

NORTHSIDE CATHOLIC ACADEMY FAMILY HANDBOOK

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Advisory Board

Chairman: Mrs. Lindsey Wills Hogan

Assistant Chair: Ms. Mara Brecht

Secretary: Mr. Liam Ford

NCA PARENT ORGANIZATION

President: Mrs. Jen Vogel

Vice President: Mrs. Rachel Ramirez

OUR IDENTITY, MISSION, AND VISION

We are diverse communities united to build up the Kingdom of God one child at a time by forming minds that think, hearts that love, and hands that serve, with the goal of graduating young people who have the faith, wisdom, and ability to do great things.

OUR ROOT BELIEFS

- Everyone is a beloved child of God
- We lead by example
- We are always learning
- Questions are important

Northside Catholic Academy abides by all policies and procedures set forth by the Archdiocese of Chicago Office of Catholic Schools. The Family Handbook is intended to be a helpful reference for all parents/guardians and students on structures, policies and procedures. Parents/ guardians and students are responsible for understanding the contents and complying with all the policies. The handbook may be changed at any time at the discretion of the administration. Any changes will be made known in a timely manner to the parents and students. The Family Handbook includes official Archdiocesan and school policies, procedures and other school related information. Periodic updates are made as necessary.

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All students are required to follow the academic program of the school, which requires study in reading, English Language Arts, mathematics, history/social studies, science and religion at all grade levels. The program may be modified according to an individual student's I.E.P. only.

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As mandated by the State of Illinois, Northside Catholic Academy provides health education in grades K-8 at age appropriate levels.

The program addresses many aspects of wellness, human ecology, body systems, human sexuality, growth and development, personal hygiene habits, mental health and available help resources, information on communicable diseases, safety and substance abuse and information on HIV/AIDS.

Topics are introduced at age-appropriate levels and may be integrated into the Science, Physical Education and/or other appropriate curriculum areas

Parents/Guardians may choose to have their child/ren excluded from some topics on Human Sexuality.

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

As a school of the Archdiocese of Chicago, Northside Catholic Academy is committed to serving Catholic families first, while also welcoming all families who desire a faith-based education rooted in the mission of the Catholic Church. Students will be admitted according to the following order of priority:

1. **Currently enrolled students and their siblings**
2. **Children of parishioners** from one of the four NCA parishes
3. **Transfer students from other Catholic schools**, including:

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- a. Students transferring from schools that are merging or consolidating
- b. Students whose families have relocated to the neighborhood
4. **Children of non-parishioner Catholic families**
5. **Children of non-Catholic families**

Admission of transfer 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, or that we are unable to meet the student's learning needs, or that the student's disciplinary issues are detrimental to the classroom learning environment, the student will be dismissed from the school and 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. If such records are not shared at the time of admission and are later discovered to exist, the school administration will review the records and determine whether or not the student and family will remain at NCA.

6) Entrance Requirements

A child entering preschool must be 3 or 4 by September 1st and fully potty trained. A child is considered fully potty trained when they can use the toilet independently and without accidents during the day. Pull-ups and toilet training undergarments are prohibited. 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
- 4) Baptismal certificate, if relevant

Admission at all levels is contingent upon available space. If the number of applicants exceeds available openings, a waiting list will be maintained and families will be notified as space becomes available.

In addition, all admissions are dependent upon the student's demonstrated academic and behavioral readiness, the family's commitment to meet tuition and financial obligations, and alignment with the mission and values of Northside Catholic Academy as a Catholic school.

Questions and/or concerns regarding discrimination in **admissions** should be directed to the principal (if applicable), the president, and the Vicariate Director of School Operations appointed by the 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

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expected to sign a financial agreement at the time of enrollment. No child will be readmitted to Northside Catholic Academy unless all past financial obligations have been met.

Readmission to Northside Catholic Academy: If a student has voluntarily left the school in a previous year and seeks readmission, the student and any /all parents or guardians will be required to interview with the principal who will make a readmission determination based on what is best for the school community.

ADVISORY BOARD

The Northside Catholic Academy Advisory Board 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, Advancement, Long Range Planning, and Facilities. The Board meets five times a year. See the NCA school calendar for meeting dates. Most meetings will have an hour-long open session for the school community, followed by a closed session.

Board members may be:

- parishioners
- alumni/alumnae and parents of alumni/alumnae
- leaders within the neighborhood, civic, business and professional communities
- school parents and guardians

The Board serves in an advisory role and does not make school policy.

ATHLETICS

The Handbook for Athletics in the Catholic Elementary School (Revised 2023), 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 Schools Resource Portal.

Northside Catholic Academy offers a variety of after school athletic programs. The Athletic Committee 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.

The State of Illinois requires any student playing interscholastic sports to have a sports pre-participation physical exam by a licensed health care provider and a concussion information sheet signed by both student and parent.

If a student plans on participating in any interscholastic sport (including tryouts), they must submit these forms prior to their participation. To that end, parents/guardians and students are strongly encouraged to complete and submit the sports-physical examination and concussion information forms prior to the start of the school year. Students who have not completed the forms will not be allowed to participate.

Note: 6th graders who have submitted the required Physical Exam are exempt from the sports exam requirement **providing** that the physician has indicated on the form that the student is physically able to participate in athletics.

See "Athletics" under Code of Conduct for policies pertaining to behavior and academic expectations for participation in Interscholastic teams.

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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 building shall have a security camera monitoring the designated main entrance.

School Visitors

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

Students should **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 Director of School Operations 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. Students will practice proper procedures throughout the year and review them periodically.

Bus Drills

NCA students take buses to field trips. Each class will practice a bus safety drill prior to leaving on their first field trip of each school year.

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.

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

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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.

Asbestos Content Notification & Management

In 1986, Congress passed the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA). That law requires all schools, kindergarten through twelfth grade, to be inspected and identify asbestos-containing building materials. The law further requires the development of a Management Plan, based upon the findings of the inspection, which outlines our intent in controlling the potential for exposure to asbestos fibers in our schools.

In the past, asbestos was used extensively in building materials because of its insulating and fire retarding capabilities. Virtually any building built before the late 1970's contains at least some asbestos in pipe insulation and structural fireproofing. We too have buildings that contain asbestos material. The primary concerns arise when these materials begin to deteriorate or become damaged.

Northside Catholic Academy has been inspected and some asbestos containing materials were identified in your building. The materials are distributed in various locations and include floor tile, pipe insulation and mechanical areas not readily accessible to building occupants or students.

The school's Inspection Report and Management Plan outlines in detail the methods used to maintain the materials in a safe manner. In addition, as required by law, appropriate school staff members have been trained to administer this program.

A copy of the inspection report and the management plan is on file at your local school office for review if you so desire/

CELEBRATIONS

Class Celebrations

Holidays designated for classroom celebrations include Halloween, Advent/Christmas, Valentine's Day or Mardi Gras, 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.

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Grades 1-8: Celebrations will take place in the last 40 minutes of the school day or during the lunch period. They should consist of a simple treat and an activity (ex. game, or craft). No more than 2 parent helpers per homeroom are allowed.

Birthdays

A treat for the entire class may be brought to celebrate a student's birthday, but prior scheduling with the teacher is necessary. Parents should check with the teacher to accommodate for medical needs of the students in the class. **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 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 they are required by law to inform the Department of Children & Family Services of any suspicions or allegations of child abuse/neglect.

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.

CUSTODY / GUARDIANSHIP ISSUES

Child Custody

Should one parent have sole custody of a child, the child's other biological parent is still the legal guardian unless the court has legally removed guardianship. 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

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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, the 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 offer 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

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.

The following topics can be found within Northside Catholic Academy's Code of Conduct:

- Academic Procedures
- Assignments and Homework
- Athletics
- Attacks on School Personnel
- Attendance
- Behavior expectations
- Bullying
- Dress Code
- Gang Activity
- Harassment/Sexual Harassment
- Language
- Substance Abuse
- Technology use

Proper training in discipline should lead towards self-control and respect for the law, authorities, property,

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and/or the rights of others.

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: *"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."* (John 13:34-35 NRSVCE).

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. When talking about discipline, we must always remember that discipline is a learning experience, not a punishment.

Discipline: We are instituting a discipline program that is based on Virtue-based Restorative Justice.

- helps the student learn a lesson that will positively affect his/her present and future behavior
- is designed to help the student control and change his/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.

ACADEMIC PROCEDURES

We are proud to offer a comprehensive curriculum for the students at Northside Catholic Academy. From PreSchool 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 teams: Early Childhood, Primary (K - 2), Intermediate (3-5), and Middle School (6-8). 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 Spanish, Art, Music, and Physical Education once or twice each week.

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.

ASSIGNMENTS AND HOMEWORK

Homework/Independent Practice

Homework is important to student learning as the children progress through their academic development, contributing toward building responsibility, self-discipline, and life-long learning habits and meaningfully supporting the learning experience of the student. 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. 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.

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- 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; 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 an 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:

- 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 a communication tool to send notes to teachers.
- See that your child does homework in a quiet, well-lit atmosphere.
- 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?"
- Do not give your child answers to their homework assignments. It is best to allow them to come to the conclusion on their own. You can certainly help guide them toward the answer, but do not supply them with the answer.
- Ask your child to SHOW you what is being learned in school. The best way to learn is to teach others what you have learned yourself!
- Have a time set aside every night for reading in your home. Act as a model during this time by reading something as well.
- 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.
- Parents have the right to set time limits on how long their child will work on homework on a given night. In grades K-5, time spent on homework should roughly equal the time limits above. 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. This does not apply to skipping homework for an athletic event or other extracurricular activities. Please note: If a student is frequently not completing his/her homework assignments, a meeting will be scheduled between the parents and homeroom teacher.

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. Teachers need to see your child's homework to understand how well they are grasping the concepts and applying new skills. 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 to gradually develop strong study habits at every level.

Missing Homework Policy for 3rd – 5th Grade

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Parents should review their child's assignment notebook each evening for homework assignments. Teachers may request that parents or guardians provide a signature. If homework is not completed, the teacher will communicate to the parents through e-mail, and the homework will be expected to be completed and turned in the following school day.

Missing Homework Policy for 6th - 8th Grade

6th through 8th grade may be assigned homework over the weekends. Teachers will assign homework with consideration of family time and extra-curricular activities.

Students are expected to complete their homework assignments and turn them in on time. Students are expected to return any missing/late homework to the issuing teacher the next day. Possible consequences for not completing homework can include having their grade reduced for the assignment, and/or missing recess to complete the assignment(s).

Note: There is a 1-week window for test corrections and retakes. **[MS teachers review in August]**

Assessment and 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.

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 4-8 should monitor the student's progress on a regular basis through FACTS Family Portal.

Students in Preschool through Grade 3 receive a developmental report card. *Although these students are not receiving grades, their homework is an important part of their education and provides critical feedback to the teacher about how the student is progressing in understanding content and mastering skills. When students do not complete homework in grades 1-3, their teacher has less information to use to guide, support, reinforce or extend the student's learning.*

Students in Grades 4-8 are graded on the following scale:

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

Midway through each trimester, students in Gr. 4-8 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 Extra Curricular Activities/Field Trips The student's academic success is a priority at NCA. Extra-curricular activities and field trips enhance the educational experience and give students opportunities to develop new skills and experience success. However, extra-curricular

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programs should not interfere with the student's academic work.

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, including athletics.

For information about academic ineligibility in sports at NCA, please read our "Athletics" section under "Code of Conduct."

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 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.

Note that attendance is important! Students missing more than 10% of school days will automatically be reviewed for possible retention.

Special Needs / IEPs / CESP

Northside Catholic Academy seeks to provide a Catholic education to all children whose parents desire it for their child. We believe that each child is beloved of God, worthy of dignity and respect, and made for greatness. The school seeks to partner with parents / guardians to meet the needs of each child as we are able.

The school will formulate and implement a Catholic Educational Support Plan for students who have been diagnosed with defined learning/behavior needs that require educational accommodations/interventions. Upon receipt of requests from parents/guardians, the school will meet with parents to review/discuss the precise nature of the special needs, medical documentation provided, and any and all proposed strategies, educational accommodations / modifications, and interventions proposed. The school will determine what, if any, strategies, educational accommodations / modifications, and interventions it is able to provide to the student based upon its available resources. The school will document any such strategies, educational accommodations/modifications and interventions they are able to provide in a Catholic Educational Support Plan ("CESP"). CESP's require the affirmation of both the student's parent/guardian as well as school officials.

An evaluation of the child's learning/ behavioral needs is typically provided via a public school district evaluation pursuant its obligations under IDEA or the parent's licensed private practitioner. Either type of evaluation may be provided by parents in support of their request for a CESP. School personnel shall not attempt to diagnose students with a defined learning/behavioral need. If a school official suspects that a student may have a defined learning/behavioral need, he/she shall speak with the principal (or designee). The principal (or designee) will meet with the student's parent/guardian to share their observations with parents/ guardians and inform them of their right to request an evaluation from their local public school district or their own private medical provider.

If a student is enrolled for the first time with an existing IEP or CESP from another school, the principal (or designee) shall meet with the parents to review the IEP/CESP, and formulate a new, local CESP based upon its local resources and the child's current needs. CESP's represent a mutual agreement between the parent/guardian and the school as to the additional educational modifications the school may provide. Catholic schools are not legally obligated to implement any services recommended on an IEP. CESP's shall be reviewed, modified (where necessary), and re-signed by the school and parent/guardian on at

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least an annual basis. The principal (or designee) shall ensure that CESP goals, strategies, accommodations/modifications, and interventions are shared with all relevant school personnel, and that relevant school personnel receive appropriate training and support in implementing the CESP.

Modifications of curriculum or assessments

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. Any such modifications will be included in the student's CESP and agreed upon by both the parents/guardians and the Principal (or designee).

Withdrawal of Students with Medical or Developmental Needs Impacting Learning or the School Environment

The school may reach an evidence-based decision as to their ability to serve a student with special needs when it is learned that the child's needs are greater than initially understood or when the available resources dedicated to serve the child are not effective. In such circumstances, the school may disenroll the student because it does not have the resources to meet the child's needs. Disenrollment is not the same as expulsion, which is a removal from school for disciplinary reasons. Disenrollment is not the result of a disciplinary proceeding, but a school determination that the support required by a student exceeds what the school can provide. Common indicators include:

- The student's behavior results in disruptions in the school environment and/or jeopardizes the health and safety of the student and/or others. The behavior has not been managed by the supports offered.
- The school cannot meet the student's safety needs.
- Benchmark assessments (e.g. iReady scores) show insufficient academic progress.
- Parent No Longer Collaborates Respectfully with School Staff or refuses to cooperate with school staff and such behavior impedes students progress.
- Academic assessments, new private psychological evaluations, or public school evaluations evidence new diagnoses.

ATHLETICS

Parents/guardians/coaches are expected to follow NCA's Code of Conduct for all practices and games.

Our Athlete Code of Conduct

Student athletes are often the first representatives of our school family to the outside world. As such, we hold our student athletes to high academic and behavioral standards.

Academic Ineligibility

Student athletes must maintain an overall grades above a 70% or higher in order in Math, ELA, Reading, Social Studies, Science and Religion classes to be considered eligible to practice with their team at Northside Catholic Academy. Ineligibility does not disqualify a student from playing in a game, but does mean that the student athlete will be unable to participate in any practices until the grade is raised above a 70%. These students are expected to attend practice but to complete their work or study instead of practicing.

Behavior

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At all times, student athletes, coaching staff, volunteers, parents and spectators are expected to maintain professional, courteous, and gracious behavior toward each other and especially toward opposing teams, staff, parents, and spectators.

The loss of a student athlete's composure- which results in negative behavior, actions, or language toward referees, coaches & staff, fellow team members, volunteers, or parents and spectators (of either team) will result in the immediate benching of the student athlete. Eligibility to return to both practices and games will be determined after a meeting between the coaching staff, the student athlete, the athlete's parents, and the administration of the school.

Classroom Behavior

A student athlete's behavior in class will also play a role in determining the athlete's eligibility for both practice and games.

Student athletes who exhibit any violent behavior in class should expect to be benched immediately until a meeting can be arranged between the coaching staff, student athlete, the athlete's parents, and the administration of the school. Until such a hearing can be arranged, the student will be unable to participate in practices and games.

If the school administration deems it necessary, student athletes who are being consistently removed from the classroom environment because of disruptive behavior are also subject to being barred from practice and games until a meeting can be arranged between the coaching staff, student athlete, the athlete's parents, and the administration of the school.

Uniforms.

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.

Parents/Coaching Staff

All coaches must sign the Coaching Code of Conduct prior to the first meeting with the students. Coaches must schedule a meeting with the parent(s)/guardian(s) prior to the first practice. At that time, the expectations for the student athletes and for the parents will be reviewed. The Parent Code of Conduct for Athletics must be signed by any/all parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student.

Violations of either the Coaches' Code of Conduct or the Parent Code of Conduct will require a meeting with the Principal (or designee) prior to the coach or parent being allowed to attend practices or games.

Like our student athletes, the loss of composure in our parents or coaching staff- which results in negative behavior, actions, or language toward referees, coaches & staff, fellow team members, volunteers, or parents and spectators (of either team) may result in the removal of the individual(s) from the athletic event. A determination will then be made with the school administration whether or not the coaching staff or parent will be allowed at future NCA athletic events.

Prayer

All home games will begin with a brief prayer by the student athletes.

ATTACKS ON SCHOOL PERSONNEL

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Any physical attack or verbal threat on school personnel at NCA will result in an immediate suspension. During which time, law enforcement will be notified and a hearing between the parents, administration, and the teacher involved will commence. At that hearing, it will be determined whether or not the student will be permanently expelled from NCA.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

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

	Students Enter	School Begins	School Ends	Half day Dismissal
Grades K-8	8:00	8:10	3:10	11:30
Pre K & JK Full Day	8:00	8:10	3:05	11:25
Pre K & JK AM Half Day	8:00	8:10	11:15	11:25
Wednesday Early Dismissal	8:00	8:10	2:30 (2:25 for Pre K & JK)	

School begins at each campus promptly at 8:10AM. Students are expected to be in their classrooms or in their designated spot in the cafeteria for our Morning Meeting at this time and prepared to begin their school day. See NCA's Tardy Policy.

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 17 times in a school year may be retained at the same grade level the following year.

Reporting an Absence

If your child must be absent from school, please call or email the school office no later than 8:30 a.m. each day he/she 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. 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. In general, students have 1 day extra for each day absent to complete their work.

Attendance at school for at least half the day is a requirement to attend or participate in after-school or evening extra-curricular and athletic events.

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Tardiness

Tardy is defined as *not physically present in the classroom or designated meeting place at the posted opening of a regular required student attendance day.*

Parents are responsible for the arrival and tardiness of their children. Students entering the building after 8:10AM are considered tardy. If tardiness becomes a recurring problem, parent(s) will need to 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 5 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. Students will receive a tardy slip and will need to give that slip to their teacher. Tardies will be recorded in FACTS Family Portal. Parent(s)/guardian(s) of students in K-5 missing significant class time repeatedly will need to meet with the Principal (or designee) to discuss the situation and come up with a plan to support the family in ensuring the student comes to school on time.

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 FACTS Family Portal. Students will be escorted to the Middle School building to their middle school homeroom. Five tardies within a trimester will result in communication from the administration. Students missing significant class time repeatedly will need to meet with the Principal (or designee) and adhere to a Behavior Plan that will include making up the time missed. A conference with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and Principal (or designee) might also be required.

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

Parents are responsible for setting a schedule that will get their children to and from school on time each day. There is no outside supervision provided before or after school. **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 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 lot located on the northwest corner of Glenwood & Thome.
- 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 the "curbside" drop off on Glenwood Avenue

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

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No student will be allowed to leave during the school day with anyone other than the parent/guardian or without written permission of the parent. An email is sufficient; however, 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.**

Vacation absences will be noted as unexcused absences on the student's report card.

403.05 Excessive Absenteeism

Excessive absenteeism means absences that total 10% or more of school attendance days in the current school year, including both excused and unexcused absences. The school will periodically review our student absence data to determine if any students are excessively absent and, if so, we may call the parent/guardian to discuss the reasons for the excessive absences. Additionally, if appropriate, the school may provide the parent/guardian with a list of resources where they may obtain counseling or social services that will encourage daily attendance and promote success. If there is no improvement in attendance or cooperation by the student or parent/guardian with its efforts for their child, the student may be withdrawn from the school.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

School Expectations

NCA asks that all students treat each other, teachers, staff, volunteers, clergy, parents, and school property with respect and dignity. This applies to behavior in the classroom, behavior during classroom transitions (moving from one classroom to another), at Church, and behavior on school property.

Classroom Expectations

At the beginning of each school year, all teachers put into place classroom rules that define the expectations, consequences, and rewards for the students. The goal of the school is to provide a positive, peaceful and respectful school environment in which our students can excel in their academic and personal growth. The behavior plan setting is an ongoing process to help students develop self-control, competence, appropriate behavior and develop responsibility and an awareness of the rights of others.

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Consequences for Behavior Violations

Teachers at each team 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. Lunch detention will be assigned when a student is not responding to teacher-imposed consequences. Lunch detention will be supervised by the principal or assistant principal.

Parents will be asked to come to the school when their child is not responding to the restorative consequences and when they continue to commit the same types of behavior violations. If a student egregiously or continuously violates school or classroom expectations, a meeting between the

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parent/guardian and the school administration will be scheduled to determine a path for redirection or discipline as a result of the observed behavior. If the violations are more severe, a different course of action will be taken.

Corporal Punishment

No student shall be disciplined corporally or corrected with abusive or demeaning language to other students.

Serious Behavior Violations:

Serious Behavior Violations are beyond “normal” behavior issues and will require a meeting between a student’s parent/guardian and the school administration to determine a disciplinary action. Such actions may lead to suspension or expulsion from NCA. Serious behavior violations include behaviors such as:

- Fighting
 - Throwing of objects to cause bodily harm
 - 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– see section below.
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- Any form of vandalism or theft

Behaviors warranting suspension or expulsion

The following actions will result in an immediate suspension and possible expulsion from School. In addition to that, Police will be notified if warranted and family or individual counseling may be recommended or required.

- Deliberate destruction, abuse, or theft of personal, public or school property.
- Carrying weapons, including knives, or replicas, or any object brought with intent to use as a weapon or for purpose of disruption school
- Use or possession of tobacco, e-cigarettes, vapes, matches, or lighters
- Harassment, including repeated disrespect and /or intimidation of others: other students, teachers or staff.
- Use or possession of alcohol and/or drugs, in school or at school-related events
- Gang affiliation, recruitment or any activity on or off school premises that may be gang related.
- Assault, intentional physical injury, or attempt to injure another student or school personnel
- Sending or sharing sexually explicit photos/videos
- Creating sexually explicit images using a photograph/videos of another student
- Major bullying, threatening, or intimidating another student or staff

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. Student will be monitored by a qualified staff member at all times. Student is able to complete work for credit during the suspension, but is not allowed to participate in after-school or co-curricular activities for the duration of the suspension. .

Procedures: To ensure the imposition of the suspension is fair and consistent, the following procedure will be followed:

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1. An investigation of the alleged misconduct by a qualified school employee.
2. An in-person conference between the parent(s)/ guardian(s) and the principal, as well as other designated and appropriate personnel, to discuss the proposed or actual suspension. This conference will include time for the student/ parent to present any evidence to refute the allegations.
3. Written notice to parent(s)/guardian(s) citing the misconduct and the length of the proposed or actual suspension.
4. Written notification to the Director of School Operations (DSO) and President.

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

Expulsion of Students for Disciplinary Reasons

Any student may be expelled for serious or repeated violations of the Student Code of Conduct that include, but are not limited to: physical, verbal, or sexual threats; substance abuse; possession of weapons or illegal drugs; repeated lack of respect for school authorities; serious damage to school or student property; theft; or physical harm to student/staff.

Where the student misconduct warranting expulsion did not: (1) present a threat of harm or (b) result in any harm to the health and safety of school employees, students, volunteers, etc., the principal may, in their discretion, offer parents/guardians the opportunity to voluntarily withdraw from the school before the student is expelled. If parents accept this opportunity, they should submit their intent to withdraw their child to the school in writing. The expulsion or withdrawal of a student does not necessarily impact the registration of any siblings in the school. Students may no longer participate in any school-sponsored extra or co-curricular activities once expelled. Parents/Guardians of Archdiocesan schools may submit a request for review of the expulsion, in writing, to the Superintendent.

BULLYING/HARASSMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

As a Catholic school, we respect the dignity of each person because we believe all people are 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.

According to the Anti-Bullying Alliance and its members, bullying is the *“repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, whereby the relationship involves an imbalance of power.”* A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more persons, and he or she has difficulty defending himself or herself.

Bullying can be physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual in nature. It can happen face-to-face or online. Offenses may include but are not limited to:

Cyber-bullying

Name-calling or mean teasing: verbally or written

Name-calling or mean comments about race, color or gender

Name-calling, mean comments, or gestures with a sexual meaning

Physical bullying

Rumor-spreading: verbally or written

Social isolation/exclusion

Taking, relocating, or damaging another's property

Threats / intimidation

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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. Complaints can be made in-person to the immediate supervisor, and via email or by phone to the principal.

If this is the first time the behavior has been reported, the situation will be discussed separately with each student. The alleged perpetrator will sign a form reminding them of the consequences for such behavior. If the behavior is known to have occurred repeatedly, the following process will be followed:

1. An investigation of the alleged bullying or harassment by the principal or assistant principal, including interviews with all parties involved.
2. A *No Contact Contract* between the two students will be enforced immediately and continue during the investigation and possibly continue afterward.
3. An in-person conference between the alleged victim, parent(s)/ guardian(s) and the principal or designee. This conference will include time for the student/ parent to present any background or context.
4. An in-person conference between the alleged perpetrator, parent(s)/ guardian(s) and the principal or designee. This conference will include time for the student/ parent to present any background or context or to refute the allegations.
5. The alleged perpetrator will meet with the school counselor. The school counselor will also be available to the victim.
6. Written notice to the parent(s)/ guardian(s) of the alleged perpetrator, outlining findings from the investigation and decisions made by the principal as to consequences for the perpetrator.
7. Written notification to the Director of School Operations (DSO) and President.
8. The school will work with the victim and their parent(s)/guardian(s) to create a *School Safety Plan* so that the child will feel safe at school.

Consequences for bullying and harassment will be decided solely by the principal in accordance with the policies of the school and may include suspension or expulsion. *Note that school administration is prohibited by law to share the decisions made regarding disciplinary consequences with parties other than the parent(s) / guardian(s) of the student receiving the disciplinary action.*

Victims of bullying will be offered support and a safety plan, which may include check-ins with a teacher or administrator and continuation of the *No Contact Contract* as well as counseling sessions with the school counselor. More information about how to support your child can be found here: [Stop Bullying.gov](https://www.stopbullying.gov) . Please note that contacting the other parent(s)/guardian(s) is not recommended.

Proactive steps to combat bullying:

The faculty and staff care deeply about each child and work to ensure that no student is the victim of bullying or harassment. In addition to the social-emotional learning done in each classroom as well as in the Grades 3-8 health classes, we have the following programs in place for the 2026-27 school year :

RISE: We are partnering with DePaul University and their RISE program which is a comprehensive year-long professional learning partnership designed to strengthen Catholic school communities as places of deep belonging, intercultural understanding, and authentic solidarity rooted in Catholic Social Teachings.

COUNSELING LESSONS: Our school counselor runs regular weekly lessons with targeted classes to address bullying and other social issues.

LUNCH BUNCH: Our school counselor runs informal “lunch bunches” with girls at the intermediate and middle school years to discuss relationship issues. Parent permission slips will be sent home if your child’s class is invited to participate in these ongoing sessions.

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CODE OF CONDUCT OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS

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

It is our belief that productive conversations and problem-solving will happen when we

- Assume positive intentions in all interactions
- Assume that the faculty and staff want what is best for your child
- Respect the education, professionalism, and experience of the educators at NCA
- Listen and seek to understand the other person's perspective and reasoning
- Communicate with respect, which includes:
 - No yelling
 - No name-calling
 - No belittling
 - No put-downs
 - No accusations
 - No threats
 - No bullying
 - No abusive language or tone
- Do not discuss other people's children, do not gossip about students, and do not reveal confidential information about any member of the NCA community..
- Use social media in a positive manner; do not use it to disparage any member of our community

Parents are not allowed to transport or consume alcohol on school property unless given permission by the administration. Alcohol is never permitted at school events that are focused on the students (e.g. dances, award ceremonies, etc.)

If a parent/guardian's behavior falls outside the boundary of the code of conduct for parents, a meeting between administration and the parent/guardian will take place to discuss parent conduct expectations. The parent will not be allowed on school property until this meeting takes place. A second violation will result in the parent being banned from school events and the school building. In consultation with the President, the administration may ask the family to leave the school.

Withdrawal of Students Based Upon the Conduct of Parents/Guardians

As partners in the sacred mission of Catholic education, parents and guardians are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that consistently reflects the teachings, values, and moral standards of the Catholic Church. This obligation applies to all interactions with school personnel, students, and volunteers – whether on school property, at school-sponsored events, or in any context associated with the school community.

The conduct of parents and guardians must be guided by Christian charity respect for the dignity of every person, and a spirit of cooperation and humility, in accordance with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the principles of Catholic social teaching.

Behavior that is contrary to the moral and spiritual mission of the school will not be tolerated. Such behavior includes but is not limited to: actions or speech that oppose Catholic values; any forms of disrespect, harassment, verbal or physical abuse; threats, intimidation, or any conduct that disrupts the peace, order, and Christian witness of the school environment.

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Should a parent or guardian engage in conduct that, in the judgment of the Principal and/or President, seriously undermines the mission or well-being of the school community, the school reserves the right to take the following actions:

- Restrict or revoke the parent / guardian's right to be present on school property, either temporarily or permanently.
- Dismiss the student(s) of the parent / guardian from the school, either on a temporary or permanent basis.

Attacks on School Personnel

Upon receipt of a written complaint from any school personnel, the school is required to report all incidents of battery committed against any school employee (e.g. principals, teachers, aides, secretaries, custodians) to the local law enforcement authorities immediately after the occurrence of the attack. Additionally, schools must report all of these incidents to the State Board of Education through existing school incident reporting systems as they occur during the year by no later than August 1 for the preceding school year.

Withdrawal of Students Based Upon Financial Delinquency

Students may be withdrawn if their parent/ guardian fails to fulfill their financial and tuition obligations to the school. Before withdrawal occurs, the Principal (or designee) shall attempt to formulate a payment plan with the family. The Principal (or designee) will be sensitive to the unique circumstances of the family, while ensuring that the family is able to fulfill their financial obligations. The Principal may serve a notice of "Exclusion Days" to families whose balances are more than 45 days late. Students will not be able to attend school until the balance is paid or a payment plan satisfactory to the administration is formulated and followed. Exclusion Days may be exercised not only for delinquent tuition, but also for any other fees, including summer camp fees and extended care fees.

DRESS CODE

Northside Catholic Academy students are expected to dress appropriately for school. Our dress code allows students to experience a sense of belonging to the Northside Catholic Academy community. School uniforms and gym uniforms can be ordered through Lands' End and Schoolbelles.

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 workplace environments.

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, grey or blue monogrammed collared shirt, or Navy Blue Monogrammed sweater or vest with plain white collared shirt.. Quarter-zip nylon or fleece pull-overs with the NCA crest may be worn in lieu of the sweater.

School Uniform Boys K - 8

Navy blue pants/shorts* with white, grey or blue monogrammed collared shirt, or a Navy Blue Monogrammed sweater or vest with plain white collared shirt. Quarter-zip nylon or fleece pull-overs with the NCA crest may be worn in lieu of the sweater.

Gym Uniform Girls & Boys K - 5

Navy blue sweatpants and navy blue t-shirt with NCA logo Navy blue shorts* and navy blue t-shirt with NCA logo Gym shoes. There is also an optional-navy blue sweatshirt with NCA logo

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Gym Uniform Girls & Boys 6-8

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

***Shorts can only be worn during the Warm Weather Uniform time period: Aug. 24 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.

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.

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 Dockers 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. 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. 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.

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.

Jewelry The wearing of jewelry is not recommended and allowable jewelry is limited. The only exceptions are religious medals, and small pierced post earrings, one per earlobe, No body piercings beyond earrings are allowed for boys or girls.

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Beauty Products: Makeup is discouraged. Nails should be kept neat, clean and well-groomed. Nail add-ons, extensions, and fake nails are not appropriate for the learning environment and will not be allowed.

Watches / SMART watches: Like cellphones, SMART watches pose a distraction in the classroom and thus are detrimental to student learning. Since we cannot leave the determination of whether a watch is connected to the internet to the teacher, who has more pressing responsibilities, we prohibit the wearing of all watches by students. All classrooms are equipped with clocks. Watches worn to school must either be kept in the student's backpack in their locker or brought to the front office to be locked up. Watches are not to be kept on the student's person.

Violations of this policy will result in the watch being brought to the front office and the parent needing to pick up the watch. The student will serve lunch detention for 2 days. This consequence is the same as for keeping a cell phone on your person.

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.

No halter tops, strapless or spaghetti straps are allowed.

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.

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.

Enrollment at NCA implies agreement with, and acceptance of, the dress code policies. Students not meeting the uniform code will be provided with appropriate clothing from our uniform closet which they will be required to return the following day.

LANGUAGE

Students are expected to practice the virtue of temperance and to use civil and respectful language at all times. Students who fail to respect the dignity of those around them by using the Lord's name in vain, cursing, using racially charged language, or using profane language can expect to be addressed by the teacher, staff, or volunteer. In most cases, a student will receive a warning. However, repeated coarse language or racially charged language will be addressed with a student's parents and administration and will result in disciplinary action.

SEARCHES OF STUDENT'S PERSON AND PERSONAL PROPERTY

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. All searches will occur when two or more school authorities are present.

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- Searches will occur once the safety of students and staff are secure.
- If a weapon, firearm, dangerous object, explosive, or ammunition is suspected, the school shall contact the local police department immediately
- If a student refuses to voluntarily empty pockets or turn over personal items, the student will be detained until the parent/guardian is contacted and present.
- Students who do not comply with the authorities (either of the school or with the police) are subject to suspension or expulsion from the school
- 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.
- 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).

TECHNOLOGY: ACCEPTABLE USE PROCEDURES

Northside Catholic Academy provides technology resources to its students 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.

No Smartphones, watches or other smart devices (including glasses), cameras, or cell-phones are allowed at school. Students who bring cell-phones to school can leave them in the office or in their backpack. Students may not keep watches of any kind or cell phones or any smart devices on their person. If a child is caught with any of these items in school, the item will be confiscated. The parent/guardian will be notified and will have to pick up the confiscated item(s). The student will be required to serve lunch detention for two (2) days.

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 programs. All users are expected to use the computers, tablets, and computer networks in a responsible and ethical manner. Access to computers and tablets provides the potential availability of material that may not be considered of educational value in the context of the school setting. 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, tablet, and any 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 below. These rules will be taught and enforced by the teachers.

The computer and electronic resources belong to Northside Catholic Academy.

Students must not:

- vandalize or abuse the equipment, the software or any data or information therein
- engage in behavior that falls outside educational uses for technology as dictated by the staff/volunteer at the time or those included in this handbook
- Copy directly from sources online without giving a proper citation of the source

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Use of A.I. in completing school assignments is prohibited in all circumstances. Technology is a tool to extend student thinking, not replace it; therefore, the use of AI is never acceptable.

When using the internet at NCA, students must follow the rules given by the school and staff/volunteer. This includes misusing the technology by downloading or opening apps not approved by the staff/volunteer at the time as well as visiting websites that are inappropriate (ie social media, porn sites, gambling sites, etc.) Actions that violate the misuse of technology will have immediate consequences.

All violations will require the staff/volunteer at the time of the incident to report such incidents to the student's parents and administration. Depending on the nature of the violation, a student may have their access to technology immediately revoked or limited. Students may also find themselves liable to a suspension and- depending on the severity of the violation- expulsion from NCA.

Technology Use Outside of School

Parents/guardians are primarily responsible for the student's appropriate and ethical use of personal technology outside of school. NCA students represent our community and engage with each other outside school hours on their personal devices. Any reported illicit online behavior of students will be investigated to the best of our ability- this includes bullying and harassment. The inappropriate use of technology outside of school may subject the student to disciplinary action, including 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 incidents 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.

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. The only contact teachers should have with students is through school email or digital educational programs.

Cellular Phones/Text Messaging

We discourage students from bringing phones to school. If phones are brought to school, they must be turned off and placed in the student's backpack or locked in the school office. . **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, during field trips, or during Extended Care.**

Cell phones will be taken from students who violate this rule and a parent will need to come pick up the phone from the principal. The student will serve two days of lunch detention.

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 or SMART watches.

Email

All NCA students in grades 4-8 will be issued a school email account through which they can access Google Classroom and collaborate with each other and our teaching staff.

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Contact with students by teachers

In the event students are contacted directly by teachers, parents must be copied on the content of all messages. 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.

Contact with students will be conducted through Gmail or through Google Classroom.

It is not appropriate for teachers to contact students via phone, text, or through social media or other mediums of communication. Only official Archdiocesan or school accounts should be used for communication between NCA faculty, students, and families.

Please notify our administrators if such contact is occurring/has occurred.

WEAPONS AND FIREARMS

Students shall not carry, possess, or use weapons or firearms in school, or on school premises. Weapons are any object that can cause bodily harm. Firearms are defined as a weapon from which a shot is discharged by gunpowder. Any student who brings a weapon to school, or who fashions and uses a weapon at school will be subject to immediate suspension with the possibility of expulsion depending on the severity of the situation. Any student who brings a firearm to school will be immediately expelled from NCA.

COMMUNICATION

We try to keep families well informed about the school and your children. On Tuesday, we email out our NCA newsletter that contains information about upcoming events and volunteer opportunities. All classroom teachers send out a Weekly Newsletter or email to all parents informing them of classroom happenings. We also send home flyers with the youngest child of each family. Families are expected to access our various methods of communication. Parents are expected to keep their contact information up to date in our SIS, FACTS and to check their email at least weekly for school communications.

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.

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.

The principal is willing and able to discuss any concerns. However, you must first discuss your concerns with the teacher involved.

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, email or written note, to discuss your concerns. You may leave a message with the front office if you are unable to reach the teacher. 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 or video conference with the teacher. Discuss the issue from your

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perspective and be open to the other view as well. Work toward understanding and resolving any conflict. Faculty members are given 24 hours to give a first response and are not expected to respond to emails over the weekend or on days off.

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. 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 Director of School Operations 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 school community, unless a parent or guardian requests on FACTS Family Portal 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.

E-LEARNING/REMOTE LEARNING DAYS

We believe deeply that the best learning takes place in person, in the classroom. Therefore, we move to e-learning only when absolutely necessary, such as the weather conditions do not allow for a sufficient number of staff members to travel to school safely. In the event of an e-learning day, the following points outline our general plan.

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

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- Refer to classroom / teacher guidelines.
- Confirm student passwords needed for any on-line learning programs
- Confirm your child's teacher contact information

During Remote Learning Day:

- Check your email and/or your child's teacher's page on SeeSaw or Google Classroom for assignments and directions for the day at the time announced previously
- 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 the FACTS Family Portal. 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, a message will be sent out via Parent Alert to notify families of the emergency. Notification will be sent to phone numbers, e-mails, and as text messages depending on the emergency notification information that has been turned in to the school office. We will also post on all our social media accounts and on our website. **PLEASE BE CERTAIN TO KEEP YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION CURRENT AT ALL TIMES!!**

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

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.

Morning: 6:30 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.

Afternoon: 3:10 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

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

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When school is dismissed for an early release day due to a teacher institute, faculty meeting, or holiday, The 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.

ENROLLMENT AGREEMENT

Agreement to the NCA Partnership

Enrollment at Northside Catholic Academy represents a commitment by the family to partner with the school in providing the best possible educational experience for their child. This partnership requires open communication, mutual respect, cooperation, and a shared commitment to the academic, spiritual, social, and personal growth of the student.

By enrolling a student at Northside Catholic Academy, parents/guardians acknowledge and agree to:

- Support the mission, Catholic identity, and values of Northside Catholic Academy.
- Partner with teachers, administrators, and staff in the education and formation of their child.
- Abide by all policies, procedures, rules, and expectations contained in the **NCA Family Handbook**, including any policies or procedures subsequently adopted or amended by the school.
- Abide by applicable policies, regulations, and procedures established by the **Archdiocese of Chicago and its Office of Catholic Schools**.
- Support and abide by NCA's **academic programs and expectations**, recognizing that the school determines the educational program, curriculum, instructional practices, and academic requirements appropriate for its students.
- Support and abide by NCA's **discipline policies and procedures**, including the school's approach to student behavior, consequences, restorative practices, and other disciplinary measures.
- Abide by the **NCA Codes of Conduct**, including the Code of Conduct for Parents/Guardians, and conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the values and mission of a Catholic school.
- Communicate with faculty, staff, and administration respectfully and follow the school's established procedures for addressing questions, concerns, and grievances.
- Fulfill all financial and other obligations associated with enrollment, including those outlined in the Enrollment Agreement, tuition policies, and other school communications.

Enrollment at NCA is therefore understood to constitute the family's agreement to **partner in good faith with the school and to abide by the policies, procedures, academic programs, discipline policies, and codes of conduct of Northside Catholic Academy and the Archdiocese of Chicago**.

Northside Catholic Academy reserves the right to determine whether a student or family is able to remain a member of the school community when conduct, failure to meet school obligations, or other circumstances are inconsistent with the mission, policies, procedures, or expectations of the school.

Continuous Enrollment

Beginning with the 2026–2027 school year, Northside Catholic Academy has moved to a **continuous enrollment model**. Continuous enrollment means that once a student is enrolled at NCA, the student will remain enrolled for subsequent school years unless the family notifies the school that the student will not return. It is the parent / guardian obligation to update on our FACTS Family Portal any information regarding address, email, phone, emergency and medical information.

Families who do not intend to return to Northside Catholic Academy for the following school year must notify the school **in writing no later than March 1**. Families who fail to notify the school by March 1 will be

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responsible for the **nonrefundable enrollment fee**, which will be charged to the family's FACTS account.

Families who decide to leave Northside Catholic Academy during the summer must notify the school as soon as possible. **If a student is not officially unenrolled prior to August 1, the family will be responsible for August tuition.**

FIELD TRIPS

At NCA, we consider field trips to be an integral part of a child's education, helping students relate what is being learned in the classroom to the "outside world". All teachers are required to incorporate field trips into their curriculum.

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.

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 trips.

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, or if a child is excluded by the principal for the field trip, alternate plans for the day will be approved by the principal.

All NCA students are assessed a Field Trip fee to help cover the cost of these important educational experiences.

FUNDRAISING

It is assumed that all NCA families will actively support fundraising efforts to benefit the school. Our primary fundraisers are 1. The Annual Fund which goes to operating expenses; 2. The Fun Run, which goes to enhanced programming or to physical updates of the facilities; 3. The Soiree, which goes to financial aid scholarships.

Watch your child's take-home folder, our weekly newsletter, and the FACTS Family Portal for information regarding upcoming fundraising opportunities. Parents are encouraged to earn Service Hours by helping with NCA fundraisers.

GOVERNANCE AND STATE REQUIREMENTS

Northside Catholic Academy operates under the auspices of the Archdiocese of Chicago. Therefore, Northside Catholic Academy adopts all policies outlined 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 school's operation but may not be contrary to the policies and procedures established by the Chicago Archdiocese.

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

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academic requirements.

Diplomas will be awarded to those students who have:

- Completed the academic requirements in accordance with the Office of Catholic Schools policies.

- 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.

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 homeroom teacher, gym teacher, and others who may need to see it.

To maintain good health, children need fresh air and exercise. Classes will go outside when windchill temperatures are 15 degrees or warmer. .

Unless a doctor's note requesting otherwise has been submitted, every child will go outside with the class. Students should be sent to school with the appropriate outdoor clothing for recess.

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 to be 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/guardian must come in and administer the medication.

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 or viruses (ie: 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 they may watch for symptoms in their children. Do not send your child to school until medication has been used for these conditions and your child is no longer contagious. When children are home due to chicken pox,

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please keep them there until at least 2 days after fresh spots appear.

Also, if your child has a fever, diarrhea, or is vomiting, he/she should be at home until fever-free and symptom-free for 24 hours. There are no exceptions to this rule.

Administration of Medical Cannabis:

Students are not to be permitted to use or possess medical cannabis infused products in our schools except in accordance with the law and school policy. If the parent/guardian of a Northside Catholic Academy student demonstrates that his/her son or daughter is a "registered qualifying patient," has an individual who is a "registered designated caregiver," and both of whom hold medical cannabis registry identification cards, the parent/guardian or registered designated caregiver must be permitted to administer a medical cannabis infused product to the student (in a non-smoking / non-vaping form) at school. The school will not deny a student attendance solely because he or she requires administration of medical cannabis during school hours.

A parent or guardian or other individual may not administer a medical cannabis product in a manner that, in the opinion of the school, would create a disruption to the school's educational environment or would cause exposure of the product to other students.

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 will 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). Emergency medical services (911) will be contacted immediately regardless of the continuance of symptoms.

Parent/guardian will be contacted to inform them of the student's reaction.

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. The school will also keep extra inhalers for emergency administration in the office and in the first aid kits that are brought out to recess and on field trips.

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:

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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.

Supply of Undesignated Opioid Antagonists Policy

In accordance with applicable State law, the School will make all reasonable efforts to maintain a supply of undesignated prescribed opioid antagonists in the name of the School and provide or administer them as necessary according to State law.

To the extent the School is able to maintain a supply of undesignated opioid antagonists, they will generally be available during:

school hours: 8:00 a.m. -3:10 p.m.

after-school hours: 3:10 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

maintained in the following designated secure locations:

However, no one should rely on the School for the availability of opioid antagonists. This Policy does not guarantee the availability of undesignated opioid antagonists.

An opioid antagonist is defined as a drug that binds to opioid receptors and blocks or inhibits the effect of opioids acting on those receptors, including, but not limited to, naloxone hydrochloride or any other similarly acting drug approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

A school nurse or trained personnel, as defined in State law, may administer an undesignated opioid antagonist to any person that they, in good faith, believe is having an opioid overdose while in school,

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while at a school-sponsored activity, while under the supervision of school personnel, or before or after normal school activities. The School shall maintain a list of trained personnel. Prior to the administration of an undesignated opioid antagonist, trained personnel must submit to the School's administration proof of completion of a training curriculum to recognize and respond to an opioid overdose.

Upon any administration of an undesignated opioid antagonist, the School must immediately notify the student's parents or guardian or emergency contact.

Within 24 hours after the administration of an opioid antagonist, the School must notify the health care provider who provided the prescription for the opioid antagonist of its use.

Within three days after the administration of an opioid antagonist, the School must report the required information to the Illinois State Board of Education.

The Catholic Bishop of Chicago, an Illinois corporation sole, the School, their employees and agents are to incur no liability or professional discipline, except for willful and wanton conduct, as a result of any injury arising from the administration of an opioid antagonist, regardless of whether authorization was given by the student's parents or guardians or by the student's physician, physician's assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse. A student's parent(s) or guardian(s) must indemnify and hold harmless the Catholic Bishop of Chicago, an Illinois corporation sole, the School and their employees and agents against any claims, except a claim based on willful and wanton conduct, arising out of the administration of an opioid antagonist, regardless of whether authorization was given.

The parents or guardians of the student must sign a statement acknowledging that the School and its employees and agents are to incur no liability, except for willful and wanton conduct, as a result of any injury arising from the administration of opioid antagonists, regardless of whether authorization was given by the student's parents or guardians or by the student's physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse, and that the parents or guardians must indemnify and hold harmless the School and its employees and agents against any claims, except a claim based on willful and wanton conduct, arising out of the administration of an opioid antagonist, regardless of whether authorization was given.

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.

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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 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.

MENTAL HEALTH PROTOCOL AND ASSESSMENTS

Northside Catholic Academy takes all indications of self-harm, suicidal thoughts and other significant mental health concerns seriously. When there is a threat to others, the school's discipline policy will be followed. /When we have concerns about a student's emotional well-being, we will ask for the student to receive a mental health assessment from a licensed mental health professional (licensed clinical professional counselor, licensed clinical social worker, licensed psychologist or licensed psychiatrist) prior to the continuation of academics and cocurricular activities at Northside Catholic Academy.

Below are the steps parents/guardians follow when a student displays a threat of harm to themselves or others:

1. Require the child undergo a crisis mental health assessment in the community by a licensed mental health professional as soon as possible. The school can help provide referrals to clinicians, agencies, hospitals and services who may be able to assess the student.
2. Parents/guardians are expected to follow the recommendations provided by the clinician, which may include outpatient therapy, partial or inpatient hospitalization, and/or medication management.
3. Parents/guardians are expected to sign a consent for release of information, and arrange for the clinician to share the recommended treatment plan with the school to determine the student's reentry.
4. The school will treat information received from the student/family/treating medical provider confidentially.
5. All documentation should be faxed or emailed to the attention of the principal or school designee.

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Post-Assessment Follow-Up

1. If the assessment and recommended treatment plan result in an immediate return to school, please see step 3.
2. If the assessment results in a recommended extended absence, defined as more than five days (or as designated by the school), the parent/guardian should contact the school principal or designee to communicate the preliminary treatment plan as outlined by the treating clinician. The principal or designee will communicate with any treatment facility and school faculty to collaborate on the therapeutic and academic needs for the student. The principal or designee will coordinate the provision of necessary information for the student's return to school in a sensitive and confidential manner. The principal or designee should utilize the assessment information to determine whether the school has the resources available to meet the child's needs and if it is able to do so, to begin drafting the student support plan that will be finalized at the reentry meeting.
3. Reentry back to Northside Catholic Academy for academics and cocurricular activities requires the following written statements from the evaluating clinician, which can be shared via fax or email to the principal and/or designee:
 - a. Evaluation date and crisis mental health assessment results, including a statement indicating the provider is informed of the reason for the assessment (e.g. suicidal ideation, threat to others.)
 - b. Safety statement: The student is not a risk of self-harm or harming others, and it is appropriate for the student to return to Northside Catholic Academy.
4. Upon receipt of documentation the principal or designee will review the documentation of assessment and any relevant treatment plans to determine if the school has the resources to provide a safe learning environment for the student based on their demonstrated needs. If additional information is needed to make this determination, the school will obtain such information from the treating mental health professional.
5. If the school determines it has sufficient resources to support student, schedule a meeting to discuss the student's potential return.
 - a. The purpose of this meeting is to review the recommendations from the assessment and treatment plan and to inform the family whether it has the resources to meet their child's needs. If it does, a draft student safety plan will be shared with the family. If necessary, this plan will include a plan to make up missing homework, tests, and other academic supports. The school may, but is not required to, revise this plan based on information presented by the parents during the meeting. The parents/guardians must indicate their approval with the plan by signing it and committing to implementing the plan as a condition of continued enrollment. If the parents/guardians agree with the school's student safety plan, a date will be scheduled for the child's return to school. If the school does not have the resources to meet the child's needs, the child will be excluded for such reason.
 - b. Once all aspects of the reentry meeting are accomplished and meet expectations, the student will be authorized to return to classes and cocurricular activities.
6. Following the child's return to school, the principal or designee will schedule a meeting to review the student support plan and determine what, if any, changes are necessary.

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 books overdue.

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

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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.

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 identify 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 NCA 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

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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)
- 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.

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 participate 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 complete Photo/Academic Permission Form on FACTS SIS during Enrollment/Reenrollment. If you wish to change your permission after submission to FACTS, please contact the Front Office or the Marketing Director. 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.

FACTS SIS

It is the responsibility of the parent and child to check FACTS on a regular basis to remain current on absences, tardies, and grades that are posted by the classroom teachers and that their contact information is up to date.

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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 TM before beginning your work with children in the school: Online at www.archchicago.org- Scroll to the *Protecting Children* button and select *Virtus* TM. NOTE: All participants must pre-register online to attend this one time, 3 hour training. The Virtus TMM 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 TM training in another diocese, call 888-847- 8870 and ask that your Virtus TM registration be transferred to the Archdiocese of Chicago. Give the principal a copy of your Virtus TM 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.

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.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The 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. Sexual harassment by one employee of another, by an employee of a student, by a student of an employee, or by one student of another student is unacceptable conduct. Employees or students who engage in any type of sexual harassment will be subject to appropriate discipline, including suspension, expulsion or termination. Retaliation in any form against an employee or student who exercises his or her right to make a complaint under this policy is strictly prohibited and will itself be cause for appropriate disciplinary action. Any student or employee, who knowingly makes false charges against an employee or student in an attempt to demean, harass, abuse or embarrass that individual shall be subject to the sanctions set forth above.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT and LEADERSHIP

Students have the opportunity to participate in student government. Heads of Houses, chosen by teachers and staff each year, will head up the student government, with other officers being chosen by classmates.

The purpose of the existence of student government is to represent, and to be responsive, to the needs of all students, and to build leadership skills in our middle school students. Students will meet weekly during lunch.

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.

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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, a 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.

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. Note that the tuition agreement requires 30 days notice before withdrawing from the school. Families will be responsible for any tuition payments that fall within those 30 days.

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.

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TUITION POLICY

Tuition is paid from August through May directly to FACTS Tuition through an automatic debiting program. We are aware that tuition can be a financial burden, but we must meet our payroll each month. Families are responsible for any late fees incurred through the platform.

If you are experiencing a serious financial crisis, please contact the principal or the business manager. End of year events and celebrations may 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 when a tuition payment is 45 days or more late. 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 at another school, NCA will not accept the family to enroll until tuition obligations have been fulfilled to the previous school. Note: Exclusion days may be applied for delinquent accounts of other fees, including Extended Care and Summer Camp.

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 various scholarship funds noted below.

NCA Guardian Angel Scholarship is funded through proceeds from our Annual Fund, interest from our invested endowment, and discrete gifts from individuals. Eligibility and amounts are determined through application through FACTS financial aid. Money is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis and may run out.

Catholic Schools Scholarship is funded through donations to the Office of Catholic Schools. NCA is awarded a limited amount each year which is distributed to select families completing the FACTS financial aid application by March 15.

Mike Cannon Scholarship is an endowed scholarship funded by families and friends of NCA in memory of our long-time bus driver. This award of \$1,500 per year is awarded to a student with financial need who is hard working, kind, and a good friend. The principal decides the award-winner based on recommendations from faculty and staff.

Trubiano-Torsney Scholarship is funded by an anonymous NCA family to pay the full tuition of a student whose family circumstances have changed since their initial enrollment in NCA. The scholarship covers all the remaining years of the student's time at NCA. This scholarship opens periodically and families must complete an application. The recipient is awarded by a committee that reads the applications anonymously.

Big Shoulders Scholarships are funded through donations to the Big Shoulders Foundation of Chicago and are awarded at the request of the Principal and paid directly to the school. These scholarships allow the school to discount tuition for those in most serious need. Families do not directly receive this money.

Enrollment Agreement

As part of the registration process, each family is asked to sign electronically an enrollment agreement, which outlines the policies regarding payment of tuition, late fees, checks returned for insufficient funds, fundraising requirements, etc. Registration fees for the coming year are non-refundable after March 1. If a

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family plans to change their enrollment status, NCA administration must be notified 30 days in advance before the next month's tuition is due. Families who dis-enroll after August 1 of the school year will owe the first month's tuition.

VOLUNTEERS

All NCA families are required to give 20 hours of time to the school through Service Hours. You are not limited to 20 hours. There are many ways parents can volunteer and play a significant role at NCA. However, if a family does not fulfill their 20 hours of service, the family will be billed \$25 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 \$25 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 your responsibility to contact the chair in order to not be billed the \$25.

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

*Room Parent *Library Aide *Athletic Coach * NCA Parent Organization

*Chaperone for field trips *Decorate gym for NCAPO dances * Work concessions stands *Help out at the Back to School Bash or Field Day *School Advisory Board * School Advisory Board Committees

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.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT REQUIREMENTS: 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 ANY volunteer service (or employment) begins. Northside Catholic Academy's administration takes our responsibility to protect our children seriously and works closely with the Office for the Protection of Youth and Children (OPCY) to ensure that we are following their guidelines and procedures.

Parents and guardians shall complete the Safe Environment Requirements well before participating as a volunteer in the school as a chaperone, coach, tutor, or in any other capacity with students. Three deadlines (one for each trimester) to be VIRTUS compliant will be shared widely with the school community. Volunteers who are not compliant by a given deadline will not be allowed to volunteer during that trimester in capacities where students are present. They will have the opportunity to become compliant for the next trimester.

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
- **Archdiocesan Standards of Behavior for Working with Youth and Children:** read, signed, dated and given to the principal annually. .
- **VIRTUS/PROTECTING GOD'S CHILDREN FOR ADULTS TM before beginning a volunteer position in the school.** All adults over age 18 must register online to attend this one time, 3 hour training. Training needs to be renewed every 3 years.

Note that some requirements are annual: CANTS 689 and the Standards of Behavior for Working with Youth and Children. The VIRTUS training needs to be renewed every three years.

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Once registered in the system, VIRTUS will send email reminders to update training and other requirements. It is the volunteer's responsibility, and not the responsibility of the school staff, to keep up to date on these requirements.

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 FACTS Family Portal.