



**2023-2024**

**FAMILY HANDBOOK**

# **NORTHSIDE CATHOLIC ACADEMY**

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## **Board of Specified Jurisdiction**

**Chairman: Mrs. Colleen Fulkerson**

**Secretary: Mrs. Mara Brecht**

From the NCA Pastors...

Welcome (back) to Northside Catholic Academy! As a ministry of the parishes of the Archdiocese of Chicago in Rogers Park, Edgewater and West Ridge, NCA welcomes you and your children with open arms. Make this your home.

Welcome back to our talented team of teachers and staff! Just as you have made a sacrificial choice to send your child to us, these men and women have chosen to teach at a Catholic school. When sacrifices such as these are offered humbly to the Lord, they bear great fruit. Believe it!

The challenges before us today in the city, the nation and world are many and difficult. At NCA, we come together as Jesus' disciples, full of confidence in the Lord's victory over sin and death. Firm faith in the reality of the Lord's birth, passion and resurrection do not allow us to give in to fear or discouragement. Each person connected to NCA in any way is perfectly known by God, called by God, lovingly shown the way by God, every day of his or her life. That means our salvation is not something we look forward to in the future: it is a lived experience, today. Love, peace, justice, generosity: it is possible to live this way! If not, let us no longer call Jesus our Savior. His disciples grow in the grace of their baptism: moving from strength to strength as...

...a priestly people – interceding for God's people through prayer and sacrifice  
...a prophetic people – proclaiming the Word of God through dialogue with our neighbor  
...a royal people – building up the Kingdom of God through lives of humble service

This handbook details our commitment to help your child along the path of discovery and embrace of the Lord's will for his or her life. Please read it and make your child familiar with the culture and traditions of NCA. They will help your children grow spiritually, intellectually, and physically. The most important teacher in this mission is you. We want to be of service to you. Please let us know how we can help.

May God bless you, bless our parishes and bless NCA this year.

Most. Reverend Mark A. Bartosic  
Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago  
President, Northside Catholic Academy

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## ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

The school hours vary for each campus. The schedules are:

	<u>Students</u> <u>Enter</u>	<u>School</u> <u>Begins*</u>	<u>School</u> <u>Ends</u>	<u>Half-day</u> <u>Dismissal</u>
Middle School Campus	7:40	<b>7:50</b>	2:50	11:10
MS Wednesday Early Dismissal	7:40	<b>7:50</b>	1:50	
Primary Campus	8:00	<b>8:10</b>	3:10	11:30
Pre K & JK Full Day	8:00	<b>8:10</b>	3:05	11:25
Pre K & JK AM Half Day	8:00	<b>8:10</b>	11:15	11:25
Primary School Wednesday Early Dismissal	8:00	<b>8:10</b>	2:10 (2:05 for Pre K & JK)	

\*School begins at each campus promptly at 7:50 am or 8:10 am. Students are expected to be in their classrooms at this time and prepared to begin their school day. See NCA's Tardy Policy.

*There is no outside supervision provided before or after school at either campus. Parents are responsible for setting a schedule that will get their children to school on time each day. Students may NOT loiter on school grounds before or after school.*

### Attendance Policies

The State of Illinois provides by law for compulsory attendance by all children between the ages of six and sixteen. The responsibility for compliance with this law belongs to the parent, but the school is obliged to keep an accurate record of daily attendance. This record is placed in the student's file at the end of the year and remains indefinitely.

### Absence

Absence from school is defined as *not physically present on a required attendance day*. Students who are absent more than 20 times in a school year may be retained at the same grade level the following year.

### Reporting an Absence

If your child is experiencing nausea, vomiting or diarrhea, or has a fever, please do not send him/her to school. A student exhibiting any of these conditions will be sent home. Students must be free of these conditions for 24 hours before returning to school.

If your child must be absent from school, **please call the school office no later than 8:30 a.m.** each day s/he will be out. (If leaving a message on the school answering machine, please include the following information: child's first & last name, reason for

the absence, the estimated length of the absence, and your name & relationship to the child.) This provides a valuable security measure for your child, as well as allowing our lunch count to be accurate. **A note regarding the absence must be sent when the child returns to school.** (Please note: We do ask parents to make both a phone call the day of the absence, as well as sending a written note for the file upon the child's return to school.) If a student has been absent for 5 or more days in a row, a written and dated note from the doctor must be brought to school upon the child's return.

It is helpful if you are able to arrange to have homework and/or important notices brought home by a sibling or a nearby friend. Your child will be held accountable to complete work assigned by the teacher. Please refer to your child's classroom policy for absent work

***Attendance at school is a requirement to attending or participating in after school or evening extra-curricular events.***

### **Tardiness**

Tardy is defined as *not physically present in the classroom at the posted opening of a regular required student attendance day.* At NCA these posted times are:

**Middle School: 7:50 am**

**Primary Campus: 8:10 am**

Students entering the building after the above stated times are considered tardy. The arrival each morning of students who are consistently tardy is a disruption to the rest of the class. Students who are tardy are at a disadvantage for the rest of the day due to all the important "tone-setting" activities they miss. **Parents must be responsible to see that students arrive on time!** If tardiness becomes a recurring problem, parent(s) will need be notified and requested to meet with the classroom teacher and administration to explain the situation and plan for the necessary changes in the daily routines to eliminate this problem.

- **Pre School - Grade 4 Students** who are tardy must report to the office **with their parents** to be signed into school before the student can go to their classroom. A staff member will escort students in the 3rd and 4th grade who have homerooms in the Social Hall building. Students will receive a tardy slip and will need to give that slip to their teacher. Tardies will be recorded in PowerSchool.
- **Middle School Students** who are tardy must report to the office for a tardy slip in order to be admitted to class. Tardies will be recorded in PowerSchool. Five tardies within a trimester will result in communication from the administration. More than 5 tardies within a trimester will result in a detention for the student.

### **Truancies**

Truancies are reported to the principal, who will contact any or all of the following: the parent, emergency contact, and the local police.

### Arrival & Dismissal Safety Procedures

There is no outside supervision provided before or after school at either campus. Parents are responsible for setting a schedule that will get their children to school on time each day. **Students may NOT loiter on the school grounds before or after school. This includes the Ministry meditation garden and the handicap ramp at the Social Hall building. We wish to respect St. Gertrude's parish property.**

Please follow our campus rules for both the Primary School and Middle School for safe drop off and pick up of all NCA children:

- Parents and children must cross the street only at the crosswalks.
- Parents should **NOT** double park on any of the side streets.
- Parents should **NOT** park in a "No Parking", "Fire Lane", or crosswalk area.
- Parents should only park in the designated Northside Catholic Academy parking lots:
  - \*Primary School Campus parking lot is located on the northwest corner of Glenwood & Thome.
  - \*Middle School Campus parking lot is in the lot located at the Activity Center. Parents may also park on Oakley or Claremont.
- Parents should not use an alley for parking or as a drop off or pick up location.
- Parents should not leave their vehicle when dropping off children at our Primary Campus "curbside" drop off location on Glenwood Avenue or at the "curbside" drop off at the Middle School Campus on Oakley Avenue and Chase Avenue.
- Pre School and Jr. Kindergarten students will meet their teachers at the school doors located on the north side of the Primary Campus building. Teachers and aides will escort the children into the building promptly at 8:00 am each morning. ***Parents will NOT be able to enter the building with the students.***

Students may ride bicycles to school. Helmets are required. Bicycles should be locked in the bicycle rack with individual locks. The school is not responsible for damage to or theft of bicycles. Bicycles should be registered with the local police department.

Students may not ride their bicycles on any school/parish parking areas before, during or after school hours. Bicycles are to be walked to and from the bicycle rack. Students may not carry passengers on their bicycles and are expected to observe courtesy and traffic regulations while riding their bicycles.

Skateboards, scooters, and roller blades/skates may not be used on school/parish property. The school/parish is not responsible for any damage to or thefts of skateboards, scooters, roller blades/skates, and other sports equipment on school/church grounds.

### Release of Students from School

No student will be allowed to leave during the school day with anyone other than the parent/guardian without written permission of the parent. A phone call is not sufficient.



### **Medical/Dental Appointments**

Please try to avoid scheduling dental or medical appointments for your children during school hours. If an early dismissal for a child is unavoidable, a parent or appointed person must come to the school office to get the child. Teachers need to be notified ahead of time of the need for this special arrangement.

### **Family Vacations**

Families are discouraged from scheduling vacations during school time. It puts any level student at a disadvantage to miss out on the work, as well as be out of step with the rhythm of the class. If such a trip is unavoidable, however, the teacher and principal must be notified well in advance. It is the responsibility of the student and/or parent to get necessary assignments, newsletters, forms, etc. when the child returns to school. **Please do NOT ask teachers for assignments to be given prior to departure.**

## **ACADEMIC PROCEDURES**

We are proud to offer a comprehensive curriculum for the students at Northside Catholic Academy. From Pre School through 8th grade, we strive to develop the academic, spiritual, social, emotional, and physical aspects of our students. Our goal is to help each young person be ready to face the challenges of life with a solid academic foundation, well-developed thinking and reasoning skills, and a strong moral base.

Our school is structured into four "Units": PK-K (Early Childhood), Gr. 1-2 (Primary); Gr. 3-4 (Intermediate); and Gr. 5-8 (Middle School). The teachers follow the mandated Archdiocesan curriculum, aligning it to the Common Core State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, and ISTE (International Society Technology Educator) programs. The basics of our curriculum are: Religion, English Language Arts (reading, writing, spelling, phonics, handwriting), Math, Social Studies, and Science. All K-8 students receive instruction in **S**panish, **T**echnology, **A**rt, **M**usic, **P**hysical Education, and **L**ibrary once or twice each week. Students at the Middle School will also participate in a **F**ine **A**rts Program each trimester. These classes are named NCA's STAMP+.

Instruction Curriculum is planned among the teachers based on local and state guidelines, and using national standards developed in various subject areas. In addition, the entire staff is focusing on developing lessons and strategies that will allow for differentiated instruction at all levels. This means working to create lessons that allow students to learn at their own instructional levels and according to their own learning styles, which vary greatly in any given classroom.

We believe that children learn successfully in many different ways, and vary the approaches used in the classroom to fit the educational needs of the situation and the students. At times, instruction is offered to the whole group, other times to small groups, and sometimes to individuals. Our teachers are committed to using a variety of strategies as they work with your children. Your child may:

- Compare and contrast using Venn diagrams;

- Learn basic Math concepts through hands-on activities with various objects that can be grouped or regrouped in meaningful ways;
- Convey their solution to a math problem through writing;
- Practice basic and complex reading skills using selections from anthologies, a short book, a novel, play or poetry;
- Complete projects through collaborative learning;
- Pray formally and informally with Scripture as a base, or through guided meditation.

### **Homework/Independent Practice**

It is expected that students will receive homework or “independent practice”. The amount and kind will vary according to the age and ability of the student. Homework is defined as an activity or assignment directed by the teacher to be performed outside of the classroom and is to support and practice classroom learning. Homework can include: written assignments, silent or oral reading practice, reviewing work covered in class, finishing class assignments, practicing math facts, working on a book report or other long-term project, studying for a test, or independent reading. The rules for homework assignments include:

- Should be an activity or assignment that the student can complete independently.
- Must be connected to the grade level or subject matter.
- Must be connected to class instruction
- Should be purposeful and relevant to learning goals.
- Consideration will be given to quality over quantity.

**Primary School** students should expect homework nightly Monday through Thursday. Homework is not given on Fridays to students in the Primary School. However, students may have long-range assignments that need work on the weekends. Students certainly should use the weekends to prepare for upcoming tests or to complete any late assignments.

**Middle School** students should expect homework to be given Monday through Friday. They may be assigned homework over the weekends beginning Trimester 1 of the school year. Teachers will assign homework with consideration of family time and extra-curricular activities. Teachers will provide students with due dates of assignments.

The amount of homework your child can expect is:

Grade K	15-20 minutes of daily reading with adult.
Grade 1	10-15 minutes in addition to 15-20 minutes of daily reading with an adult
Grade 2	15 - 30 minutes in addition to 15-20 minutes of daily reading with an adult
Grade 3,4	30 - 45 minutes in addition to 15-20 minutes of daily reading
Grade 5	50 minutes in addition to 15-20 minutes of daily reading
Grades 6-8	60 - 120 minutes including time allotted for studying for tests. Long range assignments would be in addition to this. Students also should be reading at least 15-20 minutes daily.

As much as you want to help your child, please know that it is the responsibility of each CHILD to complete his/her own assignments. Parents can help them develop that responsibility in the following ways:

1. See that books and materials come home regularly. Review assignment notebooks daily and see if all the work listed has been completed. Use it as communication tool to send notes to teachers.
2. See that your child does homework in a quiet, well-lit atmosphere.
3. Look at the completed written work. Does it look as if thought and effort went into it? Ask your child questions like: "Is there a way you can make that answer clearer? Do you have anything else to say about that question? Have you checked the Math problems in the last column?"
4. **DO NOT GIVE YOUR CHILD THE ANSWERS TO THEIR HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS!** Homework is practice for skills learned in school. It is feedback for the teacher to adjust instruction if students are not understanding what has been taught. If your child does not know how to do the assigned work on his/her own, it is important that the teacher know that. If answers are supplied at home, the teacher will expect the child to perform similarly in school, and both teacher and student will become very frustrated.
5. Ask your child to SHOW you what is being learned in school. Ask for explanations about how they arrived at their Math answers, or to explain the word they just defined, or to show you how they skimmed to find the answer in the text. It would help if you encouraged your child to understand it's not just answers we're looking for, but HOW they got them.
6. Have a time set aside every night for reading in your home. Every family member needs to model the importance of reading. You might be reading the newspaper, a document from work, or your newest novel while your child reads his/her latest Reading story, chapter of the novel being studied, or library book.
7. Make learning a fun part of everyday life. Make regular visits to the Public Library, local museums and parks, and teach your children about our city.
8. Parents have the right to set time limits on how long their child will work on homework on a given night. If the limit is reached, the parent can have the child stop and put it away. The parent should send a note to the child's teacher indicating the reason the homework was not completed. There will be NO consequence for the child for having incomplete homework, as long as there is a note from the parent. This does not apply to skipping homework for an athletic event or other extracurricular activities.

### **Missing Homework**

As homework is an important tool in reinforcing skills learned as well as giving feedback on that learning to the teachers, there is no option for students to simply not turn in their homework. All assignments must be completed. Completing homework and turning in quality work is part of your child's responsibility as an NCA student. It is important in gradually developing strong study habits at every level.

### **Missing Homework Policy for 3rd – 4th Grade**

Parents should review their child's assignment notebook each evening for homework assignments and provide a signature. If homework is not completed, the teacher will communicate to the parents through e-mail.

### **Missing Homework Policy for 5th – 8th Grade**

Homework is important to student learning at NCA Middle School. It contributes toward building responsibility, self-discipline, and life-long learning habits. The purpose of homework is that it is meaningful and supports the learning experience of the student. Students in the Middle School may be assigned homework over the weekends beginning Trimester 1 of the school year. Teachers will assign homework with consideration of family time and extra-curricular activities.

It is not an option for students to not turn in their homework. All assignments must be completed, and students will be held accountable. Students are expected to return any missing homework to the issuing teacher the next day. Possible consequences for not completing homework can include point penalties, which can affect their grade, be issued citations, and/or the student may be required to stay in during recess to make up missing work.

### **Evaluation/Grading Procedures**

An important aspect of our educational program is the ongoing evaluation of the students by the teachers. Teachers are constantly seeing changes and growth in the students, and these observations are an important part of how they can work better with your child.

Students may be required to keep a portion of their work in a portfolio as a way to observe their own development in that area. No evaluation system can adequately describe the work or ability of a student, nor can any one system fully capture the whole child. We do hope to present to you an accurate picture of your child as a learner.

Report cards, which are one form of evaluation, are given three times per year. These evaluations are based on direct observation of the student's participation in the class, oral and written class work, formal assessments (ex. tests, quizzes, projects, etc.), and homework. Parents and students in Grades 3 – 8 should monitor the student's progress on a regular basis through PowerSchool. Please note that we do shut down PowerSchool one week before report cards go home to allow teachers to prepare trimester grades and record comments for report cards.

The first report card is presented to the parent before the November parent-teacher conference. Conferences will also be held near the beginning of the third trimester. Students in Preschool through Grade 2 receive a developmental report card. We recognize and respect the evolving nature of early learning. It is important for young children to focus on the steps they need to take to become successful learners, not on letter grades or averages.

Students in Grades 3-8 are graded on the following scale:

A = 90%  
B = 80%  
C = 70%  
D = 60%  
U = 50%

Midway through each trimester, students in Gr. 3-8 will receive a Progress Report indicating if a student is performing at a C grade level or below. These progress reports serve to notify parents and students about those areas where improvement is suggested before the end of the term. The teacher may request a conference to discuss any area of concern and to review a plan in order to assist the student.

i-Ready Diagnostics are taken three times during the school to monitor the student's growth in Reading and Math. i-Ready Parent Reports will be included in each trimester's report card and discussed at conferences. i-Ready Diagnostic data is used to determine a student's personalized learning plan and to also empower NCA teachers with a deeper knowledge of their students to provide meaningful classroom instruction. i-Ready Diagnostics are not graded or included in grading.

#### **Academic/Behavior Eligibility for Athletics/Extra Curricular Activities/Field Trips**

The student's academic success has priority at NCA. Athletics, extra-curricular activities, and field trips enhance the educational experience and give students opportunities to develop new skills and experience success. However, extra-curricular programs should not interfere with the student's academic work.

- At the beginning of each athletic season, a roster of teams and clubs will be made available to school administration. A student who has a grade of a D or below will be placed on probation and a plan for improvement will be formulated between the student, parent, teacher, and administration. Teachers will review grades at the middle and the end of each trimester.
- Off-campus school sponsored events are extensions of the school's philosophy, and therefore, the student's conduct must reflect earning the privilege to represent themselves as members of the NCA community. An incident that is of a serious nature, as determined by school administration, and is in direct contradiction of the school's philosophy and values warrants the loss of privilege to represent NCA at school sponsored off campus activities.
- A Middle School student who serves 2 detentions will be given a formal warning for activity suspension from school related events on or off campus. This will be reviewed during a parent meeting to discuss behavior interventions and future success for improvement. The suspension will remain in effect until there can be a period of time to evaluate student behavior and the administration has assessed that the student's future conduct will reflect NCA's values.

## **Promotion**

Children are promoted to the next grade on the basis of achievement, academic ability, and readiness. Since all children do not reach the same level of academic or social maturity at the same time, it may, on rare occasions, be advisable for a child to be retained in a grade. When retention is being considered, many conversations will take place involving the teacher, parent(s), principal, and where appropriate, outside counselors or resource people, in order to ensure the most appropriate grade placement for the student's future success.

## **Special Needs**

There are times when students have special learning or emotional needs, which require services not easily provided by the classroom teacher. Students requiring such services may be referred to our school counselor or outside resources for diagnostic or psychological testing. Teachers and parents then attend a staffing when testing is complete, for all to discuss the best way to meet any identified needs.

Students may receive "modified" grades or narratives in some subjects if the classroom teacher has modified the student's performance expectations based on recommendations in an IEP Service Plan or 504 Plan.

There are times when it is in the best interest of the child, the family, and/or the entire class that we conclude that NCA is not the best place to handle certain problems a child may be experiencing. If that situation occurs, we will do our best to help a family to find a more suitable school for their child.

## **ADMISSION & AGE POLICIES**

**Policy ES 130.1** Archdiocesan schools admit students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students in these schools. Archdiocesan schools do not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, or national and ethnic origin in administration of educational policies, loan programs, athletic or other school-administered programs.

**Policy ES 130.2** Schools may admit students who are not Catholic provided that these students will not displace Catholic students and that both students and parents clearly understand that participation in Catholic religious instruction and school activities related to the Catholic identity of the school are required.

### **Policy ES 131.1**

- a) Criteria are developed locally in determining priority of student acceptance.
- b) A child entering school must be in compliance with the age requirements of the State of Illinois regarding age of admission.
- c) For the admission of a pre-school, kindergarten, first grade, or a transfer student, parents shall present:
  - 1) an official copy of the child's birth certificate which is reviewed, copied and returned to the parent/guardian;
  - 2) the baptismal record (if applicable);
  - 3) a record of compliance with local and State of Illinois health requirements.
- d) For admission of transfer students, parents shall present the proper transfer or some appropriate credential from the school previously attended. Upon written request from the receiving school, all records from the previous school shall be transferred within ten days provided financial obligations to the school have been met.
- e) In all cases, the transfer, health records and Unofficial Record (if applicable) must be sent within ten days.
- f) School personnel must verify that the person enrolling the child is the legal guardian of the child before accepting the student.

### **Admission of Students**

The following will be the order of admittance each year:

- 1) Currently enrolled students and their siblings (will have at least one week of enrollment prior to opening registration to new families)
- 2) Children of parishioners
- 3) Transfer students from other Catholic schools
  - a) those that are merging or consolidating
  - b) those families who have moved into the neighborhood (with a letter from former parish attesting to parishioner status while there)
- 4) Children of non-parishioners

Admission of students from other schools is dependent on space at their grade level and evidence of satisfactory progress in the previous school. In order to best serve all students, we expect parents to give us full information regarding the academic and emotional needs of their child. If a student is accepted, they will be accepted on a **probationary period of 60 school days.** During this probationary period, students are expected to maintain passing grades, have no disciplinary issues, or require accommodations that the school physically or financially is incapable of supporting. Students with special learning needs may be accepted if Northside Catholic Academy has the staff and the ability to make the necessary accommodations for the child's academic growth and success. During the 60-day probationary period, if the school determines the student is unable to perform with adequate growth in the learning environment provided by Northside Catholic Academy, any prepaid tuition will be prorated and refunded.

We do reserve the right to review previous school records, contact the former school and/or to test children before admission and/or grade placement. If academic or behavioral hindrances, or outstanding financial obligations exist, admittance may be refused.

### **Entrance Requirements**

A child entering kindergarten must be five years of age and those entering first grade must be six years of age on or before September 1 of that year. Students transferring into the school will be considered for the grade level recommended by the previous school. For the admission of any new student, the parent must present:

- 1) the child's Birth Certificate
- 2) a record of current (within 12 months) physical examination, updated immunizations.
- 3) report cards, standardized test scores, and all other pertinent and/or diagnostic information for the student.

Questions and/or concerns regarding discrimination in **admissions** should be directed to the principal (if applicable) the pastor (or parish administrator) and the Regional Director of the Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Schools.

Registration and one month's tuition are due before school begins each year. In the case of students registering during the year, these monies are due at the time of registration. The Parent or guardian is expected to sign a financial agreement at the time of enrollment. No child will be re-admitted to Northside Catholic Academy unless all past financial obligations have been met.

## **ATHLETICS**

*The Handbook for Athletics in the Catholic Elementary School (Revised 2018)*, published by the Office of Catholic Schools, is a resource for use by pastors, principals, boards, athletic boards, coaches, committees, parents, and others who have an involvement in school athletic programs.

This document is accessible on the Office of Catholic School's Resource Portal.

Northside Catholic Academy offers a variety of after school athletic programs. The Athletic Committoc has as its main goal to plan and implement a fun, comprehensive athletic program for NCA students. These volunteers meet monthly to coordinate schedules and recruit others to cover all aspects of the sports offered. Please visit Athletics on the School Speak Portal to keep posted on the programs that are offered through the school year and summer.

Parents/guardians/coaches are expected to follow NCA's Code of Conduct for all practices and games. The Code of Conduct shall require all students, coaches, volunteers, staff, and spectators to maintain professional and Christian behavior. The Code of Conduct should stress that the purpose of athletic activities is to develop the individual student-athlete.

The Athletic Director and Coaches shall be vigilant in monitoring practices and games to assure that the Code of Conduct is followed. All home games shall begin with prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance or National Anthem.

**Northside Catholic Academy allows student athletes to modify their athletic or team uniform for the purpose of modesty in clothing or attire that is in accordance with the requirements of their religion, cultural values or modesty preferences. If a student chooses to modify his or her athletic or team uniform the student is responsible for all costs associated with the modification of the uniform and the student shall not be required to receive prior approval from the school for such modification.**



## **ATTACKS ON SCHOOL PERSONNEL**

Upon receipt of a written complaint from any school personnel, the appropriate school administrator for a private school shall report all incidents of battery committed against teachers, teacher personnel, administrative personnel or educational support personnel to the local law enforcement authorities immediately after the occurrence of the attack. The school administrator also must notify the Illinois State Police (ISP) within 3 days of each incident through the School Incident Reporting System (SIRS).

## **BOARDS – BOARDS OF SPECIFIED JURISDICTION (BSJ)**

The *Strategic Plan for Catholic Schools (2013-2016)* calls for each Catholic school in the Archdiocese to implement best business practices to ensure the school's financial health. Best business practices for schools require institutional development skills in marketing and enrollment management, communications, financial oversight and transparency, and fundraising. Pastors and principals, including those with business education and experience, will benefit from a strong board, whose members have skills to bring best practices to the committees whose work is in these areas.

The Northside Catholic Academy BSJ advises the school administration on a number of topics including school policies, NCA budget and tuition rates. Board members also serve on committees that deal with subjects such as Finance, Institutional Advancement, Long Range Planning, and Facilities. The Board meets five times a year. See the NCA school calendar for meeting dates.

Board members may be:

- parishioners;
  - alumni/alumnae and parents of alumni/alumnae;
  - leaders within the neighborhood, civic, business, and professional communities; and
  - school parents and guardians
- A maximum of twenty percent (20%) of the Board members may be non-Catholic.

BSJ members commit to prepare for and attend board meetings, and to participate actively in at least one of the standing committees of the BSJ. The Northside Catholic Academy school community shall have an active and supportive role by having the NCA Parent Organization (PO) President or designated representative of the organization

attend and report at BSJ meetings. The Pastor and the school principal sit on the BSJ ex officio.

The BSJ adopts a *consensus* model of decision-making; work is prepared in committee before presentation to the board membership. The Executive Committee includes the board chair, assistant chair, board secretary, the pastor, and the principal. The school administrator and the board chair set the board agenda and monitor the board calendar. An agenda, including the minutes from each current committee's work, is provided to board members. Board minutes are shared with the NCA school community. The BSJ serves in an advisory role and does not make school policy.

## **BULLYING/HARASSMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

As Catholic school educators, we respect the dignity of each person created in the image of God. From this reverence for the individual, we are committed to shaping Catholic school communities of faith and kindness, communities in which all students are welcomed and in which bullying or harassment is not tolerated. Northside Catholic Academy has the distinct advantage of the ability to teach and model how Jesus Christ taught us to live in love and peace with one another through Gospel stories, the lives of the saints, daily prayer, worship as a school community, kindness, and virtuous habits

### **Bullying acts may be:**

- **Physical** which includes, but is not limited to, punching, poking, stalking, destruction of property, strangling, hair pulling, beating, biting, spitting, pinching, excessive tickling, or theft,;
- **Verbal** which includes, but is not limited to, name-calling, teasing, taunting, gossip, and threats whether in person, through **any** form of electronic communication or social media, the Internet or written communication;
- **Emotional** which includes, but is not limited to, intimidation, rejecting, terrorizing, extorting, defaming, humiliating, blackmailing, rating/ranking of personal characteristics such as race, disability, ethnicity, perceived sexual orientation, manipulation of friendships, isolating, ostracizing and peer pressure;
- **Sexual** which includes, but is not limited to many of the emotional acts or conduct described above (in person or through electronic communication or social media) as well as exhibitionism, voyeurism, sexual propositioning, gestures, sexting, sexual harassment and abuse involving actual physical contact or sexual assault.

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**In cases in which the severity of the incident may imply a criminal act, the matter should be turned over to the local police department immediately and the parents/guardians of the students involved will be notified. This includes any threats or sexual images conveyed through electronic communication (e.g., Internet, phone, text or social media.)**

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**No student shall be subjected to bullying during:**

- any school-sponsored education program or activity, while in school or on school property
- on school buses or school vehicles,
- at school bus stops waiting for the school bus
- at school sponsored or sanctioned events and activities
- through the transmission of information from school, home, or public computer network, or other similar electronic school, home, or public equipment.

All allegations and incidents of bullying are taken seriously; the complainant (student, parent, guardian, teacher, staff, bystander, relative or other) should report the bullying incident to a teacher, staff person, or principal immediately.

**STEPS FOR SCHOOL RESPONSE AND CONSEQUENCES TO BULLYING/HARASSMENT**

1. **INTERVENTION:** The inappropriate/unacceptable conduct should be stopped immediately.
2. **INVESTIGATION:** The complaint will be investigated promptly, thoroughly, and impartially. In cases in which the severity of the incident may imply a criminal act, the matter will be turned over to the local police department and the parents/guardians will be notified.
3. **DETERMINATION:** Parents/Guardians will be informed of the findings (Allegation Substantiated OR Allegation Unsubstantiated) when the investigation is complete.
4. **RESPONSE:** Disciplinary or restorative action for bullying/harassment and/or violation of the School Code of Conduct may be taken which is not limited to an action plan, probation, suspension, and/or expulsion from the school.

**CAMPUS SAFETY AND SECURITY**

NCA's school building(s) and properties shall comply with the requirements of the Illinois Building Code, the State Fire Marshall's Office, the State Department of Health, and the policies of the Archdiocese of Chicago. The building(s) and properties shall be regularly inspected by local personnel to ensure that they are safe and in good repair.

At NCA, external doors shall be locked at all times during the school day. Doors shall only be opened by qualified school employees. Doors shall be propped open only for brief periods of time, and under the direct supervision of a qualified employee.

Each school shall have a security camera monitoring the designated main entrance. Schools should consult with local law enforcement regarding the regular monitoring of security on the school's campus.

### **School Visitors**

"Visitors" shall include all non-employees and non-students of the school/parish (including regular volunteers). Visitors to the school during school hours shall approach the designated main entrance and be vetted by an appropriate and qualified employee through the school's security camera system. If a visitor is cleared, he/she shall proceed directly to the main office and record their name, time of entry, and purpose of visiting. Visitors should receive a Visitor's Badge. Any visitor in the school building found without a Visitor's Badge shall be immediately escorted to the main office.

Students shall **never** open external doors for visitors. If students are used to greet visitors outside the school building, they should be directly monitored by a qualified school employee at all times.

School personnel are empowered to ask visitors to leave at any time if their presence jeopardizes student safety or is disruptive to the educational environment of the school. If a visitor refuses to leave, school personnel shall contact local law enforcement.

### **School Safety Drill Compliance**

NCA is required to comply with the School Safety Drill Act (105 ILCS 128) which outlines the schedule of safety drills and reporting for public and non-public schools. NCA shall submit an Annual Review Report to ISBE and their assigned Regional Director by June 1 of the current school year. Proper documentation of each Safety Drill shall be kept by the principal in the main office of each campus, and may be accessed at any time by OCS personnel.

The school shall publish Safety Drill procedures within its local Teacher/Staff Handbook, and ensure that all school employees receive proper training on Safety Drill procedures.

### **Fire Drills**

At least three Evacuation Drills (or "Fire Drills") shall be conducted each school year, in compliance with the School Safety Drill Act (105 ILCS 128). Proper documentation of each Evacuation Drill shall be kept on file in the main office of each campus. All drills require the participation of the local fire department/district.

### **Bus Evacuation Drills**

All schools that provide transportation services to students shall conduct at least one Bus Evacuation Drill per school year, in compliance with the School Safety Drill Act (105 ILCS 128). The Bus Evacuation Drill shall be conducted on a date of the principal's choosing before December 31 of the school year. The Bus Evacuation Drill shall include

every bus in use, and must be conducted on the site of the school. If the school does not utilize buses for daily transportation to/from school, the school may instead conduct this drill before or after a field trip in which buses are used.

### **Law Enforcement Drills (Lockdown Drills)**

NCA shall conduct at least one Law Enforcement Drill (or “Lockdown Drill”) per school year, in compliance with the School Safety Drill Act (105 ILCS 128). Law Enforcement Drills shall include specific procedures for handling intruders, school shootings, bomb threats, and similar incidents in the school building. Law Enforcement Drills must include the participation of the local law enforcement agency (principals should contact the local agency prior to a Law Enforcement Drill). The Law Enforcement Agency shall certify the drill once it is complete. Schools may complete additional Law Enforcement Drills at the discretion of the principal.

Schools shall also have written procedures for handling a safety incident in the neighborhood of the school, but not within the school building. In most cases, this shall involve not permitting children to leave the building (also known as a “Soft Lockdown”). It is recommended (but not required) that principals conduct a Soft Lockdown drill at least once per year.

### **Severe Weather Drills**

Schools shall complete at least one Severe Weather Drill per school year, in compliance with the School Safety Drill Act (105 ILCS 128). Severe Weather Drills shall include specific procedures for managing earthquakes, tornadoes, and similar “shelter-in-place” incidents.

## **CELEBRATIONS**

### **Class Celebrations**

Holidays designated for classroom celebrations include Halloween, Advent, Valentine’s Day, and End-of-the Year (last full day of school). All classroom holiday celebrations will follow these guidelines:

- **Preschool & Kindergarten**—Room parents will organize a simple snack and a craft project during the designated morning snack time. This time should not exceed 40 minutes in length. No more than 2 parent helpers will participate in the celebration.
- **Grades 1 – 8**—Celebrations will take place the last 40 minutes of the school day. It should consist of a simple treat and an activity (ex. game, or craft). No more than 2 parent helpers per homeroom.

### **Birthdays**

A treat for the entire class may be brought to celebrate a student's birthday, but prior scheduling with the teacher is necessary. **All treats must be nut free!** For the sake of time and convenience, the treat must be very simple and preferably healthy. Any edible

treats must be commercially prepared and have the ingredients label on the packaging to ensure it is nut free. **DO NOT send cakes, drinks, prizes or party materials.** Students may distribute invitations in school ONLY if all students of that child's gender in the class are being invited to the gathering. Otherwise, this should be handled outside of the school day so no hurt feelings are created.

## **CHILD ABUSE—REPORTING ALLEGATIONS/SUSPICIONS**

The State of Illinois lists all school personnel as Mandated Reporters. This means school personnel are required by law to inform the Department of Children Family Services of any suspicions or allegations of child abuse/neglect.

## **CHILD CUSTODY**

### **Custody/Guardianship Issues**

Should one parent have sole custody of a child, the child's other biological parent is still the legal guardian of the child unless guardianship has been taken away legally by the court. A parent who has been granted sole custody of a child in a divorce proceeding is not necessarily the sole legal guardian of the child.

A non-custodial parent is not prohibited from participating in school activities, volunteer activities, recitals, performances, parent meetings and other events, unless an order of protection is in effect that prohibits the parent from having access to his or her child, to school information about the child, and/or unless the parent is a registered sex offender. If the parent is a registered sex offender, he/she will still have some rights to be on school grounds, although the extent to which the parent may be on school grounds will be governed by the terms of a community supervision order.

Likewise, a grandparent or a stepparent is not the legal guardian of a child unless appointed by court order. When a document calls for the signature of the parent or guardian, a signature of a stepparent or grandparent does not suffice.

### **Release of a Child to Non-Custodial Parent**

If the non-custodial parent asks the school to release the child and the school determines that the custodial parent may not be expecting release of the child to the non-custodial parent, Northside Catholic Academy will contact the custodial parent. The custodial parent is to be informed immediately that the non-custodial parent is requesting release of the child.

We will not release a child to a non-custodial parent if there are concerns regarding the child's welfare and safety. In such cases, the non-custodial parent may be denied access to the child. If necessary, local law enforcement will be contacted.

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences/Communication with the School**

In the absence of a court order, Northside Catholic Academy can provide the non-custodial parent the opportunity for a parent-teacher conference. The conference

should be scheduled at a time other than that of the custodial parent unless both parents do not object to the same conference. Parents should make sure the school is notified of any address, phone number, or e-mail change of parent or guardian. It is the responsibility of the custodial parent to keep the non-custodial parent informed of school related communication. Upon request, we will mail or e-mail copies of newsletters and report cards to a non-custodial parent unless there is a court decree prohibiting this.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT/DISCIPLINE**

In order to promote an atmosphere conducive to learning and to maintain a safe learning environment, students, parents, and faculty are expected to comply with behavior guidelines and will be held accountable for behavior that is not compatible with the mission and philosophy of Northside Catholic Academy.

The following topics are the expectations of Northside Catholic Academy's Code of Conduct:

- Adherence to the dress code policy
- Use of appropriate language
- Attendance (daily and punctual)
- Courtesy and respect for self, adults, peers, and the environment
- Expectations for completion of assignments, homework, projects, and study
- Preparation for learning by having needed supplies and homework
- Respect for school property
- Proper use of social media and technology in and outside of school
- Adherence to weapons, substance abuse, and illegal substances policies

The purpose of discipline is to promote self-control. A positive, respectful approach to discipline is the hallmark of a Catholic school. The word "discipline" comes from the word disciple. Christ told us how to recognize His disciples: "They shall have love for one another." Northside Catholic Academy shall be a place where:

- Every person is respected regardless of age, gender, race, religion or ethnicity.
- Students, staff and administrators work to help each other.
- All members of the school community exhibit the love and concern of Christ Himself, for Christ is indeed alive in our school.

NCA students and parents will be required to read and sign a commitment letter to show their understanding of NCA's guidelines for promoting a positive and safe atmosphere in our school community.

### **Philosophy Regarding Learning and Discipline**

Optimum learning occurs in a positive, safe, and secure environment. Students, parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, and other school staff all share in the responsibility to ensure a positive climate for learning.

The school setting enables students to develop responsible behaviors and habits that will serve them now and later in life. Proper training in discipline should lead towards self-control and respect for law, authority, property, and the rights of others.

While self-discipline is the ideal, it is understood that corrective measures will be required at times. When it becomes necessary to enforce the consequences of discipline violations as outlined in this policy, it should be done in a manner that respects the dignity of the student and promotes healthy and responsible behavior.

Discipline is a learning experience, not a punishment. Discipline . . .

- helps the student learn a lesson that will positively affect his or her present and future behavior.
- is designed to help the student control and change his or her behavior, thereby guiding the student into adulthood.
- helps the student to grow intellectually and emotionally.
- enhances the student’s self-confidence, self-worth, and self-image.

### **Behavior Expectations**

NCA has established the following school-wide expectations to foster respectful attitudes, encourage safe behaviors, and develop responsibility:

- 1. Be Safe.**
- 2. Be Respectful.**
- 3. Be Responsible.**

These expectations and rules help guide behavior in the school, on the playground, in church and on the bus. The behaviors that exemplify these expectations will be clearly defined and taught. Redirection and appropriate consequences will be applied when needed.

### **Student Rights & Responsibilities**

Students who attend Northside Catholic Academy have various rights and opportunities. Students also have responsibilities to teachers, other staff, and fellow students. The following chart lays out student rights and opportunities as well as student responsibilities.

#### **Learning**

<i><b>Rights/Opportunities</b></i>	<i><b>Responsibilities</b></i>
Students should have the opportunity to receive a comprehensive, appropriate education.	Students are responsible for daily attendance, for completing class assignments on time and for bringing appropriate materials required for class use.



Students should have the opportunity to attend school in a safe environment that is free from disruptive behavior by others.	Students are responsible to behave in such a manner that does not pose a potential, or actual danger to themselves or others, and that is not disruptive to the learning process of others.
Students have the opportunity to make up schoolwork missed during an <b>excused absence</b> .	Students are responsible to obtain and complete make up work assigned for periods of absence.

## Fair Treatment

<i>Rights/Opportunities</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
Students have the right to due process when involved in a violation of school rules. Included is the opportunity to hear the nature of the violation and give their account of the situation.	Students are responsible to treat all persons respectfully and to follow the rules and regulations that apply to them.
Students have the right to be informed of current school policies, rules and regulations that apply to them.	Students are responsible to be knowledgeable about and to follow school policies, rules and regulations that apply to them.
Students have the right to be informed of classroom expectations.	Students are responsible to be knowledgeable about and to meet classroom expectations and evaluation procedures that apply to them.
Students have the right to be treated respectfully by staff and other students.	Students are responsible to treat others, including other students and staff, in a respectful manner. Students are also expected to treat the property of others and the school responsibly.
Students have a right to be free from corporal punishment by staff.	Students have the responsibility to refrain from using force or physical contact for the purposes of inflicting physical and emotional harm on another.
Students have a right to be free from unreasonable physical contact from teachers and other staff except when physical restraint is necessary to prevent the student from injuring self, other persons or property.	Students have the responsibility to respect the space and freedom of those around them. Students also have the responsibility to not engage in conduct that threatens to injure themselves, other persons or property.

## Harassment

<i>Rights/Opportunities</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
Students have the right to be free from any form of harassment arising out of the physical or verbal conduct of other students, school staff or others.	Students are responsible for maintaining an environment free from harassment, intimidation, and abuse. Students are also responsible to report incidents of physical, sexual, and verbal harassment, intimidation,

	and/or abuse that they have experienced, or of which they are aware. Such reports should be made to the principal.
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**Student Government**

<i><b>Rights/Opportunities</b></i>	<i><b>Responsibilities</b></i>
Students have the opportunity to participate in student government. The purpose of the existence of student government is to represent, and to be responsive, to the needs of all students.	Student government representatives have the responsibility to communicate with the student body, the faculty, and administration, and to be aware of and comply with any policies of the school that may affect the formation of procedural aspects of the student government.

As it is impossible to anticipate all types of inappropriate behavior, the administration reserves the right to enact disciplinary action on adverse conduct not specifically mentioned in this handbook.

The discipline code exists to help provide a safe, positive environment in which students can learn and grow. The teachers and administrators expect parents will help students to accept responsibility for the choices they make and accept the consequences when infractions occur.

**Consequences for Behavior Violations**

Continuous or overt disregard of any school rule will result in appropriate disciplinary action. The purpose of disciplinary action is to help the student accept more responsibility for his or her own actions and to become more self-disciplined. Minor offenses are usually handled by a verbal warning from a teacher or staff member. The homeroom teacher will keep a record of frequency of minor offenses. Where warranted, discipline problems may require a meeting with parents and/or the intervention of the principal.

Middle School students will receive a verbal warning from the teacher or administration and attempts will be made to solve the issue within the classroom. If the inappropriate behavior continues, the student will receive a citation for a behavior violation. Citations are cumulative throughout the school year.

- 3 citations = Detention
- 6 citations = Detention and a parent conference

	and / or abuse that they have experienced, or of which they are aware. Such reports should be made to the principal.
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**STUDENT GOVERNMENT**

<i><b>Rights / Opportunities</b></i>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
Students have the opportunity to participate in student government. The purpose of the existence of student government is to represent, and to be responsive, to the needs of all students.	Student government representatives have the responsibility to communicate with the student body, the faculty, and administration, and to be aware of and comply with any policies of the school that may affect the formation of procedural aspects of the student government.

As it is impossible to anticipate all types of inappropriate behavior, the administration reserves the right to enact disciplinary action on adverse conduct not specifically mentioned in the handbook.

The discipline code exists to help provide a safe, positive environment in which students can learn and grow. The teachers and administrators expect parents will help students to accept responsibility for the choices they make and accept the consequences when infractions occur.

**Consequences for Behavior Violations**

Teachers at each grade level have developed rubrics to apply progressive disciplinary consequences to mild, moderate, and severe behavior. Administrators charge the teachers with being the first responders to any discipline issue. In general, consequences aim toward being logical and restorative. Parents will be brought in to school when their child is not responding to the restorative consequences and continues to commit the same types of behavior violations.

**Serious behavior Violations:**

- Fighting

- Throwing of objects, including snowballs
- Disrespect of school personnel
- Extreme behavior that disrupts learning of others
- Dishonesty, cheating, or plagiarism
- Abusive or foul language / gestures
- Forgery of parent / guardian's signature
- Inappropriate behavior during a fire / disaster / lockdown drill
- Bullying – the intentional and repeated harm to another's body, property, self-esteem or group acceptance
- Any form of vandalism or theft

**Behaviors warranting suspension or expulsion:**

The following actions could result in an immediate suspension and possible expulsion from School. Police will be notified if warranted. Family or individual counseling may be recommended or required.

1. Deliberate destruction, abuse, or theft of personal, public or school property.
2. Carrying weapons, including knives, or a "look-alike"
3. Use or possession of tobacco, e-cigarettes, vapes, matches, or lighters
4. Harassment (repeated disrespect and /or intimidation of others)
5. Use or possession of alcohol and/or drugs in school or at school-related events
6. Gang affiliation, recruitment or any activity on or off school premises that may be gang related.
7. Assault of another student or of school personnel

**Suspension** is defined as a period of time in which the student may not attend class or extra-curricular activities. Suspensions may be in-school or out-of-school as administration determines.

**Expulsion** is defined as a permanent dismissal of a student from the school.

**CODE OF CONDUCT OF PARENTS / GUARDIANS**

Parents / Guardians are expected to demonstrate behavior consistent with the Catholic values at all times with faculty, administration, support staff, students, and volunteers, whether on or off school grounds or at school-related events.

Unacceptable behaviors include, but are not limited to: act / behavior that is not aligned with the Catholic values and mission of the school, disrespectful, threatening, harassing,

abusive behaviors/language, acts of intimidation, battery, assault, or other threats to the faculty, administration, staff, students, and volunteers of the school.

When a parent/guardian engages in any of the behaviors outlined above or in the school's parent code of conduct, a meeting between administration, the pastor, and the parent/guardian will take place to discuss parent conduct expectations.

## **COMMUNICATION**

We try to keep families well informed about the school and your children. Each Wednesday, your YOUNGEST or ONLY NCA CHILD will bring school announcements home in a FAMILY ENVELOPE that is to be returned the following day, so we know you have received the information that was sent. (Families electing to receive the weekly newsletters via email, must still check the Family Envelope for any papers which cannot be transmitted electronically.) If letters are sent home in a sealed envelope addressed to the parent, **we expect that they will not be opened by anyone other than the parent.** It is very important that students learn to respect the wishes of the person sending the note or letter. Even if the parent will eventually share the contents of the note with the child, children should not be given permission to open letters addressed to anyone but themselves.

The school newsletter, which is posted electronically each Wednesday, offers information about both NCA campuses, curriculum news, and announcements of school and parish activities. Please read this and let us know how we are doing at keeping you informed. Periodically, you will also hear from your child's teacher with news about the things happening in his/her grade or unit. We hope you will use these newsletters to better communicate with your child about the issues mentioned. Using the SchoolSpeak portal will allow you to remain current with all school communication.

The school directory is an important means of communication between the school and families, and among families. The school directory contains the names of students and their parents, addresses, and phone numbers of all NCA students unless the school is notified in writing that the parents do not wish to be included in the directory. **The school directory is only to be used for school related matters and not for personal or business affairs of any student or parent and is not to be shared with anyone nor any business.**

Another good source of information is your Parish bulletin, distributed weekly at the Masses. Reading this will help you understand the dynamics of the parish, and keep you abreast of parish activities in which you are always welcome to participate.

Parents also need to keep in touch with teachers about your child. Please feel free to send any questions, suggestions, or compliments via email or with your child in a note. Teachers are eager to work with you for the best educational experience for your child.

The easiest way for this to happen is for you to write a note, asking for a response or suggesting times when the teacher can reach you by phone.

If more than a phone call is required, **scheduling an appointment** is the best way for both you and the teacher to be prepared to discuss your child's situation. Teachers are not free to meet every day after school due to their after school professional responsibilities, faculty meetings, Extended Care responsibilities, or outside jobs. Please wait to see the teacher until s/he sets up a time with you.

It is important to deal with any conflict that arises in the proper manner. If your child is having difficulty in a particular class, then you should discuss it with the teacher of that class. **The principal is willing and able to discuss any concerns. However, you must first discuss your concerns with the teacher involved.** Approaching those directly involved also teaches your child some things about conflict resolution and models what we expect them to do in case a conflict arises in their day-to-day school life.

**The way you communicate about school in your home is also of great importance.** Your children will develop many of their school attitudes based on how you discuss school issues, teachers, other students, homework assignments, etc. in their presence. We hope you will be delivering positive messages about school through your words, tone, and actions. If you have a complaint or criticism, it should be directed to whomever can do something about it - the teacher, the lunchroom supervisor, the principal, the School Board president. We hope that the partnership between school and home will be one based on mutual respect and our shared desire to provide what's best for all of the children.

## **CONFLICT RESOLUTION/GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

All adults involved in Northside Catholic Academy have as their main goal the success, safety, and happiness of the NCA students. However, not every decision or plan meets with universal approval. There may be times when a student, parent, teacher, or administrator is dissatisfied with how a particular situation has been handled. If this occurs, there are several steps that can be taken, in the order listed here:

### A. If the concern is with a teacher:

1. Contact the teacher, by phone or note, to discuss your concerns. You may leave a message with the secretary since teachers will not come to the phone during class time. Make sure it's clear when and where you can be reached, preferably in the after school hours. If necessary, arrange for a face-to-face appointment with that person. Discuss the issue from your perspective and be open to the other view as well. Work toward understanding and resolving any conflict.

2. If after talking/meeting with the teacher you are not satisfied that the matter has been handled in the best way, contact the principal and discuss the situation. The principal will need to also talk with the teacher involved, and then get back to you. If possible, arrange a meeting with the principal, preferably involving the teacher as well, so all issues can be raised at one sitting.
3. Work with principal and teacher to come to some mutual understanding, and be sure all are clear on the outcomes and timelines for resolution. If necessary, allow time for the resolution or agreed-upon behaviors to take effect.
4. If there is still an issue, you can contact NCA's President to further discuss the situation. He will involve the principal in discussion and try to reach a resolution to which all parties can agree.
5. Archdiocesan intervention is available only after all the preceding steps have been followed in good faith.

B. If the concern is with the Principal:

1. Contact the principal to talk through your concern. Be able to state your desired outcome of the situation and hear the desired outcome of the principal. Work toward an agreeable solution, with timelines or ways to check progress, if necessary. Follow up at the agreed-upon date.
2. If not satisfied, contact the NCA President. S/he will follow up with the principal and get back to you.
3. If there is still not satisfaction, a parent/guardian may contact the Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Schools to ask for assistance. The Regional Director for Vicariate II would contact the principal to discuss your concerns, only if the above steps have been taken.

Throughout any grievance procedure, it is important that all adults maintain respect for each other and for the student(s) involved in the issue. We expect that students will not hear either their parent/guardian or their teacher speaking disrespectfully about each other, no matter what disagreement the adults may have. This will help maintain the sense of a respectful community that we want to encourage in all parts of our school.

Prayer can also play an important role in conflict resolution. Teachers, students, parents, and administrators need to take the time to ask for God's blessing and wisdom as they begin to look at all sides of an issue. This act of calming oneself and seeking God's intervention sometimes clears the air of some of the tension and makes it possible for people to discuss in a calmer, more productive manner.

## **DIRECTORY INFORMATION**

Directory information may be released to the general public, unless a parent or guardian requests that any or all directory information not be released on the child. Without written notification to the school, Northside Catholic Academy assumes the parent or guardian does not object to the release of directory information.

Information that may be designated as directory information can include:

- Photographs, videos, digital images
- Academic awards, degrees, honors
- Information related to school-sponsored activities, organizations, and athletics.

## **DRESS CODE**

***Northside Catholic Academy students are expected to dress appropriately for school. The following dress code requirements have been established so that students become accustomed to a norm of neatness, self-respect, and modesty that will be expected of them in high school and the world of work. Our dress code allows students to experience a sense of belonging to the Northside Catholic Academy community.***

Enrollment at NCA implies agreement with, and acceptance of, the dress code policies. Decisions on dress code matters are at the sole discretion of the Principal. Students will receive warnings on the first two violations and letters will go home explaining to parents what the violation(s) were. Upon the third violation the student will receive a detention. On the fourth violation a parent/guardian will be asked to pick up the student so that they may return home to change into the appropriate uniform. Failure of students to return to class will result in an absence.

## **SCHOOL UNIFORM/GYM UNIFORM--Year Round**

School uniforms and gym uniforms can be ordered through Lands' End and Schoolbellies. Please visit NCA's website and click under *Student Life*. You will be directed to the suppliers' websites.

**The following are general standards that should be followed for both school uniforms and gym uniforms:**

- Neatness, cleanliness, appropriate sizing, and modesty should guide appearance.
- No article of clothing may be tied around the waist or thrown over the shoulders.
- All outerwear must be placed in the student's locker upon arrival at school. It is not to be worn to class. (i.e. coats, jackets, sweatshirts, boots, etc.)
- No ripped or torn clothing.

### **School Uniform Girls K – 8**

- Plaid jumper with white collared shirt or plaid skirt with white monogrammed collared shirt



- Navy blue pants/shorts\* with white monogrammed collared shirt
- Monogrammed sweater or vest with plain white collared shirt

### **School Uniform Boys K – 8**

- Navy blue pants/shorts\* with white monogrammed collared shirt
- Monogrammed sweater or vest with plain white collared shirt

### **Gym Uniform Girls & Boys K – 4**

- Navy blue sweatpants and navy blue t-shirt with NCA logo
- Navy blue shorts\* and navy blue t-shirt with NCA logo
- Gym shoes
- Optional—navy blue sweatshirt with NCA logo

### **Gym Uniform Girls & Boys 5 – 8**

- Navy blue sweatpants and gray t-shirt with NCA logo
- Navy blue shorts\* and gray t-shirt with NCA logo
- Optional—navy blue sweatshirt with NCA logo

*\*Shorts should only be worn during Warm Weather Uniform time period: Aug. 23 through Sept. 30 and May 1st through the end of the school year. Students and parents will be notified of any exceptions to the Warm Weather Uniform time period.*

**NCA Spirit Wear, NCA Athletic Wear/Uniforms, hoodies, and non-NCA sweatshirts are not allowed to be worn during school hours. They can be used as outerwear and kept in the coatroom or student’s locker.**

**Shirts/Blouses:** Monogrammed dress code shirts/blouses/sweaters/vests must be worn by students during the school day. Shirts may be short sleeved or long sleeved. Shirts must always be tucked in for grades 4-8. Any shirt/blouse that exposes the midriff is inappropriate. Solid white shirts may be worn under the uniform shirt. Undershirts may not extend past the uniform shirt sleeve.

**Pants/Shorts:** Students may only wear traditional classic cut or relaxed fit chinos, often referred to as khaki or Docker’s style, with flat or pleated fronts. Students are required to wear the waist of the pants at the navel and they must extend to the ankles. The pants/shorts must always completely cover underwear/boxers. No jean styled pants regardless of the material, and no velour, fleece, lounge pants, sweatpants, cargo pants/shorts, corduroys or pants with drawstrings. Pants may not be worn under skirts. Shorts under skirts should not extend past the hem of the skirt. Skirts/Shorts must be no more than 2 inches above the knee.

**Socks:** Socks are always to be worn in school. Socks must be visible above shoes. No inappropriate stockings (i.e, thigh-high, fishnet, patterned tights, patterned leggings, etc.). Only solid-color socks, tights or leggings are to be worn. Tights and leggings must cover the entire leg. Leggings should match the colors of the jumper or skirt. These solid colors include black, navy blue, red, or white.

**Shoes:** Rubber soled and non-marking shoes are preferred. If applicable, shoelaces must always be tied. No shoes with heels in excess of 2 inches. No shoes with built in rollers are allowed anywhere on the school campus. Open toe or open heel shoes, moccasins, sandals, slippers, clogs, crocs, ballerina or any type of boot are inappropriate for school. Rain/snow/fashion boots or weather boots should not be worn during the school day. Students should bring appropriate shoes to change into if they wear boots to school.

**Hair/Head Coverings:** Hats are not to be worn in the building at any time. Hats with inappropriate logos will be confiscated and parents will be asked to pick them up from the principal. Only natural hair colors are acceptable. The use of hair dye is highly discouraged and not appropriate for school days. Hairstyles must be neat, clean and well-groomed, no unusual haircuts (ex. Mohawks) or shaven sections of hair. Hair must be kept out of the eyes. This includes boys and girls.

**Jewelry:** The wearing of jewelry is limited. The only exceptions are religious medals, wristwatches, and small pierced post earrings, one per earlobe (for girls only). No body piercings beyond earrings are allowed for boys or girls.

**Beauty Products:** Makeup is **NOT** allowed. Nails must be kept neat, clean and well-groomed. If nail polish is applied, only light or pale colors should be used for nails. Bold, florescent, vibrant colors are unacceptable during school hours.

### **Dress Codes for Out of Uniform Days**

- Any writing on clothing must be acceptable and in good taste
- Any garment, regardless of type, should not communicate a message that conflicts with the mission and values of NCA.
- Shoulders and midriffs must be covered at all times.
- Shorts, skirts and dresses must follow the uniform length guidelines.
- Jeggings or yoga pants are not allowed unless a tunic length (mid-thigh) shirt is worn.

### **Dress Code for Field Trips**

- The NCA school uniform (not gym uniform) is to be worn on all field trips.

If a student is found to be in violation of the dress code, the student will call a parent to see if appropriate clothing can be brought to school. Or, the student may need to select an appropriate piece of clothing from the school's uniform exchange. After one warning, a Middle School student can receive a citation for not following uniform policy.

**As per Illinois PA 102-0360, Northside Catholic Academy does not prohibit hairstyles that are historically associated with race, ethnicity, or hair texture,**

including, but not limited to, protective hairstyles such as braids, locks, and twists.

## **E-LEARNING/REMOTE LEARNING DAYS**

### **PARENT CHECKLIST FOR REMOTE LEARNING DAYS**

#### **Before Remote Learning Day:**

- ✓ Review and understand the policy
- ✓ Contact your child's teacher with any questions regarding the policy
- ✓ Confirm access to SeeSaw or Google Classroom
- ✓ Confirm student passwords needed for any on-line learning programs
- ✓ Confirm your child's teacher contact information

#### **During Remote Learning Day:**

- ✓ Check your child's teacher's page on SeeSaw or Google Classroom for assignments and directions for the day
- ✓ Supervise or "check in" with your child during the completion of their work
- ✓ Email your child's teacher if assistance is needed for an assignment
- ✓ Ensure your child has completed the assignments in the subjects of Reading/ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies, and Religion

#### **After Remote Learning Day:**

- ✓ Confirm with your child those assignments needed to be directly submitted to their teacher are ready on the day school resumes
- ✓ Communicate any issue with internet access or power outage in writing to your child's teacher on the day school resumes
- ✓ Check for any emails on updates or reminders from your child's teacher

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

### **Emergency Information**

Every student MUST have "Emergency Information" on file on SchoolSpeak. Please keep the school and your child's classroom Room Parent informed throughout the year of any changes of telephone numbers, addresses, or work phone numbers so the

emergency contact information will always be accurate. Also, be sure you have spoken to those people whom you list as emergency contacts, so they know what you'd like them to do if we are unable to reach you. With so much office communication via voice-mail, it is sometimes difficult for the school to reach an actual person when there is a school emergency. Please try to have at least one of the numbers leading to someone who could get to the school to pick up the child if necessary.

### **Communication for Emergency School Closings/Issues with Bus Service**

In the event there is an emergency need to cancel or close the school, or if there are problems with NCA bus service, a message will be sent out via SchoolSpeak to notify families of the emergency. Notification will be sent to phone numbers, e-mails, and as a text message depending on the emergency notification information that has been turned in to the school office. **PLEASE BE CERTAIN TO KEEP YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION CURRENT AT ALL TIMES!!**

## **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

Northside Catholic Academy is operated under the auspices of the Catholic Bishop of Chicago, a corporation sole, in the Archdiocese of Chicago. It is the policy of Northside Catholic Academy to provide equal opportunity in employment to all employees and all applicants for employment. No person shall be discriminated against in employment by reason of such individual's race, color, sex, national origin, age, marital status, sexual orientation, military discharge, mental or physical handicap unrelated to the ability to perform the duties of the position.

### **Policy on Non-Discrimination**

Northside Catholic Academy does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of educational, admission, hiring, tuition assistance, athletic, or other school-administered policies.

Questions and/or concerns regarding discrimination in **employment** should be directed to the pastor or parish administrator and the Human Resources Department of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

## **EXTENDED CARE PROGRAM**

The **NCA Extended Care Program (ECP)** is a before and after school care program for NCA students only. The program is available for our Preschool through 8th grade students. NCA ECP is available at our Primary School Campus for both morning and after school care.

The NCA ECP provides professional care, supervision, recreation, and activities for your child before and after school hours. The program allows children to experience diverse structured and unstructured activities such as arts & crafts, outdoor recreation, indoor recreation, story time, board games, creative play, and homework time.

It serves you, the parent who desires both a Catholic school education and supplementary care in a nurturing, loving Christian environment.

## **Hours**

### **Primary Campus**

Morning: 6:30 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.

Afternoon: 3:10 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

NCA ECP operates on school days when school is in session. Any weather emergency or other emergency, which may cause school to be cancelled, will result in the cancellation of the Extended Care Program.

When school is dismissed for an early release day due to a teacher institute, faculty meeting, or holiday, NCA ECP will operate from 2:10 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. On these early release dismissal days children should bring an additional snack and a beverage.

ECP is not available for half-day dismissals due to parent/teacher conferences.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are an integral part of a child's education, and help students relate what is being learned in the classroom to the "outside world". The school requires written permission from a parent before taking the students away from the school. Field trips are not considered holidays, and all students are required to be in school on field trip days. On field trips, all students must be transported to and from the field trip site with the rest of the class.

There will be times when classes travel from one NCA campus to another for special events, projects, etc. Usually parents will be notified in advance of any such "excursions" to the other campus, however permission slips will not be sent home.

Only chaperones/volunteers ages 21 and older who have successfully completed the Safe Environment Requirements of the Archdiocese of Chicago and who have been

approved in advance by the principal may attend field trips. Infants, toddlers, siblings of students, or students from other schools may not attend field tips.

The principal reserves the right to exclude a student from participating in a field trip. If the parent/guardian chooses not to allow a student to participate in the field trip, alternate plans for the day will be approved by the principal.

## **FUNDRAISING**

It is assumed that all NCA families will actively support fundraising efforts to benefit the school. Watch your Wednesday folder for information regarding upcoming fundraising opportunities. Families who receive any form of scholarship/financial awards during the school year are expected to help us raise at least \$200 in our fundraising efforts. Parents are encouraged to earn Service Hours by helping with NCA fundraisers.

The 8th grade parents will also have the responsibility of organizing and supervising any 8th fundraising events. These fundraisers are organized to help offset the costs of graduation fees and the 8th grade year-end field trip. These fundraising events should be reviewed and approved by the principal.

## **GANG ACTIVITY**

Gang-related activities are contrary to Catholic Social Teaching and have no place in the Catholic School. Intimidation and disrespect of any person are unacceptable.

## **GOVERNANCE AND STATE REQUIREMENTS**

Northside Catholic Academy operates under the auspices of the Archdiocese of Chicago. Therefore, Northside Catholic Academy adopts in whole all policies set forth in the **Educational Policy Manual for School Administrators** published by the Office of Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Chicago. The school administrator, faculty and governance board are required to follow all policies of the Archdiocese. Additional local policies may be developed to govern the operation of the school but may not be contrary to those set policies and procedures established by the Chicago Archdiocese.  
*December 2021*

All Archdiocesan Schools must be registered with the State of Illinois and be recognized by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). School communities and their principals must comply with these requirements annually in order to maintain ISBE recognition.

These requirements include meeting administrative deadlines as determined by ISBE to ensure compliance and recognition.  
(Arch Policy 202.01)

## GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Students in eighth grade shall be issued a diploma upon completing Northside Catholic Academy's academic requirements. Diplomas will be awarded to those students who have:

- Completed the academic requirements
- Achieved a passing grade on the Constitution of the United States and the State of Illinois examination
- Adhered to the school's code of conduct
- Returned all school materials
- Maintained no outstanding balances on tuition or other required financial obligations. Diplomas will not be awarded until all financial obligations are paid in full.

## HARASSMENT

The pastor, administration, and staff of Northside Catholic Academy believe that all students and employees are entitled to work and study in school-related environments that are Christ-centered and free of harassment. The school will treat complaints of harassment seriously and will respond to such complaints in a prompt, confidential, and thorough manner. Harassment of any type will not be tolerated and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. Disciplinary action may include suspension, expulsion, or termination.

Harassment of any type is unacceptable in Catholic schools. Parents/Guardians should be notified immediately when their child is a victim of another student's harassment or if their child is the harasser of another student.

## HEALTH CONDITIONS

### Restricted Activity Due to Medical Condition

If the activities of a student need to be restricted in any way, it is necessary to have a **written statement from the doctor** informing the school of the nature of the restrictions and how long they will exist. The information is shared with the gym teacher or whoever needs to see it.

To maintain good health, children need to get fresh air, and whenever possible, we will take students outside for recess. **Unless a doctor's note requesting otherwise has been submitted, every child will go outside with the class.**

### **Medication**

**NO MEDICATION WILL BE ADMINISTERED BY THE PRINCIPAL, FACULTY MEMBERS, OR ANY SCHOOL PERSONNEL UNLESS A COMPLETED MEDICATION AUTHORIZATION FORM IS ON FILE IN THE SCHOOL OFFICE.** This is in compliance with Archdiocesan policy and state law. No student may have medication on his/her person or in a desk, locker, coatroom, or backpack.

If a prescription or over-the-counter medication is needed, a Medication Authorization Form, signed by a physician, must be on file in the school office. If a student must bring medication to school, it must have the prescription label, including Rx number, student name, medication, dosage, direction for administration, date and refill schedule, pharmacy label, and name/initials of pharmacist; or the manufacturer's label for non-prescription medication. All medicine containers are brought to the school office immediately upon student's arrival in the morning.

If it is absolutely necessary for a child to take medication and there is no medication Authorization Form on file, the parent must come in and dispense the medication to the child.

Students with severe asthma/allergies may need to have their inhaler with them at all times. In such cases the bottom portion of the Physician Request for Self-Administration of Medication **MUST** be on file in the school office.

If your child needs cough drops or throat lozenges during the day due to a cold, please send a note stating that fact. Children without a note will not be allowed to chew on these during school.

### **Infectious Disease**

To ensure the effectiveness of the school health program, report immediately any case of infectious disease (COVID, lice, strep throat, ear infections, chicken pox, "pink eye", etc.). Parents with children in that homeroom will be notified of the situation (without identifying the infected child by name) so that they may watch for symptoms in their children. Do not send your child to school until medication has been used for these conditions. When children are home due to chicken pox, please keep them there until at least 2 days after fresh spots appear.

**Also, if your child has a fever, diarrhea, or is vomiting, s/he should be at home until fever-free and symptom-free for 24 hours. No exceptions!** Please help keep our school a healthy place!

### **Official NCA Lice Protocol**

1. Report of case to teacher.



2. Teacher reports it to office
  - a. Teacher “treats” classroom environment to contain exposure (ie. pillows, stuffed animals, area rugs, coatroom protocols, etc.)
3. Office does immediate dry head check in affected classroom as well as classrooms of any siblings connected to students with lice.
  - a. Secretary logs initial source as well as any additionally identified infested students on the Lice Log sheet
  - b. Secretary sends an email to principal and vice principal with the names, grades and room #'s of all infested students
4. Any infested child is sent to the office and parents are called.
  - a. Information sheet is handed to parent at time of child being picked up
  - b. Proof of treatment (receipts for products or services used) required for return to school
  - c. Student will need to check in at office and have head checked prior to being allowed to return to the classroom.
5. Communication plan:
  - a. Note re: exposure to infestation is sent home with all “exposed” students (ie: both classes in a grade level as well as siblings’ grade levels for any infested student)
6. 5 days later the office will do a courtesy head check in the classroom.

### **Allergy & EpiPen Guidelines**

Due to the increasing number of children with life-threatening allergies, Northside Catholic Academy will create a culture of understanding and acceptance of allergy precautions among school personnel, students, and families. NCA invites parents and guardians whose children have known severe allergies to work with the teacher and principal in reviewing the food allergy procedures.

A **Food Allergy Emergency Action Plan and Treatment Authorization** should be presented to the school office. This action plan will be shared with the classroom teacher.

In the event of an allergic reaction, these general steps should be taken **immediately**:

- The injection of epinephrine if the child is unable to administer it him/herself OR the administration of other medication as directed by a physician on the Medication Authorization Form (i.e., inhalers).
- **Contact emergency medical services (911) immediately regardless of the continuance of symptoms.**
- Contact the parent/guardian to inform them of the student’s reaction.
- Complete the OCS Accident/Incident Report and follow up with the OCS Regional Director within 24 hours.

All students with severe allergies that have been prescribed epinephrine auto injectors (EpiPens) and other emergency medication should carry them in their labeled red

emergency backpacks while in school. NCA must have written authorization so any trained school personnel could act in an emergency.

### **Asthma Guidelines**

Asthma is the most common chronic condition of childhood. A doctor's signature is no longer required for a student to carry and self-administer an asthma inhaler in school. However, parent permission and a prescription label are necessary. Parents/Guardians must provide NCA with an Authorization for Self-Administration of Asthma Medication. This information will be kept on file in the school office.

### **Diabetes—Care of Students with Diabetes**

#### **The Diabetes Care Plan**

To receive assistance with diabetes management at school, the student's parent/guardian must submit a "Diabetes Care Plan" to the school. The Diabetes Care Plan is a document that specifies the diabetes-related services needed by a student at school and at school-sponsored activities. It identifies the appropriate staff to provide and supervise these activities. The parent/guardian must include the following information in the Diabetes Care Plan, including:

1. the treating health care provider's instructions concerning the student's diabetes management during the school day;
2. a copy of the signed prescription and the methods of insulin administration;
3. appropriate safeguards to ensure that syringes and lancets are disposed of properly;
4. requirements for diet, glucose testing, insulin administration, treatment for hypoglycemia, hyperglycemia, and what to do in emergency situations;
5. procedures regarding when a delegated care aide (defined below) must consult with the parent/guardian, school nurse (if available), or health care provider to confirm that an insulin dosage is appropriate; and,
6. the signature of the student's parent/guardian.

Students must be allowed to self-manage their diabetes in the school setting if they are authorized to do so by their diabetes care plans. The diabetes care plan should specify the nature of the student's self-management and may include: allowing the student to check blood glucose levels when and wherever needed; self-administration of insulin; self-treatment of hyperglycemia or hypoglycemia; and allowing the student to possess, at all times, supplies and equipment necessary for diabetes management including syringes, food and drink.

#### **Accidents & Illness at School**

When a student becomes ill or is injured at school, NCA will contact the parent/guardian. The office will contact the parent/guardian based on the Medical and Emergency Notification Information and Authorization for Medical Treatment on file for the student.

If the illness or accident is an emergency, the Principal (or designee) shall immediately contact 911 and then the parent/guardian. An approved authority from the school shall accompany the student to the hospital if a parent/guardian (or other person approved by the parent/guardian) is not available to do so.

The school shall document all injuries on school property and retain such records.

## **HEALTH REQUIREMENTS**

**Policy ES 150.1/HS 310.1** Each school shall comply with the local and State of Illinois regulations regarding physical examinations, immunizations and contagious diseases of students.

All children in Illinois shall present proof of having had a health examination and received such immunizations against preventable communicable diseases as required by the Department of Public Health. **These records are to be presented to the school before the first day of school.**

If a child is not in compliance with the health and immunizations requirements by the first day of school, the principal can exclude the child from school until the child presents proof of having had the health examination and presents proof of having received required immunizations.

### **Health Examinations and Proof of Immunization**

All children in Illinois shall present proof of 1) a health examination within the current year; 2) of being up to date on all required immunizations as follows:

- immediately prior to or upon entrance into any *public, private or parochial pre-school or transferring from outside of the State of Illinois;*
- prior to entering ***preschool, kindergarten or the first grade;***
- upon entering ***sixth and ninth grades.***
- any student participating in an NCA athletic program.

### **Medical Exemptions**

There are two avenues by which a physician may exempt a child from a required immunization. One is a **physician statement of immunity** and the other is a **medical objection**. A **physician statement of immunity** or **medical objection** must be signed by a physician and attached to the student's "*Certificate of Child Health Examination*" form.

### **Dental Examinations**

All children in kindergarten, Grade 2, and Grade 6 shall have a dental examination by a licensed dentist. Parents/Guardians are to be reminded of this requirement **60 days before May 15 of each school year.** Parents/Guardians seeking an exemption to this requirement must submit the **Dental Examination Waiver Form**, provided by the State of Illinois Department of Public Health, to the school administrator.

If a student in Grade 2 or Grade 6 fails to present proof of a dental exam by May 15, the school may hold the child's report card until the student presents proof of the School Dental Examination for or a Dental Examination form. School dental examinations must have been completed within the 18 months prior to May 15 of each school year.

### **Vision Examinations**

**All** children (**except preschool students**) enrolling in public, private or parochial schools for the first time or entering kindergarten shall have an eye exam. Parents/Guardians are to be notified of this requirement at registration.

Proof by a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches or a licensed optometrist is to be submitted to the school. Report cards may be held if the student is not in compliance with this regulation.

This requirement may be waived for those families who show an undue burden or a lack of access to a physician licensed to practice medicine or to a licensed optometrist.

## **LIBRARY MATERIALS**

Please help us to teach your student to be responsible for library materials. Library books should be cared for and returned promptly when they are due. Fines will not be incurred for late books, however students may not check out other books if they have over-dues. Books are considered lost if they are three weeks overdue and bills will be sent home. Lost books must be paid for in full plus a \$5.00 processing fee. (Please note that we would always rather have the book back, so if the book is returned in good condition within a year after cost has been paid, the student will be reimbursed.) Damaged books will be billed in the same way. A book is considered "damaged" if it is returned to the library in a condition that requires extensive repair or is unable to be repaired and cannot be returned to circulation. Damage will be assessed by the library staff and they will determine if the book can be repaired or not. A damaged bar code will incur a \$3.00 fee whether or not the book is damaged.

## **LUNCH PROGRAM**

Northside Catholic Academy maintains lunchrooms under the provisions of the Archdiocesan School Lunch Program and the requirements of the City of Chicago Board of Health. The Archdiocese of Chicago sponsors a food service program through Food Service Professionals (FSP). A student may order hot lunch in advance or bring lunch from home. Monthly menus and order forms are sent home via email. Milk is included with the hot lunch or it may be ordered as a separate item. All lunch and milk

payments are made monthly. ***Parents and students cannot assume that late orders will be accepted or that there will be extra lunches available on any given day.***

We encourage families to apply for free or reduced lunch by filling out the government forms completely. If you meet the federal guidelines, you will be informed of your new lunch rate. These forms must be filled in every year for families to be considered for the reduced rates. **Families approved for free/reduced lunches still must fill out an order form every month, with selections made for every day. Failure to submit an order on time may result in no lunch being available to your child for the month.**

## **MANDATED REPORTING**

NCA school employees are legally designated as mandated reporters and must, by law, report cases of suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). It is the responsibility of DCFS personnel to investigate allegations of abuse or neglect, and school employees shall fully cooperate with such investigations.

School employees shall immediately notify their principal when cases of child abuse or neglect are suspected. Once DCFS has been contacted, the principal shall notify their Regional Director of the allegation. The principal shall inform their Regional Director if/when DCFS contacts them about the result of the investigation.

If the allegation involves the sexual abuse of a minor, the principal shall further contact the Office of the Protection of Children and Youth (OPCY) of the Archdiocese.

If an allegation of child abuse or neglect is made against a school/parish employee, the Regional Director shall work with the Office of Human Resources of the Archdiocese to take appropriate action. In most cases, allegations of child abuse or neglect shall result in the immediate suspension of the employee until the investigation is complete.

## **MEDICATION PROCEDURES IN SCHOOLS**

Parents/guardians have the primary responsibility for the administration of medication to their children. The administration of medication to students during regular school hours and during school-related activities is discouraged unless necessary for the critical health and well-being of the student. Teachers, administrators and administrative staff shall not administer medication to students except as provided in these School Medication Procedures.

Students may be permitted to possess and self-administer an epinephrine auto-injector, asthma or diabetes medication prescribed by their treating physicians provided his/her parents or guardians submit the requisite school forms authorizing its use along with their physician's emergency action plans and completion of any required training.

Schools must inform the parents/guardians that neither NCA nor Archdiocese shall incur no liability, except for willful and wanton conduct, as a result of any injury arising from the self-administration of medication by a student including asthma medication, an epinephrine auto-injector and/or other medication required under an emergency action plan. A student's parent must indemnify and hold harmless the Archdiocese, the school and its employees and agents against any claims, except a claim based on willful and wanton conduct, arising out of a student's self-administration of asthma medication, an epinephrine auto-injector, and/or other medication required under an emergency action plan.

### Allergies

Parents/Guardians shall notify the school in writing of any diagnosed allergies. For serious allergies, the Principal (or designee) shall meet with the Parent/Guardian to develop a written set of procedures, as well as an **Allergy Emergency Action Plan**, to ensure a safe environment for the child. School personnel may administer epinephrine auto-injectors ("epi-pens") with the approval of the parent/guardian, and with proper authorization from the Principal and training.

### Procedures

- 1. Administration.** No school personnel shall administer any prescription or non-prescription medicine unless the School has the student's current and complete **Medication Authorization Form**.

A **Medication Authorization Form** is distributed for each student at the beginning of each school year or enrollment of a new student during the year. The **Medication Authorization Forms** are available in the school office.

Northside Catholic Academy retains the right to deny requests to administer medication to the student provided that such denial is indicated on the Medication Authorization Form. If NCA denies a request and authorization for the administration of medication, parents/guardians must make other arrangements for the administration of medication to students, such as arranging for medication to be administered before or after school or having the parent/guardian or designee administer the medication in school.

- 2. Self-Administration.** A student may self-administer medication at school if so ordered by his or her prescriber per the student's current and completed **Medication Authorization Form**. Students who suffer from asthma, allergies or other conditions that require the immediate use of medication shall be permitted to carry such medication and to self-administer such medication without supervision by school personnel only if the School has on file for the student a current and completed **Medication Authorization Form**. Otherwise, such medication must be stored in a locked cabinet under the control of the School and made available for the student to self-administer in accordance with the student's **Medication Authorization Form**.

3. **Appropriate Containers.** It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide Northside Catholic Academy with all medication in appropriate containers that are:

a. **Prescription – labeled by a pharmacy or licensed prescriber (displaying Rx number, student name, medication, dosage, direction for administration, date and refill schedule, pharmacy label, and name/initials of pharmacist)**

OR

b. **Manufacturer – labeled for non-prescription over-the-counter medication.**

4. **Storage of Medication.** Medication received by NCA in accordance with a completed **Medication Authorization Form** and in an appropriate container shall be stored in a locked cabinet. Access to the locked cabinet shall be limited to administration or designated school office staff.

## MISSION STATEMENT

Northside Catholic Academy (NCA) provides a rich educational experience, rooted in Catholic values of inclusion and service. Our educational community fosters a closer relationship with God and helps our children to develop an appreciation of our faiths' values and traditions. We educate the whole child: mind, body and spirit. We respect and care for each member of our diverse community. We offer opportunities for our students to excel academically, build meaningful relationships, learn responsible citizenship and develop skills for leadership.

Revised August 2019

### NCA Philosophy

#### **About Students and Learning, We believe that...**

- Teaching our students to know, love, and serve God is the chief priority of our school.
- All students can learn.
- Academic excellence is the focus of learning and supports the total development of the whole student.
- All students are contributing members to our diverse community and four NCA parishes.
- Each student's learning styles are addressed by a myriad of teaching strategies and a variety of resources.
- Students should model Christian values and show respect for themselves and others.
- Students of Northside Catholic Academy are responsible for their learning and

behavior.

**About Curriculum, We believe that...**

- Faith formation (teaching all children to know, love, and serve God) is at the core of the NCA curriculum and becomes a component of each student's daily life through prayer, worship and the study of social justice.
- The NCA curriculum provides a framework for developmental and integrated learning while recognizing progress and measuring achievement.
- The NCA curriculum offers a variety of learning opportunities related to life experiences.
- The NCA curriculum is in accordance and agreement with the curriculum of the Archdiocese of Chicago for Pre-Kindergarten to 8<sup>th</sup> grade levels.
- Fine arts and music extend beyond the classroom and annual concerts to our school masses and daily prayer.

**About Teachers and Teaching, We believe that...**

- Knowing, loving, and serving God is expressed through our "calling" or teaching vocation.
- The teacher is the facilitator and role model who fosters growth and self-esteem by acting as listener, motivator, encourager, and professional educator.
- Teachers are life-long learners.
- Teachers must promote active learning.
- Teachers are instructional leaders.
- Teachers must be aware of different student learning styles and use a variety of methods to meet the various learning styles and student academic needs.

**About Administration (President and Principal) We believe that...**

- Knowing, loving, and serving God is our personal and professional priority.
- We are life-long learners.
- NCA curriculum and values are in direct concordance with the Roman Catholic Church.
- We provide a safe, nurturing, and compassionate environment which is conducive to learning.
- We work together to foster a harmonious relationship between ourselves in order to better serve the NCA community.

**About Parents, the Four NCA Parishes, and Communities. We believe that...**

- If our students are to develop a real and devout faith in God, they need to see this modeled by parent, guardians and community members.
- Parents/guardians are the primary educators and role models for the child.
- Parents provide support and cooperation as an integral part of a team working to achieve the common goal of educating the whole child.
- Parents must be active partners with NCA concerning their student's education.
- Our NCA parishes: St. Gertrude, St. Jerome, St. Gregory the Great, and Holy Infant Jesus each are unique and have much beloved history. Students at NCA come from



all of these parishes and meet as one as NCA students.

- The NCA student and family population is diverse in culture and religion as all are welcome to our school. We believe that Jesus would have it no other way!
- All parishes, pastors, priests, religious, and community members play a vital role in the formation of all NCA students. We work in collaboration to share our time, treasures, and talents to help Northside Catholic Academy prepare her students for life after eighth grade!

## **PARISH & SACRAMENTS**

Northside Catholic Academy is a ministry of the parishes on the north side of Chicago: Holy Child Jesus, Mother of God, St. Gertrude and St. Jerome. Catholic families are encouraged to belong to one of these parishes, attending Mass on Sundays and holy days, and otherwise participating in the life of their parish or place of worship (for non-Catholics). Students are encouraged to actively participated in parish life through volunteer service, leadership opportunities, etc.

All Catholic families are responsible for being registered at one of these parishes in order to be eligible for the parishioner tuition rate. Parishioner status is determined by the individual pastors, and reviewed annually by them. It behooves parents to know their pastor, and to be known by him!

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** With the cooperation of the sponsoring pastors, NCA offers to coordinate the celebration of the sacraments of First Communion and Confirmation for all NCA students who wish to receive the sacrament together as a class, irrespective of their home parish. The sacraments will be celebrated at St. Gertrude. Those who wish to celebrate sacraments apart from this group may certainly do so, but are responsible for arranging the details with their home parish.

## **PHOTO RELEASE**

On occasion, Northside Catholic Academy uses photos and/or academic work of students in school/parish publications to share information about our school. School publications include, but are not limited to: the website, school yearbook, student academic work, advertisements, annual reports, posters, newsletters, parish bulletins, and other public relations material.

In addition, local news organizations may hear of our activities or events, and our school may invite or allow them to photograph or record our events.

Families will be required to return a Photo/Academic Permission Form to the school office advising us of whether or not you grant permission for your child's photo or academic work to be included in any form of communication.

## POWERSCHOOL

All elementary schools under the governance of the Archdiocese of Chicago are required to use the PowerSchool student information system. There will be an assignment of a unique student code for PowerSchool that allows for the integrity of student data. It is the responsibility of the parent and child to check PowerSchool on a regular basis to remain current on absences, tardies, and grades that are posted by the classroom teachers.

## SAFE ENVIRONMENT COMPLIANCE PROCEDURES REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL SCHOOL EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

Archdiocese of Chicago Application for Employment or Volunteer Service\* is to be completed by all prospective employees at the time of their interview. No one under the age of 18 may be in a supervisory role or responsible for other minors. A criminal background check should not be conducted on anyone under 18 years of age. **Volunteers are not fingerprinted nor are they mandated reporters.**

When employees *or* volunteers accept a position in the Catholic School system, they are expected to complete the list of all the tasks/trainings outlined below in order to be in compliance with the Archdiocesan mission to protect children and youth. The tasks and training must be completed before beginning work with children in the school as a school employee or volunteer.

- ❑ **Complete an online criminal background check (eApps) during the application process.**
- ❑ **Digital fingerprinting must be completed within three business days of hire. (School Employees only)**
- ❑ **Attend Virtus/Protecting God's Children for Adults™** before beginning your work with children in the school: Online at [www.archchicago.org](http://www.archchicago.org)- Scroll to the *Protecting Children* button and select **Virtus™**. **NOTE:** All participants must pre-register online to attend this one time, 3 hour training. The Virtus™ certificate received at the completion of training is to be placed in the employee's personnel file at the school.
- ❑ **Note:** If you have attended Virtus™ training in another diocese, call 888-847-8870 and ask that your Virtus™ registration be transferred to the Archdiocese of Chicago. Give the principal a copy of your Virtus™ certificate.
- ❑ **Read and sign Code of Conduct**
- ❑ **Annually complete Child Abuse and Neglect Tracking Form (CANTS).**
- ❑ **All School Employees, Coaches, and Youth Ministers must complete Mandated Reporter training before beginning your work with children.**

## SAFETY PROCEDURES

Northside Catholic Academy administration and staff are responsible for ensuring adequate supervision of students during the entire time they are on school premises during the official times of the school day.

Northside Catholic Academy will comply with local regulations for fire protection and will conduct regular fire drills. Local fire regulations state that a fire drill must be held every month. The classrooms and school conduct additional practice drills early in the school year to be sure students know the routines for exiting buildings quickly, quietly, and safely. Families should be sure to also discuss fire safety plans for home as well.

A comprehensive plan will be designed for use in the event of tornadoes and other disasters. Tornado drills and lockdown drills are also conducted on a regular basis.

All visitors must report to the school's main office to check in and check out. Visitors are required to wear badges. Students are not allowed to open doors for individuals.

Faculty and staff annually review NCA's Crisis Emergency and Crisis Management Plan.

## SCHOOL BUS

Northside Catholic Academy provides bus service to and from its six parish sites to the two campuses. Appropriate social behavior is required on the bus at all times. Inappropriate behavior distracts the bus driver and endangers the lives of other children. The privilege of riding on the school bus is conditional on a student's good behavior and observance of the following rules and regulations. Any student who violates any of these will be reported to the administration with the possibility that bus privileges may be suspended or terminated. It is the parents' obligation to see that their children board the bus safely in the morning. The school is not responsible for children prior to bus pick-up. Parents are responsible for arrangements for the safe pick-up of their children at the bus stops in the afternoons. **If there is no one present at the bus stop to meet a Preschool student, the bus will return the child to the extended care program at the primary campus.**

### **BUS BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS:**

1. Wait in a safe, designated area for the bus to arrive.
2. Obey the bus driver cheerfully and promptly.
3. Once on the bus, fill the seats from the back to the front. (Do not save seats.)
4. Once seated, stay seated.
5. While bus is moving, stay seated, with seat belts fastened.
6. Talk quietly while on the bus.
7. Keep hands, heads and belongings inside the bus. (NEVER throw anything from the bus.)
8. Do NOT eat or drink anything while on the bus.

9. Respect the bus – keep it clean and free from damage.
10. Animals are NOT permitted on the bus at any time.
11. Middle School students must show their afternoon bus pass to board the bus after dismissal.
12. Once students get on the bus in the morning, they MUST remain on school grounds until dismissed.
13. Cell phone use is not allowed on the bus.

## **SEARCHES CONDUCTED BY SCHOOL PERSONNEL**

**All searches of the school, including student desks and lockers, as well as contents, may be opened, searched or inspected at any time without notice. School personnel have an unrestricted right to search this property as well as any containers, book bags, purses, or articles of clothing that are left unattended on the school campus.**

### **Searches of Student's Person and Personal Property**

School personnel should always have another school authority present when conducting a search.

The search of a student's person or of any item brought onto school property (including vehicles) is permissible when there is any suspicion that the student may be carrying contraband. Contraband is defined as any weapon, firearm, dangerous object, illegal drug, drug paraphernalia or other items prohibited by law or by school policy.

### **Conducting the Search**

- Secure the safety of the students and staff.
- If a weapon, firearm, dangerous object, explosive, or ammunition is suspected, the school shall contact the local police department immediately and should not attempt to disarm the student.
- If a student refuses to voluntarily empty pockets or turn over personal items, the student should be detained until the parent/guardian is contacted and present.
- The parent/guardian should be informed that the student is risking possible suspension or expulsion for refusing to comply with the directive.
- If a weapon, firearm, illegal drug or controlled substance is seized, the school authority must contact the local police department to report the incident and secure the contraband until the police arrive at the school. The contraband must be turned over to the local police jurisdiction.

### **Reporting the Incident**

The Regional Director should be contacted as soon as possible. An Incident Report should be completed and faxed or emailed to the Office of Catholic Schools Regional Director within 24 hours.

After contacting the local police jurisdiction if contraband was seized, the principal must report the incident on the Illinois School Board of Education (ISBE) School Incident Reporting System (SIRS).

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

The Archdiocese of Chicago is committed to maintaining a work environment free of sexual harassment. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature shall be considered harassment when:

1. submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment;
2. submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; OR
3. such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

All instances of alleged sexual harassment are to be reported to the immediate supervisor, or pastor, parochial administrator, principal or agency director. If any employee believes that he or she has been subjected to conduct which may constitute sexual harassment, that employee is to immediately report the offensive conduct to his or her immediate supervisor. The supervisor will then report the allegation to the pastor, principal or director, who will then report the allegation to the Office of Employee Services and/or the Office of Legal Services.

If a complaint arises because of the action of the employee's supervisor or manager, the aggrieved employee is to contact a higher level of management locally, or the Director of Employee Services who, in turn, will advise the employee and consult with the appropriate level of management to resolve the complaint.

After an immediate and confidential investigation of the employee's complaint has been concluded, the employee will be advised of the results of that investigation. Based on a finding of reasonable evidence that sexual harassment has occurred, necessary and appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including discharge, will be taken against the offending party.

Retaliation in any form against an employee who exercises his or her right to make a complaint under this section is strictly prohibited and will itself be cause for appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. Reporting sexual harassment will not affect the individual's future employment, evaluations or work assignments.

Anyone who knowingly makes false charges against an employee in an attempt to demean, harass, abuse or embarrass that individual will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge. All parties involved in a sexual harassment complaint are to maintain strict confidentiality while the complaint is being investigated and evaluated.

## **STUDENT INCIDENT REPORTING SYSTEM (SIRS)**

Illinois Compiled Statutes mandate that certain types of incidents (drugs, weapons, and attacks on school personnel) occurring in or on school property be reported to local law enforcement authorities and the Illinois State Police (ISP) within one to three days of the occurrence of the incident. In order to satisfy the reporting of incidents to the ISP requirement, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), in conjunction with the ISP, have created the School Incident Reporting System (SIRS). The SIRS is a web-based application used by schools to report incidents electronically but which does not satisfy the requirement to report incidents to local law enforcement authorities.

### **TYPES OF INCIDENTS TO REPORT**

- Drug-related incidents in schools
- Firearms in schools
- Attacks on school

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

Northside Catholic Academy keeps a full and accurate record of each child's attendance, health, and academic progress according to the procedures established by the Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Schools.

**Policy #316.2 (Privacy of Student Records)** The right to privacy and confidentiality of student records must be protected. The Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education has adopted guidelines to protect the privacy and confidentiality of student records.

**Policy #316.3 (Release of School Records)** School records contain confidential data and are not to be released to unauthorized persons. Requests from attorneys for a pupil's attendance or academic records or subpoena of records may be granted according to the guidelines set by the Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education.

Northside Catholic Academy has a written system/procedure in place that flags records for any current or former student who has been reported missing by the Illinois State Police.

To help us serve your child, we should also have on file copies of any outside testing that is done, indications from doctors of any particular medical needs and how these are best handled, and any other information necessary for us to more successfully help your child learn and grow.

Each eighth grader is entitled to two sets of records being forwarded to the high schools of your choice, along with a completed copy of the High School Pre-Admission Form. Additional requests will carry a \$5 charge.

## SUBSTANCE ABUSE BY STUDENT

Substance is defined as illegal drugs and drug paraphernalia, alcohol, anabolic steroids, tobacco, chemicals, inhalants, solvents, prescription or over-the-counter drugs used for purposes other than those for which they are indicated or in a manner or in quantities other than directed.

Substance abuse means the consumption or use of any substance for purposes other than the treatment of sickness or injury as prescribed or administered by a person duly authorized by law to treat sick and injured human beings.

Illegal Violations: The possession, use, delivery, transfer, or sale of tobacco, alcohol, drug paraphernalia, illicit substances, chemical or any substance designed to look like or represented as such by students, on school premises, in school buildings, on school buses, or at school-sanctioned events is expressly forbidden.

### **SCHOOL PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING VIOLATIONS**

- Notify the parent/guardian and suspend the student during the school investigation.
- Notify local law enforcement authorities immediately as directed by law.
- Conference with principal, parent/guardian, student, pastor, and other appropriate persons as determined by the principal.
- Notify the Illinois State Police (ISP) within one to three days of the incident on the ISBE School Incident Reporting System (SIRS).
- Notify the school's Regional Director of the incident; fax a copy or send a PDF. of the completed Accident/Incident Report within 24 hours to the Regional Director.
- If the violation is founded, professional evaluation and, if necessary, treatment shall be provided by the parent/guardian.
- Based on the results of the certified clinical evaluation, the status of the student for continued attendance in the school will be determined by the principal. Options include but are not limited to continued suspension and/or expulsion.
- Appropriate confidentiality shall be maintained.

Mitigating circumstances such as first offense, age, seriousness of offense, prior conduct, cooperation of parent/guardian, attitude of student, and initial success of rehabilitative measures may warrant differences in procedures for the principal.

The approach to substance abuse should focus on education, not experimentation and provide a supportive environment for the learners. In determining consequences for violation, treatment and counseling shall have priority over, but not necessarily exclude disciplinary measures.

## TECHNOLOGY: ACCEPTABLE USE PROCEDURES

Northside Catholic Academy provides technology resources to its students and staff for educational and administrative purposes. The goal in providing these resources is to promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation and communication with the support and supervision of parents/guardians, teachers, and support staff. The use of these technology resources is a privilege, not a right.

Access to computers provides the potential availability of material that may not be considered of educational value in the context of the school setting. Appropriate

behavior, as it relates to the use of computers, is no different from behavior expectations in all other aspects of the learning and instructional program. All users are expected to use the computers and computer networks in a responsible and ethical manner. NCA has added Bark for Schools and Go Guardian as additional measures to monitor the appropriate use of websites on NCA devices. Students and parents/guardians will be required to sign and return an agreement outlining their promise to use NCA technology appropriately. Please work with us in helping your child understand and abide by the important rules of appropriate use.

### **For the Student – Acceptable Use:**

Acceptable use means that a student at Northside Catholic Academy will promise to use the computer and those special learning tools and programs, such as the Internet, with respect. Acceptable use means a student will promise to abide by the school and Archdiocesan rules as outlined here. These rules will be taught and enforced by the teachers.

Students must:

- remember to show respect for property, others and self. Students must not vandalize or abuse the equipment, the software or any information. The computer and electronic resources belong to Northside Catholic Academy.
- not do things on the computer that would be against the rules, the law, or may be looked upon as dishonest or disrespectful. Any student using the Internet **MUST** follow the rules given by the school and teacher at all times while on school premises. If students violate these directions and go to sites that are considered inappropriate they will be disciplined immediately by detention, suspension and possible expulsion. The severity of the discipline will be at the discretion of school administration.
- not tell or show others any personal or family information over the Internet. Do not pretend to be another person or use another person's information. Keep personal information private.
- No Cyber Bullying/Cyber Bashing will be allowed. Discipline applied for this offense will be at the discretion of school administration.
- No cameras, cell phones, or I-pods are allowed at school. Students who bring cell phones to school can leave them in the office or in their backpack. If a child is caught with any of these items in school, the item will be confiscated. The parent/guardian will be notified to come to school to pick up the confiscated item(s).

### **Use of the technology resources that are prohibited include, but are not limited to:**

- violating student rights to privacy/confidentiality, or unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information;
- attempting any unauthorized access, including hacking of any computer system;
- downloading unacceptable materials;
- re-posting personal communication without the author's prior consent;



- violating copyright law;
- using school technology resources for financial gain, credit card fraud, electronic forgery, other illegal activity and political purposes;
- downloading, installing or storing software on a school computer without the approval of appropriate school personnel;
- changing or attempting to alter any configuration, program or password on any computer or system;
- using a school computer without knowledge/approval of school personnel responsible for the computer;
- using inappropriate language, pictures, and gestures in any form on the Internet;
- using the Internet for entertainment or limited self-discovery function;
- using the Internet for unauthorized purchases.

### **Technology Use Outside of School**

Parents/guardians are primarily responsible for the student's appropriate and ethical use of technology outside of school. However, the inappropriate use of technology outside of school may subject the student to disciplinary action, which may include suspension or in some cases expulsion. Inappropriate use of technology may include, but is not limited to, harassment of others, use of the school name, remarks directed to or about teachers and staff, offensive communications including videos, photographs, and threats. Unauthorized costs incurred for online purchases charged to the school are the responsibility of the student and her/his family. For incidences where the school may be held liable for student behavior online outside of school, the school may hold the student's parents liable for the cost associated with such behavior.

### **Electronic Communication**

Electronic communication includes (but is not limited to) use of cellular phones, webcams, email, text messaging, and instant messaging and, electronic publication of content on websites, message boards, blogs, and social networking sites.

In the event students are contacted directly by teachers, parents must be copied on the content of all messages (although the duplicate message need not be sent using the same means of communication used to contact the student).

The content of any electronic communication should be brief and on topic. When communicating with a student, the teacher must write as if they were also communicating with their parents; the boundaries that must be respected in oral communication extend to electronic communication. All communication must conform to Archdiocesan Safe Environment Training and the Code of Conduct

Communication that violates the Code of Conduct will not be tolerated, regardless of the medium used to convey it. Except in extraordinary circumstances, all communication between adults and students should take place between the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. This includes the posting of content to websites and social networking sites.

### Cellular Phones/Text Messaging

We discourage students to bring cell phones to school. If cell phones are brought to school, they should be turned off and placed in the student's backpack. **Cell phone use is not allowed at any time during the school day. Students are not to make or receive phone calls or text messages during the school day, on the school bus, or during Extended Care.** Cell phones may be taken from students who violate this rule and a parent will need to come pick up the phone from the principal. If a parent or guardian needs to get in touch with a child during the school day, they should call the office and the message will be relayed to the student. NCA is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged cell phones.

- The school office lines should be used to conduct school-related conversations.
- Except in cases of emergency, teachers should not call students directly (e.g., on a minor's cellular phone). Instead, the teacher should call the parent or family directly.
- Teachers should avoid sharing personal cell phone number with students.
- Teachers should not communicate with students via text messages.

### Email

- Teachers should not contact students using a personal email address.
- Only official Archdiocesan or school accounts should be used for communication between NCA faculty and families.

### Social Media & Networking Sites

Students and their parents/guardians are advised that Northside Catholic Academy, by Illinois statute (Illinois Public Act 098-0129), may not request or require a student to provide a password or other related account information in order to gain access to the student's account or profile on a **social networking website**. The administration and faculty of Northside Catholic Academy may conduct an investigation or require a student to cooperate in an investigation if there is sufficient evidence to suggest the student's social network account violates the school's rules and/or disciplinary policy. The school may require a student to share content in the course of such an investigation.

- Employees or volunteers should not use personal social networking site accounts to contact students. Instead, a school can create a group or organization page used strictly for education-related communication. These accounts must be registered to the school or parish, instead of to individuals within an organization. All group pages or education-related accounts should be titled to reflect their official nature.
- No personal contact information should be listed in the profile fields. Only official email addresses, office phone numbers and job titles should be listed.
- Account settings should be set to maximize privacy.

- While schools and parishes are free to publicize their presence on social networking sites, students should not be sought out as “friends” (i.e. individually invited via site communication tools to associate with the group or page.)
- Do not post pictures of minors or “tag” pictures of minors (i.e. label photos to increase their accessibility or visibility on a site.)
- Only comment on education or ministry-related threads.
- Do not use instant messaging programs (e.g., Facebook chat).
- Official walls and pages will be frequently monitored for inappropriate posts. Inappropriate posts will be promptly removed/deleted.
- If third parties create unofficial groups or fan pages about your group, they will be periodically reviewed for inappropriate content (e.g., unauthorized use of logos, bullying, harassing or defamatory language, etc.) You may report these pages/groups/users to the hosting site and ask that they be removed.
- All content posted by employees and volunteers must reflect Catholic teachings and values. Disciplinary actions may result if the content includes defamatory comments regarding NCA, the faculty, the parish, or other students.

## TRANSFERRING

Parents should notify the school in advance if they plan to transfer from Northside Catholic Academy. Health records and other student records will be forwarded to the new school upon request from that school.

Certified copies of transfer students’ records are requested within 14 days of enrollment. Northside Catholic Academy sends **unofficial** records of students transferring to other schools within 10 days of the request. **Official** records are sent once all financial obligations have been met.

## TUITION POLICY

Tuition is paid from August through May directly to SMART Tuition through an automatic debiting program. We are aware that tuition can be a financial burden, but we must meet our payroll each month. If you are experiencing a serious financial crisis, please contact the principal or the business manager. Report cards will be held for all delinquent accounts. End of year events and celebrations may also be denied to students whose families have a delinquent account.

### Tuition Non-Payment Exclusion Procedures

Without payment of tuition, Northside Catholic Academy cannot function. Allowing some families to avoid their tuition obligation is unfair to those families that take their tuition obligation seriously and pay in full and on time.

The principal and business manager will review delinquency payments on a monthly basis. Families will be informed if their tuition is not current by a certain date, their child

will not be able to return to school until the family is caught up. These are referred to as "Exclusion Days". This date will be enforced at the end of each trimester. Families will not be able to re-enroll their children for the following school year unless their tuition obligation has been fulfilled. If a family is transferring to NCA due to the non-payment of tuition, NCA will not accept the family to enroll until tuition obligations have been fulfilled to the previous school.

### **Scholarships**

Requests for scholarships are made each spring for the following year by completing an application from FACTS. (The application process opens with registration each year.) Awards are determined based on family need and amount of money available in the NCA Guardian Angel Scholarship Fund. Those families with severe financial difficulties should discuss those with the principal or the pastor of the parish where you are a registered, active member.

### **Enrollment Agreement**

As part of the registration process, each family is asked to sign an enrollment agreement, which outlines the policies regarding payment of tuition, late fees, checks returned for insufficient funds, fundraising requirements, etc. A copy of the signed form is kept in the business manager's office and one is returned to the family. Registration fees are non-refundable. If a family plans to change their enrollment status, NCA administration must be notified 30 days in advance before the next month's tuition is due.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

Volunteers are valued members of Northside Catholic Academy and are an essential part of what makes our community such a wonderful place. Volunteers should expect to be treated with respect; to have the tools and information necessary to perform the assigned tasks; to ask for instructions or assistance as necessary; and to worship with the school community. The presence of volunteers enhances the school experience for the children during lunch time, recess, field trips, classroom helpers, extra-curricular sporting events, and on and on. Volunteers are not salaried and therefore, may not receive employee benefits or financial reimbursement for the service to the school.

The Archdiocese of Chicago Office of Catholic Schools requires that employees and volunteers working in Catholic schools complete the safe environment protocols for the protection of children and youth before service begins. Parents and guardians shall complete the Safe Environment Requirements before participating as a volunteer in the school as a chaperone, coach, tutor, or in any other capacity with students.

The following Safe Environment Requirements must be completed by all school volunteers over age 18:

- Archdiocese of Chicago Application for Employment or Volunteer Service
- Criminal Background Check – **eApps DB and online application**

- **CANTS 689 Form** (Child Abuse and Neglect Tracking System) submitted to the principal
- **Code of Conduct:** read, signed, dated and given to the principal.
- Attend **VIRTUS/PROTECTING GOD’S CHILDREN FOR ADULTS™** before **beginning a volunteer position in the school.** All adults over age 18 must pre-register online to attend this one time, 3 hour training.

All NCA families are required to give 20 hours of volunteer time to the school through Service Hours. However, you are not limited to 20 hours. There are so many ways parents can volunteer and play a significant role at NCA that 20 hours will accumulate very quickly. However, if a family does not fulfill their 20 hours of service, the family will be billed \$35 per hour not served. Also, if a parent signs up to volunteer for an event and does not show to provide the service, the parent can be billed \$35 for that hour. The volunteers who chair NCA events rely on parent volunteers to assist them. If you find you cannot attend the service you volunteered for, it is the parent’s responsibility to contact the chair in order to not be billed the \$35.

Here are just a few ways parents can earn hours and socialize with other parents:

- \*Room Parent            \* Lunch Supervisor            \*Library Aide
- \*Chaperone for field trips            \*Athletic Coach            \* NCA Parent Organization
- \*Board of Specified Jurisdiction (BSJ)            \* BSJ Committees
- \*Assist office staff with weekly folders

## **WEAPONS AND FIREARMS**

To uphold the dignity of the human person, the sacredness of human life, and provide a safe, secure school, Northside Catholic Academy will enforce the following policies:

- Students shall not carry, possess, or use weapons or firearms in school, or on school premises.
- Weapons include, but are not limited to the following: knives, brass knuckles, “billy clubs”, bats, pipes, sticks, and any other object that can cause bodily harm.
- Firearms (handgun, rifle, or shotgun) are defined as a weapon from which a shot is discharged by gunpowder.

School authorities have the right to inspect and search lockers, desk, backpacks, parking lots, and school campus property. Parents/guardians of the students involved will be notified as soon as possible. Students who violate the above directives are subject to suspension and/or expulsion.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:**

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

**If you have questions about...**

Assignments, homework, class activities	Contact classroom teacher by note, email or leave phone message.
Student progress, behavior, attitude	Contact classroom teacher by note, e-mail. or leave phone message.
Ongoing learning problems	Contact classroom teacher; consultation with resource teacher and coordinator of support services.
Discipline: specific incident or pattern of incidents in a class involving your child.	Contact classroom teacher to make an appointment. If further assistance is needed, contact the principal to meet with parent and teacher.
School procedures, calendars, administrative matters, schedules, policy matters	Contact the Principal.
Sacramental Programs	Contact your parish.
Tuition, fees, information about your payments	Contact SMART Tuition or contact Mrs. Leigh Holzman @ 773-743-6277
Bus Routes	Mrs. Laura Kollar @ 773-271-2008
Sports Programs	Contact individual team coach or Athletic Director, Dave Scholtes
Hot Lunch/Extended Care	Call Campus Office.
Scholarship/Tuition Assistance	Get application from FACTS If financial emergency occurs, contact Principal.
Miscellaneous Questions	Contact Campus Office Secretary.