agenda must pay \$7 for a replacement. Please contact the School Office if your child's agenda has been lost.

VII. Grading and Related Topics

The Diocese of St. Petersburg has adopted Standards Based Grading (SBG). SBG is a research-based best practice that measures evidence of specific academic criteria directly related to learning standards.

A. Philosophy

We believe ...

- Students should have a clear understanding of the learning objectives.
- Our system of grading should be timely, specific, fair, and accurate.
- Grades should be based on a well-defined set of standards.
- Grades should be an accurate measure of a student's ability to demonstrate understanding.

- Criteria that are not a direct measure of student learning, such as work habits and behavior, should be reported separately from the academic grade.
- Assessments are critical to the teaching and learning process.

B. Purpose of Assessment

An assessment is defined as any instrument that is able to indicate or provide feedback on student achievement or performance.

The purpose of an assessment may be summarized as follows:

1. To provide information to students regarding their progress towards mastery of a learning standard(s). In addition, it provides information for self-evaluation and the incentives to learn.
2. To provide information to teachers on the individual student's level of mastery of the content/skill.
3. To allow teachers to use assessment data to plan instruction that will meet the needs of students.
4. To communicate information to parents about student achievement and performance in school.

C. Types of Assessments

While assessments will take many forms and types, they will be grouped under two broad categories.

Formative

Whenever a student learns new material, he or she needs time to practice and gain familiarity with the material. It is expected that the student will make mistakes during this learning process. Any work done during this learning period is considered *formative*. The purpose of a *formative* assessment is to evaluate where a student is in the learning process, diagnose any problems, and motivate and help the student learn the material. Formative assessments also inform the teacher of learning areas that may need reinforcement or re-teaching.

Summative

After a student has had instruction and practice on a topic, including assessments of a formative nature, it is then necessary to evaluate mastery of understanding, content or skills. The purpose of a summative assessment is to evaluate how well a student knows and understands the material.

D. Purpose of Grades

A grade is a recorded score derived from an assessment or assessments. The purpose of grades may be summarized as follows:

1. To provide information to students regarding their performance relative to the learning standard(s).
2. To provide information to teachers on the individual student's level of mastery of the content/skill.
3. To communicate information to parents about student achievement and performance in school.
4. To document student performance for transcripts.

E. The Grade Composition

To represent an accurate measure of student performance, the academic trimester grade needs to be based on work that is evaluated for an appropriate level of mastery of the standards. Summative assessments will therefore be the primary constituent of the trimester grade. They will account for no less than 70% of the trimester grade. Formative assessments will account for no more than 30% of the trimester grade.

1. All grading is done using the 100-point scale.
2. The lowest "earned" grade is 50.
 - a. An "earned" grade is derived from any assessment that is attempted and handed in.
 - b. An attempted assessment is one where the student has made a diligent attempt to follow the instructions and complete the assessment.
3. Assessments not attempted or not handed in will receive zero points.

Completed student work will be assessed and is a direct measure of student learning. Non-academic attributes will be reported separately. Please see *Section G: Reporting Conduct* and *Approaches to Learning*.

F. Reporting Grades

Individual assignments will be either assessed traditionally or by using a rubric. When traditional grading is used, 50% will be the lowest failing grade recorded for all attempted assignments. Any assignment that is void of an attempt will result in a Zero (0) as the lowest failing grade. The following generic achievement descriptors will serve as a scoring guide.

ALL SUBJECT SCORING GUIDE – Core I and Specials (3rd-8th)

Letter Grade	% Score	Descriptor
A	90-100	The student provides evidence of deep understanding and fluent application of the target standard(s), consistently performs above grade level.
B	80-89	The student provides evidence of deep understanding and fluent application of the target standard(s), occasionally performs above grade level.
C	70-79	The student provides evidence that they can access the target of the standard at grade level.
D	60-69	The student is just beginning to address the basic ideas of the target standard(s).
F	50-59	The student provides little to no evidence of addressing the target standard(s), including missing or incomplete work.

ALL SUBJECT SCORING GUIDE – Core I and Specials (PreK-2nd)

4 Exemplary	In addition to Proficiency performance, the student provides evidence of deep understanding and fluent application of the target standards or expectations as well as the ability to apply and transfer learning to new situations.
3 Proficiency	No major errors or omissions regarding any of the target standards or expectations.
2 Basic	No major errors or omissions regarding the simpler details or processes of the target standards or expectations, but errors or omissions regarding complex processes.
1 Below Basic	The student is beginning to address the simpler target standards or expectations.
NA = Not Assessed	Standard not assessed at this time.

G. Make-up Work

Make-Up of Academic Work during Absence

Absent students are required to make up work missed in each class. If a student is out for only one or two days, upon return to school, the student should meet with the teacher about the work missed. The student will be given a deadline by the teacher to complete and turn in these assignments. It is the responsibility of the student to see that the work is completed. The student may log on to the portal to check the homework missed. If work is not made up by the deadline specified by the teacher, the grade for

work missed will be recorded as a zero.

In the case of prolonged absence, three or more days, parents should call the office before 8:30 a.m. for missed class work and homework so that the work can be prepared and be ready for pickup at dismissal time or sent via e-mail. Based on the number of days absent and the amount of work missed, a reasonable amount of time will be allowed for its completion.

Homework assignments for extended absences should be arranged with the teacher. Parents may pick up textbooks, if necessary, at the end of the school day but should email the teacher by 10:00 a.m. to arrange this. Requests for homework should be made by contacting the classroom/subject teacher. Due to teaching schedules, requests may take up to twenty-four hours to be completed.

Make-Up of a Scheduled Summative Assessment during Absence

Any student who is absent on the day of a scheduled summative assessment will be expected to make it up upon his/her return to school. For every day a student is absent, he/she has that number of days to make up the summative assessment (Ex. 1 day missed = 1 day for summative assessment.) It is the student's responsibility to speak with his/her teacher regarding missed assessments. In the event of multiple-day absences, the teacher will determine when all assessments will be taken.

H. Retakes

The focus of our Catholic schools is to always encourage and support the learning process that leads to mastery. This retake policy supports this emphasis on learning and relearning. Teachers have the discretion to refuse retakes to students who do not fully engage in the learning process prior to the summative. *

The following retake policy is designed to encourage relearning on the part of the student.

Criteria for Retakes

Grades K-5

1. The retake process is initiated by the teacher. The teacher will communicate with the parent when a retake is necessary.
2. A student may retake a summative once.
3. Students may be required to participate in additional practice to qualify for a retake.

Grades 6-8

1. The retake process **must** be initiated by the student.
2. A student may retake a summative once.
3. The Application for a Retake should be completed by the student (with a parent, if needed), signed by student and parent, and returned to the examining teacher no more than five (5) school days after the grade has been posted.
4. On the Application for a Retake, the student will identify the deficient standards/topics and include a clear learning plan and timeline to close the learning gap.
5. Students may be required to participate in additional practice to qualify for a retake.

Limitations and Deadlines

1. Only one retake will be allowed per summative.
2. All graded formative assessments must be completed before the original summative.
3. The retake for any summative in a unit must be completed before the date of the first summative of the following unit.
4. Trimester exams and summatives that are extended projects with ongoing feedback and clear completion deadlines do not qualify for retakes.
5. The student will forfeit the retake opportunity if either the scheduled retake date or a scheduled teacher required additional practice is missed, unless excused or rescheduled by the teacher.

Teacher Facilitation

1. Teachers will group summative assessments around specific learning standards to help the student identify deficiencies and plan a successful retake. Teachers will post retake dates when the summative assessments are returned.
2. The retake will only assess the deficient standards, allowing the student to focus on closing the learning gap and improving the assessment score. The higher grade (out of the retake or the original grade) will be recorded for credit in the grade book.
3. Teachers have discretion and may require that a student complete missing ungraded assignment correlated to the deficiencies before the retake is administered.
4. Teachers have discretion over the format of the retake assessment.

*Teachers reserve the right to deny a student from a retake before, during, or after the retake form is completed if the teacher can show due cause as to why there should not be a retake. This may include, but is not limited to, situations that involve academic dishonesty.

I. Other Matters on Assessment and Grades

Honor Roll

Honor Roll is awarded to students who encompass merit and integrity that results in academic and behavioral success.

Honor Roll eligibility is determined by:

1. Grades in all subject areas
2. Approaches to Learning (ATL's) in all classes
3. Conduct in all classes

Students can earn Principal's Honors or Honors. Eligibility requirements follow:

Principal's Honor Roll

- A's in all academic subjects (including Spanish 1 for 8th Grade only)
- Any combination of A's and B's in all special subject areas
- 3's or higher in all Conduct
- 3's or higher in all Approaches to Learning

***Students on Principal's Honor Roll will be recognized in a special way*

Honor Roll

- Minimum of two A's in academic subjects
- No grade lower than a B in the remaining academic subjects
- Any combination of A's and B's in all special subject areas
- 3's or higher in all Conduct
- 3's or higher in all Approaches to Learning

J. National Junior Honor Society

Seventh & Eighth Grade students may merit membership in the National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) based upon their academic performance and conduct, as well as their demonstration of the five tenets of NJHS, listed below. Students must also maintain S's in Conduct to be eligible.

Eligibility Criteria for National Junior Honor Society Selection

There are five areas where a student must excel to be invited to membership in the National Junior Honor Society: Scholarship, Leadership, Service, Character, and Citizenship.

For a student to begin the process of applying for the NJHS, he or she must first have demonstrated strong academic success at Nativity Catholic School. This academic requirement is a non-rounded 93% for the last trimester of sixth grade and the first

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trimester of seventh grade. This average of 93% is the academic bar for Nativity's chapter of the NJHS, as the faculty and Leadership Team consider the high academic bar a sign of excellence and a positive goal for which students can strive. NJHS students earning 6 demerits or more will be suspended from NJHS and its activities for 2 weeks. NJHS students earning 9 demerits or more will be suspended from NJHS and its activities for the remainder of the academic year. Please note: Spanish is included in the required 93% in 8th Grade only.

K. Student Leadership Team

The purpose of the Student Leadership Team is to provide a forum for students to channel their ideas, to assume responsibility for projects, and to see their plans through to completion. The Student Leadership Team consists of five students from the eighth grade who have been elected by the students in grades seven and eight. Grades six and seven have two representatives elected by their classmates. Teachers who serve as advisors work with the students in developing their leadership skills and in planning activities. The Student Leadership Team holds weekly meetings. SLT members earning 3 demerits or more will be suspended from SLT and its activities for 2 weeks. SLT members earning 6 demerits or more will be suspended from SLT and its activities for the remainder of the academic year.

L. Promotion and Retention Policy

Promotion and Retention Guidelines

The core subjects at Nativity Catholic School are religion, math, language arts, science, and social studies. A student enrolled at NCS who fails one core subject must participate in a remedial program. Failure of two core subjects will result in remediation or retention at the discretion of the principal. Failure of three or more core subjects will result in retention.

Students have the following options for remediation:

- Florida Virtual School
- Private Tutoring – a minimum of 20 hours per subject
- Remedial Program – a minimum of 20 hours per subject

Teacher(s) or programs providing remediation must meet the following requirements:

- Hold current certification in the subject area in which the student needs remediation
- Be contracted by the parent
- Meet the school principal's approval
- May not be the student's current teacher or have the possibility of being the student's teacher in the future.

Prior to the beginning of the next school year, the principal must receive:

- Tutoring Verification Form to validate attendance
- Proof of proficiency in the subject area(s) including work samples and test scores

Failure to meet any of the above remediation guidelines will result in retention.

The following documentation guidelines will be followed after meeting remediation guidelines:

- The original failing grade is recorded on the permanent record and may not be altered.
- Proof of proficiency in the subject area must be recorded separately on the permanent record card.
- TRANSFER RULE: Any student who fails one or more core subjects must meet the remediation guidelines of the originating school.

After these criteria have been met, further assessment may be administered by the school principal to ensure proper placement.

Upon returning to school, students who have completed remediation will automatically be placed on academic probation for one semester. Academic Probation includes the following:

- Three parent-teacher conferences during the first trimester
- Assistant Principal – Academic Affairs, school counselor and/or resource teacher meets with student regularly to offer support

NOTE: Situations involving students with an existing Student Support Plan will be reviewed individually utilizing the student support team process.

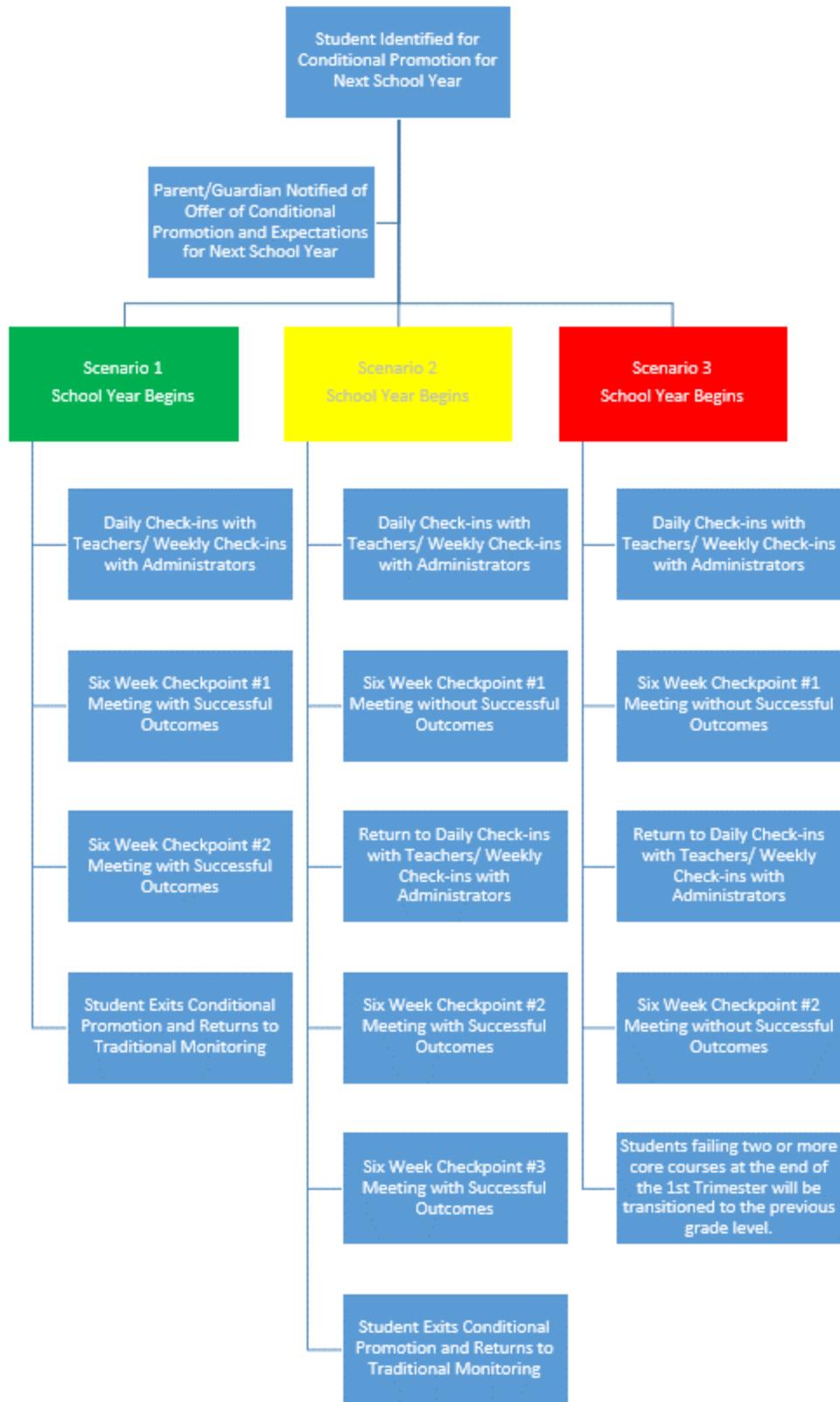
Conditional Promotion

Students not meeting retention criteria but that have lower levels of academic performance in the school year may receive a conditional offer of promotion to the next grade level. This means that the student may not have successfully completed all course requirements of their current grade level and it is believed that with increased progress monitoring and communication amongst home and school, that the child can be successful in the next grade level. In transitioning to the next grade level, the student can expect the following expectations for next school year:

- *Student will maintain at minimum a "C" average in core content classes and no more than one "D". A student on Conditional Promotion may not have an "F" in any class (including core II classes).*
- *Student will consistently adhere to school rules, policies and procedures outlined in the Student Handbook and their classrooms.*
- *Student will demonstrate exemplary attendance by limiting tardiness, absences, or early dismissals.*
- *Student will use their planner to promote organization and student success.*
- *Student will complete all classwork and homework assignments on time.*
- *Student will be an active learner and participate in their classes.*
- *Student will not receive any conduct referrals and/or grade-level equivalent consequences as a result of behavior.*
- *Student will not exhibit any bullying and/or aggressive behaviors.*
- *Student will receive formal academic support outside of the traditional classroom setting to support the attainment of knowledge and skills necessary to access grade-level work.*

A student on Conditional Promotion will be monitored closely and frequently. There will be daily check-ins with the student from teachers, weekly check-ins with the student from administrators, and a recurring six-week checkpoint meeting to be attended by all stakeholders to assess student progress (as needed). The six-week checkpoint meeting will consist of reviewing student data, observations from all stakeholders, student self-assessment, and development of a Plan for Student Success if the students still qualifies for continued progress monitoring.

After twelve weeks (1 trimester) of successfully meeting the expectations set forth, a student may exit Conditional Promotion and return to traditional monitoring for their grade level. Please refer to the timeline below for more details about the progression of events while a student is on Conditional Promotion.



M. Homework

The purpose of homework is to create an introduction to new information or reinforce material already taught. Homework fosters habits of independent study. If a child is absent due to illness, homework and missed assignments will be collected and given to the child on the day of his/her return. When a student is home ill, that student should rest and get well. If desired, a student that is absent may collect missed assignments from Rediker. It is a student's responsibility to obtain all missing work from the teacher when he/she returns. They will have the same amount of days to make up assignments within the same number of days absent. **After three days** of absences, parents wishing to pick up assignments prior to their child's return to school should call the office by 9:00 a.m. to allow teachers time to gather assignments by afternoon dismissal.

Students absent due to personal vacations are required to make up work missed during the absence. You are encouraged to gather books and materials needed and retrieve assignments from Rediker during or following the absence. Students will be allotted the number of days absent to make up the work missed.

N. Accommodations for Students with Exceptionalities

Nativity Catholic School may accept students with exceptional needs, though the school is not required to do so, if following discussion with the parent(s) and other advisory faculty, school administration believes the child's needs may be met. An academic, medical, and/or psychological evaluation from a licensed practitioner may be required to make the determination for enrolling a child. If possible, accommodations for a child diagnosed with learning disabilities or other exceptional needs will be made within the regular classroom. Additional services that may be offered include the school resource program, speech/language therapy (provided through the School District of Hillsborough County), and Title I tutoring. Concerns about a currently enrolled child's academic progress should be brought to the attention of the classroom teacher. If a learning disability or other exceptional need is suspected, a meeting will be scheduled with the Child First Team.

Child First Team

A Child First Team (CFT) has been formed to systematically address the individual learning needs of its students in consultation with the teachers, resource teacher, school counselor, and Assistant Principal - Academic Affairs. The team will seek to meet this goal in the following ways:

- Facilitate the use of resources both within the school and outside the community;
- Facilitate communication between and among teachers and parents.

O. Textbooks, Book Fees, and Other School Property

Unlike most area schools, Nativity Catholic School does not charge book fees to cover the high cost of textbooks. Students are expected to be good stewards and take proper care of textbooks. Specifically:

- Textbooks, workbooks, and Bibles (grades 3 and 6) are owned by the school. They must be kept clean, not scribbled in, and handled carefully.
- Bibles, due to their sacred nature, are expected to be handled with exceptional care at all times.
- BOOKS MUST BE COVERED AT ALL TIMES. Uncovered books may be confiscated and a fine may be charged. No contact paper or other adhesive book covers are to be used, except on consumables.
- No defacing of covers, folders, or notebooks is permitted (drawing pictures and/or doodling in a workbook or notebook may be considered defacing materials); only name and subject are to be written on them. Parents and students will be asked to replace the defaced material.
- If a book is damaged, marred, misused, or lost, the parent and the student will assume responsibility for paying for damages or replacement.
- Parents and students are responsible for the cost of replacing or repairing any property (i.e. books, supplies, equipment, building, or grounds), which is lost or damaged through the student's negligence. This behavior may also be cause for suspension or expulsion.

- Because careless disposal of gum presents sanitation and cleaning problems, gum chewing is not permitted anytime or anywhere on school property.
- All desks, lockers, cubbies, etc. remain school property and are subject to a search at any time by the administration.
- Loss or damage to students' property is not the school's responsibility.

P. Graduation

Nativity Catholic School honors its graduates each year with traditions that allow the entire student body and faculty to express their affection and congratulations. The graduating class is "clapped out" on their last day of school.

Graduates, parents, and grandparents are honored guests at a brunch the week of graduation. Siblings are welcome to attend at the discretion of the family. **Church attire** is appropriate for this occasion.

Graduation occurs at the end of a special Mass offered for the intentions of the graduates and their families. Graduation is a dignified ceremony celebrating the unique value of a Catholic education. Appropriate attire should be worn for the occasion: dress shirt, tie, and dress pants for boys; modest dress attire for girls. Gowns are worn at the ceremony. Parents are asked to be inclusive of all students for all graduation festivities and to plan celebrations which are age appropriate. No limos are allowed at any time.

Q. Standardized Testing

NCEA ACRE (Assessment of Catechesis/Religious Education): is designed to assist in the evaluation of catechetical/religious education programs in Catholic schools and parishes. As an integrated assessment tool, NCEA ACRE provides faith knowledge questions (cognitive domain) and questions related to religious beliefs, attitudes, practices, and perceptions (affective domain). Nativity students are required to take the ACRE tests in grades five and eight. Individual student test results are available to parents/guardians.

TERRANOVA ASSESSMENT: Schools in the Diocese of St. Petersburg participate in the Terra Nova Assessment, which is administered in the spring. The Terranova Assessment is a standardized achievement and abilities testing program, promulgated by the Diocese. Nativity students are required to take the Terranova Assessment in grades two through eight. Individual student test results are available to parents/guardians.

R. Student Growth Assessments

NWEA MAP Growth: Unlike a standardized test, MAP Growth is administered periodically during the school year. Instead of asking all students the same questions, it adjusts to each child's performance— giving a more accurate measure of what they know. Teachers can use the score to inform instruction, personalize learning, and monitor the growth of individual students. Administrators can use the scores to see the performance and progress of a grade level or the entire school.

S. Faith In Action Service Hour Requirement for Middle School Students

Each middle school student at Nativity Catholic School is required to complete five (5) hours of Faith In Action Community Service each trimester, for a total of fifteen (15) hours per school year. Not only is this a reflection of our faith and Catholic Social Teaching, but it meets the Second Generation of the Sunshine State Standards of 6th grade SS.6. C.2.1, 7TH grade SS.7. C.2.14, and 8TH grade SS.C.1.2.

Requirements: Students must submit a completed Faith In Action Community Service Proposal Form each trimester. All Service hours are to be completed outside of the school day.

- Service hours may be completed during the summer before but should be approved on the Faith In Action Community Service Proposal Form.
- All service hour documentation must be turned in by the last day of the trimester.
- Social Studies grades are considered incomplete until Faith In Action hours are completed and approved
- A parent, guardian, or other family member may not sign for completion of service hours.
- Students should keep a copy of all forms submitted to the school.

Faith In Action Community Service is defined as identifying and addressing a social issue in the community.

Some service hours that are not acceptable:

- Family-related activities
- Hours that result in financial or other material benefit
- Activities in which there is not a leader designated as responsible
- Donations (ex. cleaning out closets and donating clothes)
- Fostering of animals

VII. Parent-Teacher-Administrative Conferences

A. Conferences

Conferences are held in partnership between teachers and families, to promote healthy dialogue, and to help families better understand and assist student learning. There is one mandatory conference day held in the first half of the school year. (Please see annual calendar). Other conference days are optional. Teachers will often request conferences with parents should a child be in academic jeopardy or if they have concerns. Conference schedules are prepared and issued by the classroom teachers well in advance of the scheduled date.

Parents requiring additional conferences during the school year may make arrangements with individual teachers.

Appointments may be scheduled by writing or emailing the teacher, or in urgent matters, through a telephone call to the School Office.

Please refrain from calling teachers at their homes or showing up to school without a planned conference. Teachers have been instructed NOT to engage in conferences of this type. **All teachers should be given the professional courtesy of preparing for a conference before it is held. Therefore, the teacher(s) should be provided the courtesy of being made aware of your specific concern prior to the conference.** Impromptu discussions in homeroom/hallway/carline and/or unannounced visits for a conference are never appropriate. Nativity Catholic School reserves the right to ask that students NOT attend a parent-teacher conference; however, teachers may request that students to be present.

B. Guidelines for Conferencing

Because Nativity Catholic School strives to be a faith community, a school-parent partnership is essential. Our first instinct should be to assume that each of us – teachers, coaches, administrators, parents/guardians, and other caregivers – have the child's best interest at heart. While our school is excellent in many ways, no one within our community is perfect and problems and misunderstandings will occur. When a problem or disagreement arises, we will make every effort to contact you to clarify the situation. Parents are asked to show similar respect. Through this type of partnership, positive resolutions can be reached.

While conferencing:

- Please be as courteous to the teacher/coach as you would expect him/her to be to you. Questioning the teacher's authority is never helpful. If you disagree with a teacher, please request a conference in private (without the child).
- Try to be open to both sides of the story if a problem arises. Perception differences and information reported incorrectly can lead to unnecessary confrontation with the teacher and unwise decisions.
- **Discuss difficulties in the classroom with the teacher/coach before bringing your concerns to the attention of the Assistant Principal - Student Affairs, the Assistant Principal - Academic Affairs, or the Principal.** This includes problems such as routine procedures, (homework, class assignments), classroom or playground behavior, or student-to-student problems. Teachers can be contacted for appointments by email or with a phone call to the School Office. Teachers are available for conferences before and after school and in rare cases at other scheduled times.
- If the difficulty cannot be solved between the classroom teacher/coach and the parent, the parent may request a conference with the:

- **Assistant Principal - Student Affairs** -- first administrative contact regarding conduct/discipline concerns; or
- **Assistant Principal - Academic Affairs** -- first administrative contact regarding academic concerns.
- Due to school responsibilities, the Assistant Principal - Student Affairs and Assistant Principal - Academic Affairs may not be available immediately. Patience in setting appointments or in expecting return phone calls is appreciated and expected. Please allow
 - 24 hours for email and phone call responses during the school week. **An appointment is necessary to conference with the Assistant Principal - Student Affairs, Assistant Principal - Academic Affairs, and/or the Principal.** There is no exception to this policy. Please call the School Office to arrange an appointment time. It is the policy of administration NOT to have students present when conferencing about difficulties in the classroom. Administration may call the student down for a personal interview following the parent interview if needed.
- the administration will NOT entertain notes that are not signed or callers that do not identify themselves.
- **Any other inquiries, regarding the day-to-day operations of the school, should first go through the Director of School Affairs.** Please email or call the School Office to speak with the Director of School Affairs.

All faculty/staff members of Nativity Catholic School promise prompt attention to problems, privacy in discussing matters, professional courtesy, respect when problems are presented, and a sincere effort to resolve problems in a Christian manner. Communication is the most effective method of understanding and problem-solving. Communication and cooperation between student, parent, teacher, and administration are essential. If at any time a parent has a concern pertaining to their child in a school situation, we ask that the child's teacher be contacted as soon as possible.

C. Conference Request Sequence

Sequence Guidelines Regarding Conduct/Discipline/Athletic Concerns

1. Teacher/Coaches or Staff Member
2. Assistant Principal – Student Affairs / School Counselor (if needed) / Resource Specialist (if applicable)
3. Principal
4. Principal and Pastor

Sequence Guidelines Regarding Academic/Classroom Concerns

1. Teacher/Coaches or Staff Member
2. Assistant Principal – Academic Affairs / Resource Specialist (if applicable)
3. Principal
4. Principal and Pastor

Parents should discuss with the classroom teacher or staff member before going to the next step. This includes problems such as routine procedures (homework, class assignments), classroom or playground behavior, or student-to-student problems. Parents stating that they do not have a good relationship with a teacher or that they have already held a conference with the teacher with regards to another problem ARE NOT deemed as sufficient reasons to skip steps. Teachers should be afforded the professional courtesy of a conference before parents speak with the Assistant Principal – Student Affairs, Assistant Principal – Academic Affairs, or the Principal.

VIII. Discipline Code

A. Positive Behavior Support System

Nativity Catholic School strives to teach and foster self-discipline for the well-being of both the student and the school community and for the creation of a Christian atmosphere for learning. The partnership of all – parents, teachers, and students is necessary to achieve success in this most important area of growth and development. In guiding the students' growth in habits of virtue and Christian attitudes, it is helpful to emphasize the positive rather than the negative.

- To that end, the students will participate in a school-wide positive behavior support system that emphasizes our Values:
 - **Model** Jesus and the Catholic Church
 - **Respect** the Diversity of all God's Children
 - **Learn** because it is our Vocation
 - **Achieve** our God-given Potential
- Furthermore, to recognize student growth in the areas of Approaches to Learning (ATL) and Conduct for grades 3-8, **Zeal Awards** are given each week to students who have received NO conduct or ATL referrals. Awards can be accumulated to "purchase" a variety of appreciation gifts.

Zeal Award Appreciation Gifts (age-appropriate) may include, but are not limited to:

- free seating in class
- get a locker pass
- dress down pass
- redemption pass (grades 5-8)

Nativity Catholic School exists to provide a Catholic education that will help each student to grow in awareness of God, self, and others, and to develop to his/her full potential, spiritually, academically, and socially. These objectives provide a guide for action in the area of discipline.

B. Restorative Justice / Conduct Demerit System /Approaches to Learning

Restorative Justice

As a school family, we value that we all should MODEL Jesus and the Catholic Church, RESPECT the diversity of all God's children, LEARN from our mistakes, and ACHIEVE our God-given potential. Restorative Justice, in conjunction with Positive Behavior Support, aims to heal the broken relationships. Often this can be done through an apology and forgiveness (Modeling Jesus as in the sacrament of Reconciliation). Sometimes a financial restoration is needed due to a lack of Respect for another's property. Even the results outlined for Demerits that include detention will include our beliefs in learning and goal setting so that we can Achieve our God-given potential.

ATL Interventions

Again, through the ATL system, we all should MODEL Jesus and the Catholic Church, RESPECT the diversity of all God's children, LEARN from our mistakes, and ACHIEVE our God-given potential. Interventions are therefore designed to reflect these values. The ATL form that is sent home is intended as a means of communication between teacher and parent so together we can help our students ACHIEVE their God-given potential. ATLs are **NOT** connected to Demerits. However, some of the behaviors indicated on the ATL form may result in a Demerit Referral when appropriate. Another benefit of the ATL system is the ability to quickly recognize the development of patterns. On this note, we have set up time frame markers which indicate an intervention is needed. The purpose of the interventions is to identify barriers to classroom success and to find strategies to eliminate or overcome them.

****Students in Prekindergarten through Grade 2 work with their teachers and the School Counselor to develop respect, spirituality, and responsibility. Age-appropriate rewards and consequences are employed.**

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Consequences for inappropriate behavior at this level are usually issued by the classroom teacher and may include, but are not limited to:

- Redirection in the classroom.
- Redirection on the playground bench.
- Loss or delay of using playground equipment.
- Loss of freedom of interaction with other students for a limited time.
- Notes/phone calls to parents

****Grades 3 and 4 use a modified version of the Demerit System:**

- Demerit Forms and ATL Notices may be issued, but teacher assigned discipline is used in place of point accumulation.
- However, Grade 4 students will be introduced to the Demerit System later in the school year when appropriate.

Approaches to Learning (ATL) Notice: given to a student whose choices in the area of academics, specifically in the areas of 1) Organization, 2) Communication/Collaboration, and/or 3) Reflection/Personal Initiative. The following are the indicators of Organization, Communication/Collaboration, and Reflection/Personal Initiative, as promulgated from the Diocese of St. Petersburg's Office of Catholic Schools and Centers' Grading Policy:

Organization

- Prepared for class
- Homework completed
- Class work completed
- Punctual with assignments

Collaboration & Communication

- Participates in class
- Attentive and engaged during instruction
- Demonstrates helpfulness and teamwork
- Seeks help when needed (from teacher or peers)

Reflection & Personal Initiative

- Open to teacher help and correction
- Makes an effort to improve behavior/performance
- Produces quality work
- Makes time for personal study and improvement

Incomplete/Missing Work

- All ATL Notice forms are in triplicate: one copy stays with the issuing teacher; one goes to the student's homeroom teacher; one is sent home. **Parents are to sign and have their child return notice the following day to the homeroom teacher. If incomplete/missing work needs to be completed (ATL Notice), students must also return the work on the next school day. If the work is still not done, the student is to attend a mandatory "Missing Work Make-Up Session" from 3:00-3:30 p.m. in the 8B Classroom as indicated on the ATL form.** This is simply so the student can complete the work and receive credit for the work. School work remaining incomplete or not turned after 48 hours will receive a **zero**.
- We recommend that the parent(s) talk with and guide the student in making some resolution for improvement, and **then respond in writing, giving the teacher productive feedback.** Your support is appreciated and is vital in our partnership. Parent refusal to sign any form or notice is in direct contrast to the partnership between home and school and our Mission. Parents should schedule a conference with the classroom teacher or person issuing the ATL or Demerit for further explanation should

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they have concerns.

- If a form is not signed and returned on time, the student may be required to make a phone call from the office to make the parent aware that the form will again be taken home, to be returned the following day. This call is not the time to discuss the ATL or Demerit. (It is suggested that the parent’s response should be something like: “I don’t appreciate that you had to call me for something that should have been taken care of last night; we’ll talk about it tonight.”). Failure to return an ATL or Demerit on time may result in Conduct Demerit being issued.

C. Reporting Conduct and Approaches to Learning

The Diocese recognizes that the cultivation of good behavioral and learning habits and behaviors support learning in the long run.

Level I Approaches to Learning (ATL)

While schools may create their own rubric for ATL, the principles of Organization, Communication / Collaboration and Reflective Thinking should be the focus for all ATL behaviors. The following are the indicators of Organization, Communication/ Collaboration and Reflective Thinking.

Organization

- Prepared for class
- Punctual with homework and in-class assignments
- Completed homework and in-class assignments

Collaboration & Communication

- Participates in class
- Attentive and engaged during instruction
- Demonstrates helpfulness and teamwork

Reflection & Personal Initiative

- Open to teacher help and correction
- Makes an effort to improve behavior/performance by seeking help when needed
- Makes time for personal study and improvement

Reporting ATL/Conduct on the Report Card

Numerical Guides for reporting Grades for ATL and Conduct

Approach to Learning Number of ATLs per trimester		
Score	Core Subjects	Specials/Electives
4 Exceeds expectations	0	0
3 Meets expectations	0-2	1
2 Developing ability to meet expectations	3-6	2-3
1 Rarely meets expectations	7 or more	4 or more

These numbers are guides, actual grade reported is up to the discretion of each teacher.

Conduct Number of Demerits per trimester	
Score	All Subjects Combined Reported in Homeroom
4 Exceeds expectations	0
3 Meets expectations	0-2
2 Developing ability to meet expectations	3-6
1 Rarely meets Expectations	7 or more

These numbers are guides, actual grade reported is up to the discretion of each teacher.

Demerit Earned and Results

Number of Demerits Earned for the school year	Results
1	Restorative Justice
2	Restorative Justice
3+	PM Detention plus conference with teacher, parent, & student plus Restorative Justice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NJHS and SLT members suspended from those leadership roles for two weeks
4	Restorative Justice
5	Restorative Justice
6+	PM Detention & conference with Assistant Principal, teacher, parent, & student plus Restorative Justice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NJHS and SLT members suspended from those leadership roles for the remainder of the school year
7	Restorative Justice
8	Restorative Justice
9+	1 week of PM Detention plus conference with Assistant Principal, teacher, parent, & student plus Restorative Justice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other students who have earned 9 or more demerits are suspended from extracurricular activities for 1 month
10	Restorative Justice
11+	Saturday Detention plus conference with Assistant Principal, teacher, parent, & student plus Restorative Justice

12	Restorative Justice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students who have earned 12 or more demerits are suspended from extracurricular activities for the remainder of the school year
13+	ISS (in school suspension) plus conference with Assistant Principal, teacher, parent, & student plus Restorative Justice
14	Restorative Justice
15+	OSS (out of school suspension) plus conference with Principal, teacher, parent, & student plus Restorative Justice
16+	Meeting with Principal and or Pastor plus Restorative Justice

E. Academic Honesty

At Nativity Catholic School, we take pride in **Achieving** our best, using the gifts God gave us. We do not tolerate cheating in any form. Cheating is a form of lying; it is also morally wrong (a sin).

Cheating can include, but is not limited to:

- a student turning in the work of another (whether it is from tests, class work, homework, or projects) as his/her own.
- individuals working as a group without fairly sharing the responsibilities of the group task.
- copying in which one (or more) of the group members does all the work and others rewrite it, while pretending that they themselves accomplished the work.
- group members not completing their task(s) and depending on other members of the group to complete the project.
- plagiarizing (using the words or drawings or photographs of another without permission or without crediting the person who actually wrote, drew, or photographed the material).

Consequences of Dishonesty:

If a Nativity student does not follow testing rules or is found to be cheating:

- the work will be taken from the student by the teacher. Further academic consequences are indicated at the beginning of the year at class meetings by the teachers.
- the student cheating may receive Conduct Demerits. In addition, the student may receive an ATL Referral if the work taken causes the student to be missing work due for that class.
- a student giving his/her work to another student to copy may also have that work taken and receive Conduct Demerits (and an ATL Referral if the work taken causes the student to be missing work due for that class).
- A student is found to be cheating a second time will receive Conduct Demerits and the student, parents, administrator, counselor, and teachers involved will meet to discuss that action.

F. Playground Behavior

Please discuss the following rules and guidelines for playground behavior at recess time with your child. The teachers also make students aware of the playground rules throughout the school year. The same rules of safety and conduct used inside the school also apply to the playground area during school and during the Extended Day program. Administration reserves the right to exclude any child from the privileges of recess for inappropriate playground behavior.

All students should obey playground monitors at all times. All students must be accepted and allowed to play. No exclusive games, groups, or cliques. No wrestling, tripping, pushing, hitting, fighting, etc. This includes pretend fighting and/or martial arts games. Balls/Toys from home are not allowed on the playground unless approved/requested by the classroom teacher. No jumping from, twisting, flipping, or doubling up on the swings or other playground equipment. No climbing up slides. Only one person at a time down the slide. No throwing rocks, sticks, acorns, mulch, sand/dirt, etc. Parents/Guardians help maintain the discipline of the school by partnering with the school by supporting the policies, staff, faculty, and administration.

G. Other Disciplinary Measures

Some behaviors are so serious as to warrant additional or different disciplinary responses. Such serious infractions may include, but are not limited to:

- Repeated disrespect toward the administrators, teachers, or others;
- Possession/use of smoking materials, alcohol, non-prescribed drugs, etc. on campus or at school-sponsored activities;
- Any act endangering the lives and/or safety of others, including verbal or written harassment (in person or via electronic communication) or sexual harassment or disrespect of another student or staff member, whether real or in jest; fighting among students; possession of firearms, or other weapons and objects that could endanger the safety of students or staff, etc.;
- Vandalism or willful destruction of school or personal property;
- Truancy, leaving school grounds, or skipping class without permission;
- Consistent and flagrant violation of school rules;
- Possession of pornographic pictures or literature while at school or school sponsored events;
- Stealing, cheating, or plagiarism;
- Membership in a gang whose primary goal is to commit crimes;
- Gambling during school hours or school events;
- Intentional disruption of school technology systems/network;
- Any other behaviors deemed serious by the Administration and faculty/staff.

Illegal Substances

The use or possession of illegal substances on school premises or at school-sponsored activities, including but not limited to tobacco, drugs, alcohol, and various types of inhalants (such as those used in vaping) is prohibited and is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

Leaving School Grounds During the School Day

No student may leave the school grounds during school hours without the permission of the administration and written authorization of the parent/guardian.

Physical Restraint

Corporal punishment is not used as a means of student discipline. However, there are times when physical restraint may be necessary to maintain order in the school or classroom, or at a school activity or event, to prevent a student from harming him/herself, other students, and/or school/staff property.

Search and Seizure

Lockers, desks, and personal belongings are subject to reasonable search at any time by the school administration. This is for the protection of students and school employees. Lockers, desks, and any other storage areas at the school remain in the possession and control of the school even though they are made available or assigned for student use.

Vandalism/Property Damage

Students and their parent/guardian are liable for all damage to equipment or school property.

Harassment Policy

Nativity Catholic School strives to establish a Christian, professional and supportive educational community for administrators, faculty and staff, parents, and students. The Diocese of St. Petersburg has adopted and promulgated a harassment policy for its schools/centers that addresses behaviors that interfere with fulfilling the school's mission. We, at Nativity Catholic School, condemn any form of harassment. Concerns should be reported directly to the school administration. All credible allegations will be addressed according to the Diocesan policy.

Under federal and state laws (Florida Statutes 111.32) and as well as diocesan policies, sexual harassment is illegal and is prohibited in school settings.

In keeping with the Christian regard for the dignity of each person, no form of harassment will be tolerated at Nativity Catholic School and could lead to suspension/expulsion.

****Because it is impossible to foresee all behavior problems which may arise, the administrator(s) reserves the right, when necessary, to take appropriate disciplinary action in response to these problems, even though that action may not be specified in this Handbook. This action may include, but is not limited to: increased number of demerits issued, in/out of school suspension, or removal of the student from the school after administration's consultation with the Pastor. Such disciplinary actions will include documentation of the infraction and of the actions taken in response. A copy of the documentation will be given to the parent(s), to the student's homeroom teacher, and a copy will be placed in the student's personal folder. If a difference of opinion occurs between the administrator(s) and the student, or his/her parent(s) or guardian(s), and no other approaches to a resolution of this difference of opinion are appropriate or successful, the administrator(s) will offer the family the appeals process established by the Diocese of St. Petersburg's Office of Schools and Centers.**

H. Technology Expectations

Students have access to computers and other technology in the Computer Lab, News Studio, Innovation Lab, Media Center, and in the classrooms to support the learning process. Students in grade 5- 8 will participate in the school's 1:1 Microsoft Surface Tablet Program. Grades Pre-K – 4 are equipped with Apple iPads for student use. Nativity Catholic School students and parents must read and sign the Acceptable Use Policy form before students will be permitted to use school technology. If the equipment is damaged or lost due to negligence, the School shall have the option of requiring the Student/Family to pay for the repair of the equipment to a state of good working order or to reimburse the School for the replacement cost of such Equipment.

Students, parents, faculty, and staff are not permitted to:

- send or display offensive messages or pictures;
- use obscene language;
- harass, insult, or attack others;
- damage computers, computer systems, or computer networks;
- visit unauthorized websites or view personal e-mail or websites;
- access materials from CDs or flash drives without running a school virus scan on the material;
- violate copyright laws;
- use another's password(s);
- trespass into another's folder, work, or file;
- intentionally waste limited resources;
- employ the network for commercial purposes;
- post on a personal website, etc., any school or student pictures, or school activities without expressed permission of the school and/or individual.
- use social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, etc.) to spread negative statements about the school and/or individuals;

I. Valuables and Cell Phone/Electronic Device: Use and Abuse

Valuables should not be brought to school. Students should not have unauthorized electronic devices; this includes cell phones and smart watches, on campus. Any cell phones brought to school must be turned off and remain in the student's backpack during the day. If a student has any of these valuables on his/her person, they will be confiscated and taken to the school office. Only the parent/guardian may retrieve the item(s) from the office.

Children attending Nativity Catholic School expect a safe and optimum learning environment.

Keeping this responsibility in mind, it is necessary to implement a rule regarding cell phone/electronic device usage by students. The rule intends to maintain the integrity of the learning environment and to protect students, faculty members, and the school from disruption, disrespect, or loss of privacy.

Student cell phones/electronic devices may not be seen, heard, or used while at school, on a field trip, or at a school function (i.e., middle school dance), unless with direct permission from a faculty or staff member. Consequences for failing to abide by this rule are:

- Cell phones are taken and are held in the school office to be returned only to the parent or guardian.
- 2 Demerits

IX. Uniform Policy

A. Dress Code – Uniforms

Uniforms are worn at Nativity Catholic School as a symbol of unity and school pride. The uniform policy creates equity among students, a valuable reminder that all students are equally precious in the eyes of God. The wearing of uniforms is to be a cooperative effort among parents, students, and staff. The school has the responsibility for maintaining a conducive educational environment.

Uniforms are required and are not subject to modification. Uniforms should be clean and pressed with all buttons attached and hems intact. Students and parents share the responsibility for proper dress and grooming. If a student is not in regulation uniform, parents will be called to provide proper uniform, pick up the student, or the student may be required to change into a uniform provided by the school. In grades PreK-2, when a child is not in compliance with the uniform policy, the child's parent or guardian may be contacted to bring the appropriate uniform item(s). In grades 3-8, Demerits may be issued for breaking the uniform policy.

All Student Uniform Requirements

Regulation shirts, skirts, jumpers, shorts, pants, skorts, etc. originate with Risse Brothers only.

General Requirements

- Appropriate in size, fitting, and alteration
- Worn at the natural waistline, without rolling of waistbands
- Shirts tucked in at all times (except PE uniforms and recess)
- Skirts, skorts, and shorts are to be **no shorter than two (2) inches above the top of the kneecap.**

Prekindergarten Three and Four Year Olds (boys and girls):

- Nativity logo gray P.E. shirt
- Nativity logo P.E. shorts
- Nativity logo navy jersey dress for girls with modesty shorts
- Nativity logo sweatshirts only may be worn on cold days
- Preferably Nativity logo navy or plain navy or gray sweatpants on cold days

Kindergarten through Grade 5:

GIRLS:

- Nativity plaid jumper with a white, round collar blouse
- Nativity logo navy jersey dress for girls with modesty shorts (K-2nd Grade ONLY)
- Nativity plaid skirt or shorts
- Nativity logo navy, white, or light blue polo shirt
- Navy or khaki uniform trousers with a black or brown belt (belts Grades 3-5)
- Nativity logo or solid navy or white sweater (no hoods)
- Nativity logo sweatshirts only (no hoods)
- Nativity logo gray P.E. shirt
- Nativity logo P.E. shorts

Middle School Students (Grades 6, 7, and 8):

GIRLS:

- Nativity plaid skirt or skort
- Nativity logo navy, white, or light blue polo shirt
- Navy or khaki uniform trousers with a black or brown belt
- Nativity logo or a solid navy or white sweater
- Nativity logo sweatshirts only or hooded Nativity sweatshirt
- Nativity logo gray P.E. shirt
- Nativity logo P.E. shorts

Kindergarten through Grade 5:

BOYS:

- Navy or khaki uniform trousers or shorts (no cargo style) with a black or brown belt (belts Grades 3-5)
- Nativity logo navy, white, or light blue polo shirt
- Nativity logo or solid white turtle neck shirt (cold weather only)
- Nativity logo or a solid navy or white sweater (no hoods)
- Nativity logo sweatshirts only (no hoods)
- Nativity logo gray P.E. shirt
- Nativity logo P.E. shorts

Middle School Students (Grades 6, 7, and 8):

BOYS:

- Navy or khaki uniform trousers or shorts (no cargo style) with a black or brown belt
- Nativity logo navy, white, or light blue polo shirt
- Nativity logo or a solid navy or white sweater
- Nativity logo sweatshirts only or hooded Nativity sweatshirt
- Nativity logo gray P.E. shirt
- Nativity logo P.E. shorts

Spirit Shirts

- The 2019-2020 Spirit Shirts provided by NCS may be worn on Fridays with uniform bottom appropriate for the day's activities.

Hair/Grooming

- Students' hair shall be well-groomed and neatly arranged.
- Students' hair length and style must not impede vision nor be a distraction from schoolwork.
- Neither coloring of the hair (i.e., dyeing, bleaching, coloring, etc.) nor extreme hairstyles are permitted.
- Girls' hair accessories must be Nativity plaid, black, brown, white, or blue.
- Girls' hair accessories (such as bows and headbands) must be minimal and not distract from the uniform.
- Girls' hair is to be out of the face and neatly groomed.
- Boys' hair must be cut above the collar, out of the face, above the eyebrows, and neatly groomed.
- Regarding facial hair, boys must be clean-shaven.
- Boys' sideburns may not reach below the ear and must be uniform width.
- Boys may wear white, short-sleeve t-shirts under their uniforms.
- A student receiving a notice for non-compliance with hair requirements shall have no more than three school days to come into compliance.

Accessories

In keeping with the simplicity of a uniform, accessories should be minimal, as follows:

- Wristwatches may be worn (those with sound capabilities should be set to silent mode)
- No smartwatches of any kind (i.e. Apple Watch, Android Watch, etc.) may be worn at any time; Smartwatches may not be worn, even if their "smart" functions can be 'turned off.'
- Girls with pierced ears may wear modest, appropriate stud earrings (one per ear) – this is a safety issue – no hoops of any size
- Boys may not wear earrings
- Students may wear one thin gold or silver chain and/or bracelet with a religious theme.
- No nail polish, artificial nails, or French manicures (regardless of out-of-school commitments), unless permitted by the School on dress down days only, in which case nail polish must be removed by the next school day
- No make-up, glitter, tattoos, or body piercings are permitted
- No armbands or rings may be worn
- No caps, hats, or scarves may be worn
- Belts must be worn in Grades 3-8

Shoes

- **Grades PreK-3 – Grade 1:**
 - o Students must wear low-cut white +/- or black tennis/athletic shoes with Velcro.
 - o Velcro is required for PreK-3, PreK-4, Kindergarten, and Grade 1.
 - o Any shoes/sneakers with wheels or lights are prohibited.
- **Grades 2–8 Only:**
 - o Students must wear low-cut white +/- or black tennis/athletic shoes with coordinating laces, OR solid black or brown Sperry's/Docksiders/Boat Shoes with rubber soles. Saddle shoes are approved shoes.

- **P.E. Days Only:**
 - o Tennis/athletic shoes are required for P.E. class.
 - o Any color tennis/athletic shoe is permitted on P.E. days only.

****Please note: Any shoes/sneakers with wheels or lights are prohibited.**

- **Socks:**
 - o Socks must be worn at all times.
 - o White or black socks only; preferably no logos; small logos are acceptable.
 - o Uniform plaid on girl's socks is acceptable.

Clarification of Outer Wear

As colder weather is approaching, remember that all non-approved outerwear must be taken off as soon as students arrive in their classrooms. Non-approved outerwear may not be worn at any time during the school day. This includes going to and from Mass. Outerwear consists of any coat, jacket, sweater, or sweatshirt of any kind worn over the Nativity School uniform. **Girls** may wear white or navy tights during cold weather under the appropriate uniform.

- **Non-approved outerwear will only be permitted for recess or P.E. on *extremely* cold days.**
- **Long sleeve shirts may not be worn under any uniform shirt**

Approved Outer Wear for All Students

- Nativity logo crew neck style sweatshirts or the Nativity Booster Club
- Nativity logo sweaters
- Nativity logo jackets or the Nativity Booster Club
- Students may wear preferably Nativity logo navy or plain navy sweatpants on P.E. cold days

Middle School Students ONLY

- The gray or navy hooded Nativity logo sweatshirt sold by the Booster Club
- Nativity Sports Teams sweatshirt

B. "N.U.T. Days" /Other Out-of-Uniform Days/After School Activities (such as the Sports Banquet)

During the school year, certain Fridays (unless otherwise noted) are designated as N.U.T. (No Uniform Today) Days, which may be sponsored as fundraisers for charities or taken as rewards for positive behavior. Clothing worn on N.U.T. Days and other out-of-uniform days should be in keeping with the values supported by our school. Parents are asked to monitor what students wear. Free Dress Passes may **ONLY** be used on and must be for the 2019-2020 school year. Expired dress down passes will not be accepted.

The following dress code applies to N.U.T. Days and other out-of-uniform events:

Permitted:

- clothing that fits properly and does not contain inappropriate graphics or words
- jeans, capris, shorts, (shorts, must be no shorter than 2 inches above the knee)
- enclosed shoes, such as sneakers (any color permitted)
- students in all grades may also wear P.E. uniforms on these days
- girls may wear solid-colored nail polish (single color only; no artificial nails are permitted; nail polish must be completely removed before the next school day)

Not permitted:

- torn or ripped clothing
- very tight, form-fitting, or revealing clothing – this includes no yoga pants, tights, leggings, or jeggings
- clothing with inappropriate graphics or words
- tank tops, cut-offs, sleeveless, spaghetti straps, shirts which expose the abdomen during normal movement
- sandals/backless/open-toed shoes (safety reason)
- shoes not having solid soles/heels; feet enclosed in the entire shoe (safety reason)
- jewelry/accessories which would not be permitted with the regular school uniform
- on dress-up days, no jeans or shirts without collars

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

****A student not following the dress code:**

- will be sent to the office to call his/her parent to bring appropriate clothing (if parents are not available to bring a change of clothing, the student will be given a PE shirt and shorts to wear; if available)
- will be permitted to return to class only when he/she is appropriately dressed
- may be prohibited from participating in future dress down days
- may be given Demerits for repeated or disrespectful violations

****Thank you in advance for your cooperation in following the above dress down day guidelines.**

X. Student Activities**A. Athletics**

The Nativity Athletic Program functions under the same philosophy as Nativity Catholic School. The purpose of this program is to develop physical skill in conjunction with teamwork and positive leadership skills. Participating in a sport is a privilege, and all athletes must Model good Christian behavior to keep that privilege.

All student-athletes must have the appropriate permission document completed and notarized, and must also pass a physical examination by a physician before practicing or competing in any sport. Sports physicals must be done after the last day of the prior school year.

Please Conferencing Guidelines (VII, B) for concerns involving athletics.

B. Title IX

Nativity Catholic School adheres to the tenets of Title IX: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

C. Code of Ethics

The **coach** is expected to Model Jesus and to conduct him/herself in a sportsman-like manner and lead his/her team not only by words, but also by example. The coach should at all times be a positive role model to his/her players. It is the coach's responsibility to ensure that athletics is a rewarding experience for each player by promoting an attitude of support and encouragement among all team members. This Code of Ethics applies to assistant coaches as well.

The **athlete** is expected Model Jesus and to exhibit the highest degree of cooperation, enthusiasm, and sportsmanship at each athletic event. Each athlete is an ambassador of Nativity Catholic School and is expected to demonstrate moral behavior parallel to that which is expected of them during each school day. Each athlete should always exhibit honorable behavior toward his/her coach, the officials, his/her teammates, and the opposing players and coaches. A Nativity Catholic School athlete is expected to accept victory or defeat in a positive, dignified manner.

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The **parent** is expected to support his/her child and the coach positively to reinforce the Vision, Values, and Mission Nativity Catholic School. Each parent should refrain from being critical of the coaches and/or officials, and each should understand that his/her child must learn to cope with the situation, no matter how adverse. Each parent should Model and demonstrate to his/her child that success is Achieved through hard work and dedication, not excuses.

Sports available to students are as follows:

Girls

Varsity Basketball
Junior Varsity Basketball
Varsity Track and Field
Junior Varsity Track and Field
Varsity Flag Football
Varsity Volleyball
Junior Varsity Volleyball

Boys

Varsity Basketball
Junior Varsity Basketball
Varsity Track and Field
Junior Varsity Track and Field
Varsity Flag Football

Coed

Varsity Soccer

- The purpose of JV athletics is to allow students to foster the skills necessary to make our Varsity program. Students will be given approximate equal playing time to develop throughout the season.
- The purpose of Varsity athletics is to provide an experience to athletes at a highly competitive level and prepare our students to play in high school. Students will receive playing time at the discretion of the coach. Playing time is not guaranteed.

D. Transportation Procedure for After-School Sporting Events

It is the responsibility of the athlete and the parent(s) to arrange transportation for their child to and from practices and after-school sporting events. You are encouraged to make arrangements with other families in advance if you are unable to drive to an event. Nativity Catholic School coaches will not be responsible for arranging carpools and are not allowed to transport athletes to and from games.

If you are releasing your child to another parent for transportation to an event, you are required to send a written request to your child's homeroom teacher. In this request, please ask the teacher to release your child to the driver(s) who will be transporting him/her. This request may include more than one driver and may be good for the entire season of the sport.

To further preserve the instructional time at the end of the day, students participating in sporting events will not ordinarily be excused early from class to attend games, unless approved by the school administration. Athletes and their siblings can leave during regular dismissal and meet at a designated location to leave on time for most sporting events. **Athletes leaving early for a sporting event without prior approval will not be allowed to participate in that event.**

E. Clubs/Organizations

Nativity Catholic School offers numerous activities and clubs geared to the varied interests and talents of its students. Information for these activities is posted on the school website as they occur during the year. Many after-school activities are completed by 4:00 p.m., some, like sports and band, have their own schedules.

Students have the option of participating in after-school activities with the understanding that they are picked up immediately after the activity. For the sake of safety, any student not picked up promptly will be escorted to Extended Day; there will be a fee charged for this service. **No student may be on the school property unsupervised at any time.**

STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES – (Based on availability and are subject to change)

[Please Note: ** = nominal fee]

Altar Servers

Students in grades 5 through 8 may volunteer to assist the parish by serving at both parish and school liturgies. Training is provided by the parish.

Band

Instrumental music instruction in band is available for students in grades 6 through 8 after school hours through the music teacher.

Bricks 4 Kidz**

Students in Kindergarten through grade five may participate in this after-school enrichment program. *Bricks 4 Kidz* is designed to provide an extraordinary atmosphere for students to build unique motorized creations, build art, explore imaginations, play games, and have loads of fun using LEGO bricks.

Chess Club **

Chess is known to exercise both sides of the brain, increase creativity, and improve memory.

Drama

Nativity's 6th-8th-grade students can audition for the school musical. The students rehearse acting, singing, and dancing and perform the chosen musical each spring.

Green Team

Students in grades 6, 7, & 8 may apply to participate on the *Green Team*. The *Green Team* collects recycled materials throughout the school on a weekly basis, in accordance with the Church's environmental stewardship.

Karate**

Students in grades Kindergarten through grade 8 may participate in this after-school program. *Karate* is designed to further students' life skills, such as respect, self-discipline, and focus.

Mind Lab**

Students in Kindergarten through grade 5 may participate in this after-school enrichment program. *Mind Lab* offers strategies and mind games for enhancement of thinking abilities and life skills.

Odyssey of the Mind **

Students in grades Kindergarten through grade 8 may participate in this after-school enrichment program. *Odyssey of the Mind* is an international creative problem-solving competition for students from kindergarten through college. The program is presently open to Nativity students Kindergarten through grade 8. Students are to work as a team to solve long-term and short-term problems as creatively as possible (visit www.odysseyofthemind.com to find out more). Parent volunteers are needed to coach teams. Coaches are expected to support teamwork, motivate, guide, yet not interfere with student ideas, and teach needed skills

to the students on their team. Parents will receive ten service hours for this activity.

Patrols

Students in grade 5 serve on the school's safety patrol. The patrols' responsibility is to assist in the safe movement of students, especially at drop off and dismissal time. All parents and students should respect the patrols and follow the school rules at all times.

Recorders

Students in grade 4 and the first half of grade 5 receive weekly instruction during school time in playing the recorder. Instruction is provided by the music teacher.

Robotics Club **

Students in grades 1 through 8 may participate in this after-school enrichment program. The Robotics Teams participate in the LEGO League, which is designed to get children excited about science and technology and teaches them valuable life skills. Teams are made up of up to ten students with one or two adult coaches. This club is open to eligible students in grades 1 through 8.

Scouts

Daisy, Brownie, Girl Scout, Cub, and Boy Scout programs are available through the local scouting council. Meetings are held outside of school time on campus. Contact the Parish Office to learn more.

G. Field Trips

Field trips are designed to correlate with teaching units and to achieve curricular goals. Field trips are re-evaluated each year to determine the trips compatibility with curricular goals. All grades do not always have the same number of field trips. Field trips are permissible for all grades when advanced planning, location, and the experience ensure a successful learning opportunity. There are no "traditional" field trips. Class participation in a particular field trip over consecutive years does not mean that this trip has become a school tradition.

Field trips are privileges afforded to students; no student has an absolute right to a field trip. Individual teachers, in consultation with the Administration, reserve the right to restrict or deny student participation on any field trip due to, but not limited to, poor academic performance and/or poor conduct. Parents will be notified of all trips to areas outside of the immediate school environment. An electronic permission slip must be completed by a parent/guardian before a child is permitted to attend, on the date designated by the teacher. Students not returning permission slips are not permitted to participate. Verbal permission is not acceptable. A telephone call will not be accepted in lieu of the proper field trip permission slip. Call the Director of School Affairs for information needed to complete the online form.

Parents may refuse to permit their child from participating in a field trip by stating so on the proper form. Students who do not attend a field trip will remain at home with the parent and will be marked absent for the day. Students who are participating in the field trip must ride the bus to and from the field trip with their class when a class bus is provided. Parents may not "opt out" of the bus portion of the trip. Students not on the bus may not participate in the field trip and will be counted absent for the day.

Parent chaperones must have completed the Safe Environment Training course and fingerprinting as required by the Diocese of St. Petersburg. Teachers reserve the right to select chaperones for their field trips. Parents who are not "official" chaperones may not drive their car to a field trip destination with the plan of accompanying the class on the field trip. Our risk management insurance company insures the "official" chaperones and participation by unofficial chaperones jeopardizes the protection for our students and all other "official" adults on the trip.

All monies collected for the field trip are non-refundable. Student cell phones are not allowed on field trips unless otherwise directed by the teacher and/or administration. Attendance of non-school age younger siblings on a field trip is not permitted. In addition, field trips are an extension of the school day, and students are expected to follow school rules as if they were in the school building. Field trips are an opportunity for students to Model give witness to our Values; **Model** Jesus and the Catholic Church, **Respect** the Diversity of all God's Children, **Learn** because it is our Vocation, **Achieve** our God-given Potential. Exemplary conduct is expected. The school reserves the right to exclude from field trips those students whose conduct throughout the year does not reflect the principles of respect and responsibility. In the event that a student demonstrates the inability to conduct himself/herself properly on a field trip, the school reserves the right to exclude the student from future field trips.

XI. Medical

A. Health Room

Nativity Catholic School has a full-time registered nurse on staff. The nurse's primary role is to make contact with the parent of a sick or injured child, not to treat illness or injury. The nurse is also responsible for maintaining the students' health records. Prescription medication may be administered by the school nurse, provided appropriate documentation, and forms have been completed.

The Health Room is on the first floor of Building B. Visits are limited to half an hour. If after that, time the child is still not feeling well enough to return to the classroom, the parent will be notified, and the parent will be required to come take the child home.

At the beginning of the school year, the parent(s) is/are to complete the Student Clinic/Emergency Sheets and return for each student promptly. It is essential that the school is made aware of a student's health needs, particularly allergies (bees, ants, certain food allergies, etc.).

Updating the office database and family profile with a change of address, telephone number(s), custodial information, and/or the emergency contact information is very important for the student's safety. It is extremely important that the school can contact a parent/guardian at any time during the day in case of an emergency. If any updates are needed during the year, the School Office needs to be contacted.

B. Immunizations

Catholic Schools within the Diocese of St. Petersburg require enrolling students to submit a Florida Department of Health Certificate of Immunization as provided for in Florida Statute 1003.22 as a condition precedent to acceptance. Catholic Schools in the Diocese of St. Petersburg do not recognize a religious objection to this immunization. This policy is effective as of the 2011-2012 school year. Immunization records and an Emergency Treatment Form and a Student Clinic Card for every student are kept on file in the Health Room. The purpose of these required diocesan forms (found on the school website under school information) is to give the school personnel important information concerning health problems, procedures for emergency care, and the persons to contact if a parent is unavailable or cannot be reached. The parent's signature on these forms gives the school personnel permission to act in an emergency situation. Any health problems a child has must be listed on the Medical Alert Form. Please complete these forms carefully as it is extremely important to have complete and accurate information. Remember to alert the school if changes in telephone numbers, addresses, or health status occur during the school year.

C. Illness

Sick children should not be sent to school. Parents should notify the school immediately if their child has come into contact with or has any contagious disease or condition, such as but not limited to, chicken pox, pink eye, or head lice. The school reserves the right to require a doctor's note for a student to return after an illness or to explain a student's extended absence. Students must be approved by the school nurse in order to return to the classroom. All children with a fever, and/or flu-like symptoms (i.e., throwing up), must stay home when sick at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 37.8 degrees Celsius, measured by mouth) or signs of a fever (chills, feeling very warm, flushed appearance, and/or sweating) without the use of fever-reducing medicine.

D. Medication

Students who must take medications during the school day must keep medication in the bottle or container in which it was dispensed and must keep it in the Health Room. A Parental Authorization for Administration of Medication Form must be signed by a parent and given to the school nurse with any medication to be given. This diocesan form may also require a physician's signature.

An exception to this policy is cough drops. Cough drops may be sent with a note from the parent to the classroom teacher. A copy of the note will be kept on file in the Health Room for the duration of the school year.

Medication should not be transported between home and school daily. Separate containers should be kept at home and at school. Nativity Catholic School does not provide medication.

No student is allowed to carry medication during the school day without consent from the School.

E. Health Screenings

Annual screenings are provided by SDHC School Health Services as available:

- Vision and Hearing Screenings – Kindergarten and Grade 1
- Vision: Grade 3
- Vision, Hearing, and Scoliosis – Grade 6

F. Diocesan Student Accident Insurance

All students attending diocesan Catholic schools will be covered by the student insurance program inaugurated by the Diocese of St. Petersburg and paid by the school. The policy runs from the first day to the last day of student attendance.

An accident must be reported to the School Office promptly following the occurrence. Claim forms are available in the School Office or through the School Nurse and must be completed and returned to the school for mailing to the insurance company within thirty days of the accident.

The student insurance does not take the place of private insurance. For more information on what is covered, please call the Assistant Principal – Student Affairs.

XII. School Counselor's Office

The School Counselor at Nativity Catholic School provides support to students and their parents and works collaboratively with faculty and staff to assist students in their social and emotional development.

The fundamental goals of the School Counselor's Office are:

- Assist students in developing understanding and acceptance of themselves and others
- Guide students in problem-solving, healthy decision-making, and improved social skills
- Foster partnerships with students, their parents, and the school

- Facilitate small groups for students to aid in social and emotional development
- Aid students in developing increased accountability, self-direction, and responsibility
- Coordinate and educate Safe Environment curriculum
- Coordinate school-wide anti-bullying and to educate and promote moral conduct
- Coordinate school-wide drug-free initiatives to educate students and promote moral conduct.

A consultation may be requested through phone call or email; requests may be initiated by a student, parent, teacher, administrator, or other school personnel. The School Counselor will return phone calls or emails by the end of the following business day.

XIII. Parent Matters

A. Parent Code of Conduct

This **Code of Conduct** applies to all parents, guardians, caregivers, volunteers, and visitors who interact with our schools and Catholic Education in the Diocese of St. Petersburg. It also applies to all parents, guardians, caregivers, volunteers, and visitors who are present at school and school-sponsored activities, meetings, and/or functions within and outside of school hours. As parents, guardians, caregivers, volunteers, and visitors, there is an expectation of support for the Vision and Mission of Catholic Education in the Diocese of St. Petersburg.

Code of Conduct for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of St. Petersburg

The school is a multifaceted organization comprising a diversity of populations that have distinctive relationships to one another. Relationships are at the very core of our Catholic Christian belief in our Triune (three persons in one) God. The Holy Trinity is God in relationship! This beautiful doctrine inspires all of us in Catholic Schools, to attempt to be a living Christian community in relationship with God and others. It is essential in such a community that all members recognize and respect not only their own rights and responsibilities but also the rights and responsibilities of other members of the community and those of the school itself. "All rights have to be balanced by responsibilities because we are in relationship" (Putney, 2005).

The responsibility for promoting and upholding these core values of the school community must fall on all those with the greatest capacity to reason and control their actions. Therefore, it is the expectation of the school that all parents/guardians/caregivers/volunteers and visitors model acceptable behavior always within the school setting, at school-sponsored activities or when the school can be involved in any social or professional media. "It is incumbent upon parents to cooperate closely with the school teachers to whom they entrust their children to be educated; and in fulfilling their duty, teachers are to collaborate closely with parents who are to be willingly heard and for whom associations or meetings are to be inaugurated and held in great esteem" (*The Code of Canon Law, Canon 796, Para. 2*).

As a parent, celebrate that you play a foundational role in the development of your child's sense of justice, equity, and worth of all members of the school community. You are one of the most instrumental role models within your child's life. "Since parents have given children their life, they are bound by the most serious obligation to educate their offspring and therefore must be recognized as the primary and principal educators" (*Gravissimum Educationis, 1965, para. 3*).

This Code is designed to guide all stakeholders in their dealings with staff, other parents, students, and the wider school community. All staff and students at our Catholic schools are guided by similar codes. The Code is written in line with the school's values and expectations. The Code stands beside, but does not of course exclude or replace, the rights and obligations of individuals under common law. All Catholic schools are private property owned by the Roman Catholic Diocese of St. Petersburg.

The Gospel and Our Values:

We are called to emulate Jesus' call to love God and to love each other. We look to the values taught to us in scripture and the Christian belief to guide us, including: **Love** (1 John 4:7-19); **Promoting Life in Abundance** (John 10:10); **Inclusion** (Luke 19: 1-10); **Reconciliation** (Luke 15: 11-32); **Compassion** (Luke 10: 30-37); **Justice** (Matthew 25: 31-46); **Liberation** (Luke 4: 16-21); **Community** (John 15); and **Hope** (Luke 24: 13-35).

In living out these Gospel values, we strive to develop the following:

- An inclusive approach including a non-judgmental and welcoming attitude towards all people
- An ability to appreciate the situation of others
- A cooperative attitude in working with others
- Open, positive and honest communication
- The ability to work civilly with other people
- Reverence for Creation
- Trusting relationships
- Responsible actions

As a Parent, Guardian, Caregiver, Volunteer, and/or Visitor, we ask that you:

- Help your child/ren to discover that it is more the process that is experienced, rather than the end-product, that makes it all worthwhile Model flexibility – encourage healthy problem-solving.
- Respect the decisions made by the administration, even if you disagree with them.
- Help your child/ren to understand that 'giving of your very best' is what matters rather than always comparing yourself against the capabilities or achievements of others.
- Listen to your child/ren, but remember that a different version of the event may be interpreted by others.
- Understand the importance of a healthy parent/teacher/child relationship and communicate any concerns to your school in a constructive and appropriate manner.
- Validate that both parents and teachers work together for the benefit of the child/ren.
- Observe the school's policies, as outlined on the school webpage and/or the school's handbook and endeavor to support them in the home.
- Cooperate where your child's behavior has overstepped accepted school standards, as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct, and follow specified protocol for communication with faculty/staff members.
- Support the school in its efforts to maintain a positive teaching and learning environment.
- Castoff gossip and hearsay by communicating with the school and always model good manners for your child/ren.
- Sustain a positive and co-operative attitude and interact positively with other parents and members of the school community.
- Encourage community building with other parents in your year, level, and across the school.
- Value the school community and its reputation especially when engaging with social media.
- Do not smoke or use offensive language on school premises.

Rights of a Parent, Guardian, Caregiver, Volunteer, and Visitor:

- To be treated with respect and courtesy by staff, students and other parents
- To be listened to, and clearly communicated with by the school, regarding your child/ren's education and development
- To have confidentiality over sensitive issues respected by faculty/staff
- To be treated in a caring and polite manner
- To have a timely response to concerns raised, usually within 24-48 hours
- To be treated with professionalism by all faculty/staff members

Responsibilities of a Parent, Guardian, Caregiver, Volunteer, and Visitor:

- Value and advocate for your school and its reputation. Be mindful of the hurt and damage social media may cause to faculty/staff members and other parents
- Under no circumstances approach another child while in the care of the school to address, discuss or reprimand them because of actions towards your own child/ren
- Respect the rights of faculty/staff members and other individuals
- Respect the reputation of teachers and be mindful of communications especially social media; e.g. tone of emails
- Follow the correct procedures to resolve a grievance or conflict, as outlined in the school's handbook
- Respect teachers' preparation time before, during, and after school. Make an appointment for long discussions at a mutually convenient time. If you wish to speak to a teacher, please do not expect a meeting unless pre-arranged
- To protect our children, do not discuss any grievances or perceived failings in front of them regarding the school
- On excursions, helping in class or on campus, parents must follow the instructions and directions of the teacher. A parent may remind students of the rules but at no time issue consequences and should refer the student to the teacher if the behavior continues
- As valued members of the school community attend and participate appropriately in school liturgies or special events including athletics, concerts, academic, and cultural events

Grievance Process for a Parent, Guardian, Caregiver, Volunteer, and Visitor:

Our Catholic schools want to work in partnership with our families. If anyone has a **current complaint, criticism, or concern**, it is expected the following steps be followed in the first instance:

1. Speak to the appropriate school person involved (e.g. class teacher) first and try to resolve the concern with mutual respect and clear communication. Where/if possible make an appointment with the relevant person. Follow the chain of command.
2. If for some reason this is not possible, then make an appointment to see an administrator, or other designated leadership personnel.
3. The Administrator (or designee) should attempt to mediate and find resolution in the presence of both parties.
4. If, having followed Steps 1-3 with no satisfaction, you may complete the online form found on the website of the Diocese of St. Petersburg - Office of Catholic Schools and Centers for further facilitation.

It is important to note that criticism regarding a faculty/staff member will only be heard if it is related to their professional conduct.

Deliberate breaches and inability to respect the Diocese of St. Petersburg – Office of Catholic Schools and Centers Code of Conduct for Parents, Guardians, Caregivers, Volunteers, and Visitors, or exasperating complaints, may result in exclusion of a parent, guardian, caregiver, volunteer, and/or visitor from a school, and/or possible termination of enrollment of their child/ren.

If your complaint relates to Sexual Abuse by a faculty/staff member towards a child in both a historical or current matter, you should, contact the statewide toll-free abuse and neglect registry at 1-800-96ABUSE (1-800-962-2873) and/or law enforcement.

B. Family/School Partnership

Enrollment at a parochial school such as Nativity Catholic School is a privilege, not a right. Under normal circumstances, a student should not be deprived of a Catholic education on grounds relating to the attitude of the parents/guardians. However, a situation may arise in which the uncooperative or destructive attitude, actions, or words of parents/guardians so diminishes the effectiveness of the school that the family may be required to withdraw from the school. Parental support of a child's defiance of the school rules is completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

To facilitate this partnership, it is vital to keep contact information up to date on *Rediker*.

C. The Nativity Catholic School Advisory Council

The School Advisory Council is appointed by the pastor and the principal and operates in an advisory capacity to the administration. The Board does not enact policy but assists the administration in the formulation and adaptation of policy and participates in decision-making and designated areas of responsibility. Usually, these areas include long and short-term strategic planning, public relations, and marketing. The Board generally meets every other month and welcomes written communications from parents or suggested topics for discussion. These items should be sent to the principal or School Advisory Board President one week before the meeting so that they may be placed on the agenda. Parents are encouraged to participate in parent consultative subcommittees.

D. Parent, Teacher, School Association (PTSA)

The primary purpose of the PTSA is to support the pastor and administration, as well as foster a closer relationship between home and school, through sponsorship of activities of the parents of all school children at Nativity Catholic School.

E. Volunteering

Parents in Partnership: Parent Service Requirements

As part of each family's financial commitment to the school, parents are required to provide parent stewardship service hours. Serving in activities and fundraising projects supports the effort to continue offering affordable tuition while providing an excellent school environment. **Look on Better Impact for volunteer opportunities.**

F. Catholic Schools Week

Each year, Nativity Catholic School participates in a nationwide celebration of Catholic schools sponsored by the National Catholic Educational Association. The Student Leadership Board, in cooperation with the administration, faculty, staff, and parent community, plans special activities, which highlight our school's Catholic identity and unique qualities. This special week takes place every year at the end of January/beginning of February.

G. Book Fair

A Book Fair, benefiting the school library/media center, is held annually. The Book Fair usually takes place during Catholic Schools Week. Parents are encouraged to volunteer for this fundraiser.

H. Lunchroom

Students are expected to enter the lunchroom quietly and conduct themselves in an orderly manner, observing proper etiquette and politeness. Courtesy toward other students and cooperation with lunch monitors is expected at all times. Tables are to be left clean after dining. Meals are to be ordered and paid for in advance through *Tastes of Tampa Bay*, which may be accessed online through www.orgsonline.com. Students may also bring their lunch from home. Parents may not drop off fast food for their children in the lunchroom. Healthy lunches are encouraged, as our bodies are a gift from God.

Due to the fact that there are some students who are highly allergic to peanuts and other foods, students may not share food. All families are asked to remind their child(ren) to follow this request. A peanut free table is also available to students with peanut allergies.

H. Messages to Students

Parental messages will be forwarded to the student via the School Office ONLY in emergency situations. Parents should make any changes to pick-up routines BEFORE the school day begins, as the office cannot guarantee the timely delivery of messages during the school day. Parents are not permitted to directly email students on their tablets during school hours, nor are students permitted to email parents from their tablets during school hours.

I. Creating Responsible Students

As a cooperative effort to help create responsible students, parents are discouraged from bringing in forgotten items to school (homework, lunches, projects, etc.). Help your child get ready for school the night before. This will ensure your child has everything he/she needs to be prepared for the next day. If your child forgets his/her lunch, they will be served an emergency lunch from the cafeteria. Families will be charged by the *Tastes of Tampa* for this service. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

J. Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are extremely special, so special that they should be celebrated at home. Nativity Catholic School acknowledges each student with a small birthday gift. No food/goodies permitted.

Invitations for parties occurring outside of school time may be distributed following these guidelines:

- the homeroom teacher must give permission.
- invitations must include either all students in the class, or all students of one gender.

K. Special Occasions

Class parties are sometimes held for holidays or other special occasions. The homeroom teacher coordinates these celebrations with the homeroom angel.

L. Nondiscrimination Policy

The Catholic schools of the Diocese of St. Petersburg admit students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available at all schools. They do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of their educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship programs, athletic programs, or any other school-administered programs.

M. Lost and Found

Unclaimed items are kept in a designated area in the school. Articles that remain in this area for an extensive period of time (and are not labeled with a name) will be given to charity or recycled.

N. Parent Opportunities

The following opportunities for parents to partner with Nativity Catholic School are available:

Adopt-a-Class

- This program invites individuals or businesses to sponsor a class or program of the school by donating \$150 or more to support the class or program of their choice.
- These funds are used exclusively for the students of the class or program sponsored.
- Students remember Adopt-a-Class sponsors at weekly mass; sponsors receive a photo of the class/program sponsored.
- If you are interested in our "Adopt-a-Class" program, please contact the Director of School Affairs.

Parent Teacher School Association (PTSA)

- All families are members of the PTSA, and receive a magnet to support school spirit.

Educational Endowment Fund

- This fund, established by Nativity Parish and School, in cooperation with the *Catholic Foundation*, is a means of ensuring the availability of Catholic education in the future.
- Persons wishing to contribute to this fund (for a special event or in memory of a loved one) should contact the Director of School Affairs.

School Masses

- Parents/guardians, as well as family and friends, are invited to join us in celebrating the liturgy as a school community at our weekly school Masses (most Wednesdays at 8:15 a.m.).

Teacher Appreciation

- Parents have made a tradition of providing, on occasion, gifts of food or flowers/plants for the faculty. Those wishing to bring in an item should contact the Director of School Affairs in advance.

P. Yearbook

Nativity Catholic School publishes a yearbook at the conclusion of each school year, which features the students and activities of the school year. A faculty/staff member oversees the preparation of the yearbook. Each student receives a yearbook.

When a parent marks 'no' on the Media Release Form that is signed at the beginning of the school year, the student's picture cannot be included in the yearbook. Therefore, a specific written exception must be on file to include a student's picture(s) in the yearbook.

XIV. Financial Policies

Parents and guardians of children attending Nativity Catholic School are fully responsible for all financial commitments set forth in their Enrollment Contract and in this Handbook.

A. Tuition/Fees

TUITION IS NON-REFUNDABLE. A tuition schedule is prepared each year by Nativity Catholic School based on the anticipated financial needs of the school for the upcoming year. Tuition, registration fees, and all other monies are non-refundable. The Pastor and Principal have the discretion to waive this policy for very special circumstances of pastoral need.

Payment of school tuition begins in May of each school year. All payment plans are arranged through FACTS Tuition Management. Parents/guardians may select one of the following tuition payment options:

- **Single payment** for the full year due by May 1st (NON-REFUNDABLE)
- **Semi-annually** - Two payments: 50% tuition due by May 1st and 50% tuition is due by November 1st (NON-REFUNDABLE)
- **Ten monthly payments** May through February. (NON-REFUNDABLE)

Each family, through its active support and participation in the parish community and by weekly Mass attendance, will determine one of the following tuition rates for their children. A family's reception of the Nativity Parish tuition rate will be reviewed periodically throughout the year. Nativity Catholic School reserves the right during the school year to raise the tuition of any family who does not meet the requirements for receiving the Nativity Parish rate. The tuition rates are as follows:

- **Nativity Parish:** The family agrees to support the Church by use of the envelope system or through Nativity's Online Giving program, with a weekly financial contribution. Registered, practicing, and contributing members of Nativity Catholic Church may qualify for the in-parish tuition rate. If a family does not attend Mass each week, unless legitimately excused, that family will not qualify for this tuition rate.
- **If you are a member of another Catholic parish, a parish verification form must be completed and returned to the Finance Office in order to qualify for the reduced parish discounted rate.**

- **Non-Parish or Non-Practicing Families:** Any other family who desires a faith-based education will be subject to this tuition rate.

B. Financial Aid

Financial aid may be available for families with demonstrated financial need, or for those experiencing a temporary or emergency financial hardship. Should a family have a need for assistance during the year, the parent should contact the Finance Office. All requests for assistance must be through the FACTS online financial aid application program. For those requests arising during the school year, after the application program is closed, a family will be asked to make their request in writing and may be asked to provide further financial information similar to that required in the online application. Any financial information and request will be held in the strictest confidence. Each spring, families that qualify may also apply for financial assistance from the Diocese of St. Petersburg, Step Up for Students, and Mary Forbes Foundation. All scholarship awards are for the school year applied for and the family must reapply, if necessary, for future years. A family who does not remain current with their tuition payments risks the loss of their tuition assistance – this includes coming into the Finance Office to sign checks in a timely manner.

Should your aid application be denied, you may submit a written request for a redetermination, understanding that the primary guidelines for a Nativity Catholic School scholarship will be faithful Mass attendance, economic need, and the amount of available funds. A redetermination request **does not guarantee** any award of scholarship.

C. Withdrawal Process

Parents/guardians are to inform the Director of Admissions prior to a student's withdrawal from the school. A form is available from the School Office for this purpose. The school reserves the right to accept a verbal notification of withdrawal. Parents/guardians must satisfy all financial commitments to the school before student records will be forwarded. (Exception to the rule is a student's health records.)

Tuition and fees are non-refundable upon withdrawal. The Pastor, and/or Principal have discretion to waive this policy for very special circumstances of pastoral need.

D. Billing for Extended Day Program

All families planning to use the Extended Day program must complete a registration form, pay the annual \$50 program fee and will be billed weekly through the ProCare system (Tuition Express). The \$50 registration fee will be charged in the first month of using the program, regardless of the amount your student uses the program.

A credit card/account authorization form must be completed each year, and all families must keep payment information and expiration dates current.

For families not signed up with ProCare/Tuition Express, billing will process at the higher drop-in rate, as published on our school website. Should an Extended Day account become past due, the account may be placed on hold and the child(ren) may not be allowed to return to school and/or may not be allowed to retain their class seat or participate in certain class activities, i.e. graduation, final exams, etc. (see *Important General Policies* below).

Access to Nativity Catholic School's Extended Day program may be denied to a family unless previous payment arrangements have been made with and agreed to by the Finance Office, and the family remains current with said agreed upon arrangement.

E. Important General Policies

Families agree to all terms of the policies of Nativity Catholic School and Nativity Catholic Church, and understand that they are liable for all financial obligations including, but not limited to: tuition, registration fee, technology fee, parish support, service hours, Extended Day charges, Media Center overdue fees, and all other financial commitments contained in your family's contract with Nativity Catholic School.

If payment for these aforementioned items is not remitted within fifteen (15) days of them coming due, and the responsible party has not contacted the Finance Office to make a payment arrangement, your account will be placed on hold. This could result in the

suspension or forfeiture of your child's class seat. The financial obligations for your child's education should be a priority.

It is Nativity Catholic School's policy that a student may not be allowed to take final exams, participate in graduation festivities, or participate in other school events/functions if all yearly school fees are not paid in full or if a family's financial account is not current. Students may also be asked not to return to class and those individuals listed on your emergency release form will be called to pick up your child. Your child will not be allowed to return until all financial obligations are satisfied. If exams are not completed, a student is disqualified from having completed the requirements that entitle him/her the yearly promotion to the next grade or a final diploma that allows an eighth-grade student to transfer to high school.

If the FACTS system is abused, i.e., rejected payments, stopped payments, etc., Nativity reserves the right to deny the FACTS program to anyone and demand payment in full for any outstanding balance prior to your child being allowed to return to their class seat.

F. School's Right to Amend

The Pastor and/or Principal retains the right to amend the Family Handbook for just cause, and the parents will be promptly notified of changes through the website or through a special written notice.