



PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

2023-2024

AQUINAS ACADEMY

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My Dear Aquinas Academy Family,

***“What greater work is there than training the mind and forming the habits of the young?”
St. John Chrysostom***

Welcome to Aquinas Academy! In choosing Aquinas Academy, you have demonstrated a commitment to the values and philosophy of a Catholic education.

The Parent/Student Handbook reflects the policies of Aquinas Academy for the 2023-2024 school year. Please read this document carefully and sign the attached agreement. This agreement states that you intend to abide by the policies of Aquinas Academy during the 2023-2024 school year.

The faculty and staff of Aquinas Academy look forward to working with you to promote academic excellence and spiritual development in the context of the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Together let us pray that God, who has begun this good work in us, may carry it through to completion.

Throughout this document, policy of the Diocese of Greensburg is referenced and has been adopted by Aquinas Academy.

Blessings,

Kelly Watkins
Principal

Aquinas Academy

HISTORY

Aquinas Academy is a consolidated Catholic school begun in 1995 and sponsored by the Greensburg parishes of Blessed Sacrament Cathedral, Our Lady of Grace, St. Bruno, and The Church of St. Paul. The primary purpose of Aquinas Academy is to continue the faith-filled legacy of the merging schools in order to form the students in the values of Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Catholic Church.

The Principals who have served at Aquinas Academy are:

Sr. Brycelyn Eyler, SC	1995-2007
Mrs. Cherie Rullo	2007-December 2010
Mrs. Kelly Lazzara	January 2011 (Acting Principal)
Mr. Scott A. Manns	2011-October 2014
Mrs. Kathy Poole	October-December 2014 (Acting Principal)
Dr. Eugene M. Dangelo	December 2014-June 2016
Mr. Joseph J Rice	2016-2021
Ms. Kelly Watkins	2021-Present

Today, Aquinas Academy is a regional Catholic school comprised of the parishes of Blessed Sacrament Cathedral, Our Lady of Grace, St. Bruno, St. Paul, Ascension, Sacred Heart, and Holy Cross. From humble beginnings as St. Benedict's Catholic School until today as Aquinas Academy, the school has had the same goal of teaching students a strong academic curriculum rooted in the Catholic faith, seeing Christ in others, and being Christ for all.

Aquinas Academy

Founded in 1995

A Catholic School of the Diocese of Greensburg

Mission Statement

Aquinas Academy provides students with a Catholic learning environment that nurtures their spiritual, academic, and physical growth. Students are challenged to achieve academic mastery within a community grounded in the Gospel values and the Catholic tradition of discipleship, service, family, church, and community.

PHILOSOPHY

It is the philosophy of Aquinas Academy that we believe the following:

- Our school environment is centered on the Gospel and based on the values of our Catholic faith through Jesus Christ.
- That we are all members of the Family of God, that the Parish is integral to that Family, and that the school's program is an extension of parish life in educating and reinforcing the Family of God.
- That we exist to assist and support parents/guardians and guardians as first teachers and guides in the formation of their children as they experience "the journey of a lifetime."
- That Catholic education fulfills its academic purpose while simultaneously promoting a disposition to service, passion for justice, and commitment to God and the Church in faith through Jesus Christ.
- That we respect and recognize the individuality of each student as a gift from God. It is our purpose to guide each student to this realization.

ACCREDITATION

Aquinas Academy is accredited through the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

The curriculum of the Diocese of Greensburg is a living document, which is continually updated and reviewed. Our rigorous curriculum is infused with the Catholic faith and aligned with Pennsylvania state and national standards. Parents/guardians may receive a copy by contacting the school office.

ACADEMIC PLAN

A student whose academic performance indicates serious deficiencies may be placed on an academic improvement plan. The plan will be developed with support of the parents/guardians, teachers, and administration. The plan will be reviewed periodically during the grading period.

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to outline the acceptable use of computer equipment and systems at the diocese. These rules are in place to protect the employees and the organization. Inappropriate use exposes all of us to risks including virus attacks, compromise of network systems and services, and legal issues.

The Diocese of Greensburg Office of Catholic Schools has developed General Technology and Internet Policies to guide schools in enforcing appropriate use of available technology. The purposes of these policies are to ensure the equitable and optimal use of all technology-related equipment at the schools and to encourage the use of technology as a valuable learning tool. It is the policy of the Diocese of Greensburg Office of Catholic Schools to maintain an environment that promotes ethical and responsible technology use. It shall be a violation of this policy for any student, employee or guest to engage in any activity that does not conform to the established purpose and general rules set forth in this policy.

ACCIDENTS AND INJURY

In case of an emergency concerning the health of a student, the school nurse and/or school principal or designee shall be immediately notified. The school nurse shall be primarily responsible for rendering medical assistance. If the parents/guardians or person designated on the student's emergency card cannot be timely reached, the school nurse or school principal or designee shall decide whether hospitalization or further treatment at a medical facility is necessary.

The school office will maintain a Family Emergency/Illness Card for each student. The Family Emergency/Illness Card will be sent home in the first family envelope. It should be printed neatly and returned to school within the first three days of school. It is important for your child's safety and comfort, as well as the effective operation of the office that emergency information needed to locate parents/guardians are available for each child and that this information is kept up to date by parents/guardians.

In the case of illness during school hours, the principal or designee may send a child home after a parent/guardian has been notified and transportation arrangements have been made. Children are not permitted to call their parents/guardians or dismiss themselves. A parent/guardian must pick up the child in the school office and sign him/her out.

Parents/guardians of children who have any type of physical disorder should contact the principal, school nurse, or teachers to make them aware of the problem. All cases of head lice should be reported to the school office at once.

ADMISSION INFORMATION

In order to ensure equal educational opportunities in all Catholic educational programs, particularly schools of the Diocese of Greensburg, the following uniform guidelines are to be used in the formulation of admission policies:

- Catholic schools, having been established and maintained out of the contributions and personal sacrifices of the Catholic citizenry, may justly give preference in admissions to Catholic children. This principle not only accords with justice but constitutes a proper accommodation to religious conscience.
- All applicants must file with the school the admission application, and when accepted, the registration materials.
- Non-Catholic students shall be admitted to a Catholic school as school circumstances permit.
- Non-Catholic school students attending a Catholic school shall be expected to attend religious activities during the school day but cannot participate in the sacraments of the Catholic Church.
- Priority in admissions shall be: Parishioners, Catholic non-parishioners, and non-Catholics.
- Children of any race, color, handicap, or national origin are eligible for admission to any Catholic school. Children of any religion are likewise eligible for admission to any Catholic school subject to the rights of Catholic children stated above.
- No Catholic school should accept students whose parents/guardians seek to have them admitted in order to avoid racial integration or to avoid situations involving racial tension.
- The legal name of the student shall be used on school records and documents which are deemed official. Changes in the child's name cannot be affected by an act of the parents/guardians but must be authorized only through official court documents. Custody

arrangements or a change in the marital status of the parents/guardians has no bearing whatsoever on the legal name of the child. Requests by the parents/guardians to have the child called by a name other than the legal surname or to have that name placed on official school papers cannot be considered.

- Parents/guardians should be advised that they must accompany the child to school for the purpose of registration and verification of residency.
- On the date of registration to formal schooling, normally kindergarten, the following documents must be presented prior to admittance:
 - Birth certificate (Original and a copy will be made in the office)
 - Immunization record
 - If living with a guardian, residency and responsibility papers are needed, plus a conference with the home and school visitor for verification of residence.

When a student transfers to a diocesan school, a certified copy of the student's disciplinary record shall be obtained from the school from which the student is transferring. This record shall be maintained as part of the student's disciplinary record and shall be available for inspection as required by law.

Upon registration and prior to admission to the school, the parents/guardians, or person having control or charge of the student shall provide a sworn statement or affirmation stating whether the student previously was suspended or expelled from any public or private school of the Commonwealth or any other state for an offense involving weapons, alcohol, or drugs; for the willful infliction of injury to another person; or for any act of violence committed on school property.

Parents/guardians shall be informed that any willful false statements concerning this registration shall be a misdemeanor of the third degree. This registration statement shall be maintained as part of the student's disciplinary record.

A Memorandum of Understanding must be signed by parents/guardians prior to admission and at the beginning of each school year. This Memorandum of Understanding pledges support for the Catholic identity and mission of the school and holds parents/guardians accountable for following the principles and policies of the school and the Catholic faith.

All admissions are subject to a 45-day trial period. Full admittance is at the discretion of the principal. The principal has permission to revoke the admission of a student at any time during their 45-day trial.

The following documents are needed for admission:

Preschool through Grade Six

- Application for Admission
- Registration Form and Fee
- Home Language Survey
- Memorandum of Understanding
- Sworn Statement of Prior Conduct
- Parent Permission to Request and/or Release School Records (if applicable)
- Tuition Payment Agreement
- Original Birth Certificate (a copy will be made in the office)
- Immunization Records
- Residency and Responsibility Papers (if living with a guardian)

- Copy of Disciplinary Records from Previous School
- Family Survey

The following documents are needed yearly:

- Re-Registration Form
- Family Survey
- Memorandum of Understanding
- Tuition Payment Agreement
- FACTS Agreement entered into the system

Kindergarten

Any child who reaches the age of five (5) by October 1 of the current school year, may be admitted to kindergarten unless there is evidence that the child is not ready to begin.

First Grade

Any child who reaches the age of six (6) by October 1 of the current school year, may be admitted to the first grade unless there is evidence that the child is not ready to begin.

Other Grades

Students who have attended another school and wish to transfer to a school in the Diocese of Greensburg will be accepted and placed according to their previous school records. The final placement decision rests with the school principal.

Students with Disabilities

The Catholic schools in the Diocese of Greensburg desire to be as inclusive as possible in welcoming all students for whom they can provide an appropriate program.

Steps taken when a student with disabilities wishes to attend a Catholic school:

- The principal must review all previous school records (academic, social, medical, etc.).
- The principal interviews the parents/guardians(s) and the child to assess the child's potential for success in the school environment.
- The principal consults with other knowledgeable persons to determine whether the school is an appropriate placement for the child.
- If the principal determines the school is an appropriate placement, the parents/guardians are notified, and they can fill out an Application for Admission Form.

During Public School Strikes

During a strike or shutdown in the public school district, parents/guardians with children attending such a public school may submit an application for admission for their children.

If the application is approved according to the admissions policy of the Diocese of Greensburg and the standards set forth by school administration, the children are admitted to the school. In most cases, all financial aid will have already been distributed, so the availability of financial aid is extremely limited. Parents/guardians are required to pay two months of tuition in advance before students will be admitted.

ADVISORY COUNCIL

The School Advisory Council is made up of members (both parents/guardians and parishioners) appointed by the Bishop to serve the school along with the school Principal and Board of Trust Administrators. This council is to enhance our ability to market the school, increase the school enrollment, provide support for the school's development functions, and assist with the school's financial planning.

ALLERGY POLICY

Aquinas Academy recognizes that life-threatening food allergies are an important condition affecting many school children and positively welcomes all students with food allergies. In order to minimize the incidence of life-threatening allergic reactions, Aquinas Academy will maintain a system-wide procedure for addressing life threatening allergic reactions and maintain an Emergency Action Plan for any student(s) whose parents/guardians and physicians have informed the school in writing that the student(s) has a potentially life-threatening allergy.

ATHLETIC PROGRAM/EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Aquinas Academy Athletic Program provides extra-curricular activities for students to participate at a competitive level under the Diocesan CYO guidelines and W.P.I.A.L. Middle School through Greensburg Central Catholic. The student will be expected to maintain acceptable academic achievement in relationship to his/her ability. The student will be expected to maintain standard behavior throughout the school day. Serious offenses, as described in this handbook will be handled on an individual basis at the discretion of the principal. Any student absent from school on a particular day may not attend practice or play in a game that day. Parents/guardians will be contacted if students do not meet the above expectations. Aquinas Academy will follow all diocesan and W.P.I.A.L. policies pertaining to the athletic program.

ATHLETIC PROGRAMS OFFERED

Fall -	Diocesan Girls Basketball: Grades 3–6 Diocesan Cross Country: Grades K-6 Diocesan Coed Flag Football: Grades K-6
Winter -	Diocesan Boys Basketball: Grades 3–6 Diocesan Cheerleading: Grades K-6
Spring -	Diocesan Girls Volleyball: Grades 4-6 Diocesan Soccer: Grades 3-6

ATTENDANCE

The Office of Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Greensburg requires that school aged students enrolled in the schools of the diocese attend school regularly in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The educational program offered by the diocese is predicated upon the presence of the student and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation.

Our philosophy is one that stresses to teachers, students, and parents/guardians the importance of regular school attendance. It is the Diocese of Greensburg, Office of Catholic Schools' belief that only through regular school attendance can a student progress academically at a successful rate. Furthermore, since attendance is part of a student's cumulative record, it is important that good school attendance habits be established for later years when students seek employment. When employers seek reference materials on past students who are prospective employees, attendance information is requested on a high-priority basis. A good record of attendance and punctuality is an excellent recommendation for future school and career endeavors.

In addition, the Office of Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Greensburg recognizes that a strong relationship exists between good school attendance and academic achievement. The learning experiences that occur in the classroom environment are the most meaningful and essential components of the instructional process. Class absences disrupt instructional continuity and decrease direct teacher-student contact time. Absences limit opportunities for classroom interaction and direct participation with teacher and student.

Therefore, it is the underlying purpose of this policy to:

- Provide an educational program, predicated upon the presence of the student, which requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation.
- Help students develop a sense of responsibility, discipline, and good work habits.
- Maintain close communication and cooperation between home and school to encourage and sustain regular school attendance.
- Improve students' opportunities for academic and social accomplishment.

School Responsibility

In order to meet their responsibility for maintaining attendance records and accounting for absences, the principal and her/his staff will be responsible for the following procedures:

- Keeping an accurate record of all students assigned at the beginning of the school year, new entrants, withdrawals, and reentries.
- Ensuring a school session which conforms to the State Board of Regulations.
- Daily recording and reporting of absences by homeroom and/or class period.
- Maintaining cumulative records of each student's absences.
- Informing parents/guardians of students' absences. The principal or her/his designee shall report student absences at ten-day (10) cumulative periods to parents/guardians by phone contact or written notification.
- Issuing written notice to a parent/guardian who fails to comply with the compulsory attendance statute that such infraction of the law will be prosecuted.
- Identifying and counseling students with irregular attendance patterns.
- Ensuring that students returning from an absence have an opportunity to make up the work they missed.
- Making provisions for accumulation of class cuts or excessive tardiness into equivalent days of absence.
- Taking disciplinary measures in cases of excessive tardiness and absences from school or class.
- Developing a positive incentive program appropriate to student age and maturity levels to foster a positive attitude toward school attendance.

Parents/Guardians Responsibility

The Compulsory Attendance holds parents/guardians legally responsible for the regular school attendance of their child. In addition to the legal ramifications, the Office of Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Greensburg recognizes that parental attitude is a factor which influences the regularity of school attendance. As part of their responsibility, parents/guardians are expected to provide the school with a written excuse for their child's absence. After five (5) days of continuous absence or after 15 days of cumulative absence, the principal or her/his designee may require the parents/guardians to verify the student's illness by a written statement from a physician for the purpose of issuing an excused temporary absence.

Student Responsibility

Students are expected to report to school each day on time. In the event of an absence, the student must bring an excuse from their parents/guardians upon returning to school the first day after an absence. All excuses from parents/guardians concerning absences or tardiness should contain the following information:

- Date note is written
- Name and grade of the student
- Date of absence or tardiness
- Reason for absence or tardiness
- Signature of parent/guardian

The student is responsible for making up all assignments and tests missed during an absence from school. The student is normally permitted one day for each day missed to make up any work missed. It is the student's responsibility to obtain the assignments and return them to the individual teacher within the time designated.

Excusals from Instruction

Certain children may be excused from attendance in accordance with diocesan policy. The following cases of out-of-school instructions are permitted upon the approval of the Superintendent of Catholic Schools.

- Homebound instruction for enrolled students who are temporarily unable to attend school for medical reasons.
- Individualized out-of-school instruction for students unable to attend regularly. Tutoring and programs for exceptional students may be types of individualized instruction.
- Educational, school sponsored experiences held at other sites which are extensions of classroom instruction (i.e., field trips and school sponsored educational travel/study programs).

Students who have received the Superintendent's permission to participate in such programs are considered to be in attendance.

Excused Temporary Absences

The Office of Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Greensburg recognizes several specific reasons for which a child may be excused from school for all or part of a school day. These include:

- Observance of religious holidays.
- Religious Instruction-This is restricted by law to a maximum of 36 hours per school year.
- Educational trips, not school sponsored.

Upon receipt of a written request from the parents/guardians of the students involved, students may be granted excused temporary absences from school to participate in an educational trip during the school term when the trip is determined by the school principal to service an educational purpose. The following conditions must be followed:

- Educational trips will be considered for approval if the school principal determines that such a trip will be of educational significance to the student. In order for the school principal to make such a determination, the parents/guardians shall provide a written request for excusal which shall indicate the days to be missed, the destination of the trip, the reason why the trip could not be taken on days when school is not in session, and an outline of the educational value of the trip.
- The total number of days granted for an educational trip, not school sponsored, will be based upon the student's attendance and academic record.
- Unless some emergency arises, such requests shall be made at least two (2) weeks prior to the date of the trip.
- Unless some unusual family circumstances exist, such trips shall not be approved during the final two (2) weeks of the school term.
- If more than one child in a family will be taking the trip, the request for all the children shall be included in the request made to the school principal.
- Students are granted the privilege of making up all assignments and tests missed during the excused absence. However, the responsibility for making up this work lies with the student. Appointments should be made with the teachers to find out what work is to be made up. The student assumes the responsibility for completing this work within one week after her/his return.
- Health Care: Absence for a portion of the school day may be excused for medical or dental appointments which cannot be arranged after school hours.
- Illness and other urgent reasons: These are the most common reasons for temporary absence from schools. In general, absences for the following reasons should be excused:
 - Illness or recovery from an accident
 - Quarantine of the home
 - Death in the family
 - Court appearance
 - Family emergency (unavoidable)

Unexcused or Unlawful Absences

The Office of Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Greensburg defines an unexcused absence as the absence of a student due to parental neglect, illegal employment, or truancy. Unlawful absences are

unexcused absences for all students under seventeen (17) years of age, the present age in the compulsory attendance age law.

First Offense

A first offense consists of three or more days of absence without lawful excuse.

- Written Notice to Parents/guardians: The school's official notice of absence to parents/guardians shall be served in person or by certified, registered, or regular mail to the parents/guardians' home as soon as a student has three (3) days, or their equivalent, of unlawful absences.

Closing of first offense: The first offense is closed at the end of three calendar days after the serving of the notice or upon the return of the student to school within the three days following the serving of the notice.

Second Offense

After the first offense is closed, the next session during the school year that the student is unlawfully absent becomes a second offense and requires the serving of a warrant on the parents/guardians through the office of a magistrate. The serving of the warrant closes the second offense. Each succeeding session of unlawful absences by the same student becomes another second offense and the same procedure is repeated. The Office of Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Greensburg official notice of absence to parents/guardians is not serviced in second offense cases. The notice served after the first three (3) days of unlawful absence is adequate for the school year.

The following list includes, but is not limited to, examples of unexcused or unlawful absences:

- Truancy
- Parental neglect
- Illegal employment
- Students who run away from home
- Shopping
- Trips not approved in advance

Corrective measures for excessive absence or truancy may include counseling, parental conference, internal or external suspension. When student attendance behavior is not modified by less severe disciplinary measures, repeat offenses can result in enforced withdrawal from a course or expulsion from school.

Early Dismissal

All students are expected to be in school every day for the entire day. A student may be dismissed from school early only with the approval of the principal or her/his designee. Each principal shall set up procedures to validate requests for early dismissal to assure that students are released only for proper reasons and into proper hands. No student may be released into the care of a person who is not known or on the basis of an invalidated telephone call.

Medical and dental appointments during school hours are discouraged. Students of estranged parents/guardians may be released only upon the request of the parents/guardians whom the court holds directly responsible for the child and who is the parent/guardian registered on the school record.

Tardiness

Students are expected to be punctual in reporting to school. Students who arrive late to school are to report to the office with an excuse for their tardiness. Chronic unexcused tardiness may be converted into the equivalent days of unlawful absence. Principals should bring to the attention of the parents/guardians, these cases of frequent tardies to school. All tardies are to be recorded in the student's attendance record.

Compulsory School Age

"Compulsory school age" shall mean the period of a child's life from the time the child enters school, which may be no later than at the age of eight (8) years, until the age of 17 years or graduation from high school, whichever occurs first.

BOARD OF TRUST ADMINISTRATORS

The Board of Trust Administrators is comprised of all, or a subset of the pastors of parishes that are in proximity to an elementary school. The members of the Board of Trust Administrators select one of the members to be the Chairman.

Board members consider the effects of any action upon students, employees, suppliers, families, and parishioners of the Trust and communities in which offices or other establishments of the Trust, or an affiliated Trust are located, and all other pertinent factors.

BUCKLEY ADMENDMENT [FERPA]

Aquinas Academy adheres to the Buckley Amendment (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act) regarding student records and the rights of non-custodial parents. It is the responsibility of the parents to share any official custodial information determined through the courts. Official custodial agreements will be kept in a confidential file in the office of the principal. In the absence of any court document, the school will view each parent as having full legal custody of his/her child. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, non-custodial parents have the right to receive records about their child's academic progress or lack thereof.

A non-custodial parent is that parent who does not have primary custody as determined by a court of law.

BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING

Prohibiting Harassment, Intimidation, Hazing, or Bullying

The Office of Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Greensburg is committed to providing a caring, friendly, safe, and respectful environment for all students, employees, volunteers, and visitors of our schools. A safe, secure, and respectful educational environment is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards and build appropriate relationships with others. Acts of harassment, hazing, intimidation, and bullying (including cyberbullying) are unacceptable behaviors and are prohibited in our schools.

The purpose of this policy is to assist the schools of the Diocese of Greensburg in our goal of preventing and responding to acts of bullying, intimidation, violence, and other similar disruptive behavior.

Administration, faculty, staff, and volunteers are to demonstrate appropriate behavior by treating others with civility and respect, and being aware of and not tolerating harassment, intimidation, hazing, and bullying. If incidents do occur, students should be able to report and know that the inappropriate behavior will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

General Statement of Policy

- An act of harassment, intimidation, hazing or bullying (which collectively shall be referred to in this document as “bullying”) by either an individual student or group of students is expressly prohibited on school property; at a school-sponsored activity or event off school property; on a school bus; on the way to and/or from school; or off school grounds if these actions are intended to and/or do adversely affect the safety and well-being of students while in school (including cyberbullying). This policy applies not only to students who directly engage in such an act but also to students who, by their indirect behavior, condone or support another student’s unacceptable behavior.
- No teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of the schools of the Diocese of Greensburg shall permit, condone, or tolerate such acts.
- Apparent permission or consent by a student being bullied does not lessen the prohibitions contained in this policy.
- Retaliation against a victim, good faith reporter, or a witness of bullying is prohibited.
- The principal (or designee) will act to investigate all complaints of bullying and will discipline or take appropriate action against any individual who is found to have violated this policy.

Definitions

- Bullying involves conduct by a person, including verbal conduct, that creates a hostile educational environment by substantially interfering with a student’s educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, or with a student’s physical or psychological well-being.
- Harassment, hazing, intimidation, and bullying are any acts, words, or other behaviors by an individual or group against another individual or group characterized by:
 - Intent to harm
 - Intensity and duration over a period of time
 - An interpersonal relationship where there is an imbalance of power, not mutual or intentional provocation by the victim
 - Inflicting physical or emotional harm or discomfort or damage to the person’s reputation and/or relationships
 - A level so severe, persistent, or pervasive that an intimidating or threatening educational environment is created or the orderly operation of the school is substantially disrupted.

Bullying can take many forms including but not limited to slurs, rumors, jokes, innuendo, demeaning comments, cartoon drawing, graffiti, pranks, gestures, staring/leering, physical attacks, flashing a weapon, physical restraining, threats, taunting/ridiculing, stalking, malicious teasing, name calling, relationship undermining, social isolation or exclusion, other written, verbal and/or published items including cyberbullying, destroying/damaging property, or other physical actions.

Responsibilities of Administrators, Supervisors, Teachers and Others

To the extent that a person has supervision of other persons, activities and environments, each administrator, principal, teacher, aide, or volunteer shall:

- Have the responsibility for maintaining a workplace, work area, learning area and/or activity area free of harassment, intimidation, hazing, and bullying. Teachers should establish a positive, friendly, and trusting relationship with the class and each individual student. The best results are obtained through a combination of generous verbal praise or other social

reinforcements for positive activities and consistent negative consequences for aggressive, rule-violating behavior.

- Have the responsibility to ensure that all information concerning the policy prohibiting harassment, intimidation, hazing, or bullying is disseminated to all subordinates, to all families, and to all students. This information may be in the form of rules, regulations, orders, procedures, policies, or other written or oral directives. All parties are to be instructed as to the full meaning and application of all such directives.
- Have the responsibility to be particularly alert to possible situations, circumstances, or events that may lead to or constitute bullying and immediately report to his or her immediate supervisor: any actions viewed by him or her which, in his or her opinion, may be construed as falling within the definition of bullying as contained within the policy; and/or any instances, reports or allegations of bullying which come to his or her attention.
- Have the responsibility, upon receiving an allegation of bullying, to complete the Harassment, Intimidation, Hazing, or Bullying Incident School Investigation Form.
- Document incidents in the Diocesan PowerSchool student management system for the purpose of program evaluation and planning, as directed by the Superintendent and the Office of Catholic Schools.

Responsibilities of Students

To the extent that students have influence with other persons, their own words and actions, and school activities and environments, each student shall:

- Respect and obey all teachers, staff, and volunteers.
- Speak and act appropriately.
- Respect other students in word and action.
- Respect the school property and the property of others.
- Not harass, intimidate, haze, or bully others.
- Recognize peer conflict, report problems, and work to resolve conflict.
- Be responsible for protecting the rights of others.
- Accept responsibility for her/his own actions as well as the actions of a group when participating in such behavior.
- Be truthful and candid if observing behaviors that could be a form of bullying.
- Be courageous to report behaviors to a teacher or administrator.
- Make it a point to include all students who are easily left out.

Reporting Procedures

Any student, employee, staff member, aide or volunteer who believes he or she has been the victim of bullying or any such person with knowledge or belief of conduct that may constitute bullying shall report the alleged act(s) immediately to the building principal (or designee). A student may report bullying anonymously. The Office of Catholic Schools encourages the reporting party or complainant to use the reporting form available from the building principal. An oral report shall be considered an official report and must be documented.

- The building principal (or designee) is the person responsible for receiving oral or written reports of bullying at the building level. If the report is given verbally, the principal (or designee) shall reduce it into written form using the Harassment, Intimidation, Hazing, or Bullying Incident School Investigation Form. This form is located in the appendix of this document. (600 A)
- All other members of the school community, including parents/guardians, students, volunteers, and visitors, are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy to a school employee. While submission of the report form is not required, it is encouraged.

The Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form is used for reporting and is found in the appendix of this document.

- Submission of a good faith complaint or report of bullying will not affect the complainant's or reporter's grades, educational environment, future employment, work assignments, or work environment.
- The school and the Office of Catholic Schools respect the privacy of the complainant(s), the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witness(es) as much as possible, consistent with the school's obligation to investigate, take appropriate action, and comply with any legal disclosure obligations. Reports of bullying are classified as private educational and/or personnel data and/or as confidential investigative data and will not be disclosed except as required by law.
- Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on an anonymous report, but only when validated.
- If the complaint concerns alleged conduct by the principal, the report form shall be delivered to the superintendent.

Investigation Procedures

- Upon receipt of a report or complaint that alleges harassment, intimidation, hazing or bullying, the building principal (or designee) shall undertake a prompt, thorough and complete investigation of the alleged incident in as confidential a manner as possible. The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the complainant, individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and others who may have knowledge of the alleged incident(s) or circumstances giving rise to the complaint. The investigation shall be documented using the Harassment, Intimidation, Hazing, or Bullying Incident School Investigation Form and may include other methods and documents deemed pertinent by the investigator. The building principal (or designee) may take immediate steps, at her/his discretion, to protect the complainant, student(s), or others, pending completion of an investigation of bullying, consistent with applicable law.
- Whether a particular action(s) or incident(s) constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all the facts and the surrounding circumstances.
- The building principal (or designee) is not obligated to disclose to a victim any educational or personal data, including any disciplinary action taken against an alleged perpetrator. To the extent permitted by law, the principal will notify the parents/guardians of the student(s) involved in a bullying incident and the remedial action taken, based on a substantiated report.
- A full written report shall be completed by the principal or the principal's designee upon completion of the investigation. Such report may include, but shall not be limited to:
 - Written and/or transcribed verbal statement(s) of the reporting or aggrieved party.
 - Written and/or transcribed verbal statement(s) of the accused party.
 - Written and/or transcribed verbal statement(s) of all witnesses.
 - Diocese of Greensburg Schools Harassment, Intimidation, Hazing, or Bullying Incident School Investigation Form.
 - Factual findings and recommendations.
 - All written and/or transcribed verbal statement(s) shall be signed by the person offering such statements.

Discipline and Remedial Action

The response to students who commit one or more acts of bullying should be determined based on the totality of the circumstances. In all cases, the school should attempt to actively involve parents/guardians in the remediation of the behavior(s) concerned.

- Initiate immediate talks with the bully or bullies to include:

- Sending a clear, strong message that the behavior is not acceptable.
- Documenting involvement or participation.
- Warning that future behavior will be closely monitored.
- Warning that additional negative consequences will be administered if the behavior does not stop.
- Immediate consequences may be warranted for inappropriate actions in their first occurrence.
- Talk with the victim and his/her parents/guardians to include:
 - Documenting specifics of the incident.
 - Providing information about the plan of action to be taken by school personnel and parents/guardians to deal with the behavior.
 - Encouraging the immediate reporting of any new episodes or attempts to school personnel.
- In determining the appropriate response to students who commit one or more acts of bullying, school administrators should consider the following factors:
 - The development, maturity levels, and/or special learning needs of the parties involved.
 - The levels of harm.
 - The surrounding circumstances.
 - The nature of the behaviors.
 - Past incidences or past or continuing patterns of behavior.
 - The relationship between the parties involved.
 - The context in which the alleged incidents occurred.

It is only after meaningful consideration of these factors that an appropriate consequence should be determined, consistent with the diocesan policies and school procedures.

- Upon completion of the investigation, the building principal (or designee) will take appropriate action. Disciplinary consequences will be sufficiently severe to try to deter violations and to appropriately discipline prohibited behavior. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for students who commit acts of bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions, referral to school and outside resources, detentions, up to and including suspension or expulsion. In summary, action taken for violation of this policy will be consistent with the applicable statutory authority, and the school and diocesan policies and regulations.
- The parents/guardians concerned should be contacted. Depending on the situation, meetings can be held together with parents/guardians of both sides, or to minimize tensions, meetings can be held with each family separately. To support the teacher convening this meeting, the school psychologist, guidance counselor, principal or assistant principal may be invited to attend.

Protection for those Reporting Incidents

The Office of Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Greensburg prohibits intimidation, harassment, or intentional disparate treatment against any person who makes a good faith report of alleged bullying, any person who testifies, assists, or participates in an investigation; or any person who testifies, assists, or participates in a proceeding or hearing relating to such bullying. Counseling, corrective discipline, and/or referral to law enforcement may be used to change the behavior of the perpetrator and remediate the impact on the person who reported the incident. Disciplinary action will be in accordance with diocesan policies, procedures, and agreements, and may range from positive behavior intervention up to and including suspension, expulsion and/or reports to appropriate law enforcement officials.

False Accusations

Students, school employees, visitors or volunteers who are found to have falsely accused another of bullying shall receive consequences in accordance with diocesan policies, procedures, and agreements. Counseling, corrective discipline, and/or referral to law enforcement may be used to

change the behavior of the perpetrator and remediate the impact on the person who was falsely accused. Consequences shall be determined by the school administrator after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act and may range from positive behavior intervention up to and including suspension, expulsion and/or reports to appropriate law enforcement officials.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is when someone is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed, or otherwise targeted by a peer using information and communication technologies.

The policies and procedures herein related to other forms of bullying and in the Diocese of Greensburg Schools Technology Resource Acceptable Use Policy also apply to cyberbullying. However, because the motives, methods, profile, and demographics of cyberbullies are varied and sometimes different from the traditional bully, the solutions and prevention messages must address their special issues.

The schools have a valid concern and legal obligation to maintain discipline and protect their students while in their care in the classroom, on school grounds, and at school-sponsored activities. However, if cyberbullying originates or occurs off school grounds and outside of school hours and does not directly impact the school itself, schools have limited authority to react to cyberbullying. Each school's Technology Resource Acceptable Use Policy, signed by the student and parents/guardians, must include a provision reserving the school's right to discipline the student for actions taken off school grounds if these actions are intended to and/or do adversely affect the safety and well-being of students while in school. Documentation on how the incidents affect the school should be kept.

Children should be counseled to immediately tell a responsible adult. Depending on what they are doing, how they are doing it, and if repeated, cyberbullies' actions might escalate from annoyance, to bullying, or to the school's disciplinary code, to criminal acts.

If the cyberbullying is repeated and threatening, the victim and the parents/guardians should contact the school so the situation can be monitored in school for the safety of all. School authorities must respond to allegations of cyberbullying:

- By gathering information using the Harassment, Intimidation, Hazing, or Bullying Incident School Investigation Form and procedures detailed in this policy, including the telecommunication method used and the effect of the threat at school. Collecting and preserving electronic evidence is important to facilitate the investigation and any eventual prosecution. Do not: 1) install or allow to be installed any programs; 2) remove or allow to be removed any programs; or 3) take or allow other remedial action on the involved computer or communication device during this process. These actions may adversely affect the investigation and any eventual prosecution.
- In one or more of the following ways:
 - Contact law enforcement if the victim is in danger of physical harm.
 - Contact both sets of parents/guardians and try to mediate the situation and reiterate applicable policy.
 - Institute an educational and awareness program to help stop further cyberbullying by students, and to help educate parents/guardians about the problem.

Policy Dissemination, Prevention Programs, and Curriculum

Information regarding the policy against bullying shall be incorporated into the school's employee in-service program and policies.

It is the responsibility of the administration and staff to ensure that each child is made aware and understands definitions, conditions, and examples of bullying. The schools will provide annual education and information to students and parents/guardians regarding bullying, including information regarding the Office of Catholic Schools' policy prohibiting bullying.

Intervention programs may also be delivered by Intervention Specialists, Guidance Counselors, SAP Liaisons, and/or professional school personnel.

CAR RIDER

Arrival

1. Arrive at drop-off area between 7:45 and 8:10 AM. The drop-off area is the cafeteria door located along PA Avenue. No Main Street drop off for safety reasons.
2. Use PA Avenue Parking Lot for students who can walk independently to the cafeteria.
3. Use curbside of PA Avenue to walk your child to the cafeteria door.
4. Drive slowly and carefully at all times.
5. Please do not pass nor pull up alongside a car that is unloading.
6. Wait until the car in front of you moves, and then you may pull out of the parking lot.
7. If your child is unable to open or close the car door independently, use the curbside parking on PA Avenue. This will give you a chance to help them and allow others to unload in a timely fashion and walk your child to the cafeteria door.

Dismissal

1. Arrive at the pick-up area at 2:50 PM. The pick-up area is the cafeteria door located along Pennsylvania Avenue.
2. Parents/Guardians are not to come to the door to pick up students.
3. Post the assigned car number in the windshield daily. This makes it easier and faster.
4. Drive slowly and carefully at all times.
5. Form two lines in the school parking lot by the gym and a third line along Pennsylvania Avenue curbside. You may only use the curb lane if you have a door with curb access. Please do not double park on Pennsylvania Avenue.
6. Pull all the way up so that at least 12 cars can be loaded at once.
7. Dismissal of the first batch of cars will be directed by a teacher. Never pull away until a staff member directs you to move. Always stay in your lane.
8. Stay in your cars.

If transporting students for school functions (i.e. field trips), there must be a minimum of two adults in the car. It is not recommended that parents/guardians or staff transport students in a car. Necessary forms can be obtained in the school office.

CELL PHONES

Students are permitted to have cell phones. However, they must be turned off during the entire school day and must be kept in the student's backpack. A violation of this policy will result in immediate detention and the cell phone will be retained at the school office until it is retrieved by the student's parents/guardians.

CHILD ABUSE AND IMMUNITY LAWS

It is important to remember that “child abuse” is not limited to sexual abuse alone. It includes inflicting or creating an imminent risk of physical injury, mental injury, sexual abuse, or harmful physical neglect. A “child” is any individual who is under the age of 18.

Child abuse can be one of several different things:

- Non-accidental *physical injury* that causes severe pain, or that significantly impairs the child’s physical functioning, even temporarily
- Non-accidental clinically diagnosable *mental injury* that renders the child chronically and severely anxious, agitated, depressed, socially withdrawn, psychotic, unable to perform age-appropriate developmental and social tasks, or in reasonable fear that his or her life or safety is threatened
- Any type of *sexual abuse* or *sexual exploitation* (such as inducing a child to engage in sexual acts or to be photographed in simulating sexual acts, even if the child “consents” to the acts)
- Serious *physical neglect* which endangers a child’s life or development or impairs the child’s functioning, but which does not arise solely from the financial inability of the parents/guardians to provide adequate housing, clothing, and medical care. Child abuse also occurs when an individual places a child in imminent risk of serious physical injury or sexual abuse or exploitation.

Perpetrators

A perpetrator of child abuse can be a:

- Child’s parent/guardian
- Spouse or former spouse of the parent/guardian
- Paramour or former paramour of the parent/guardian
- Person 14 years of age or older responsible for the welfare of a child or having direct contact with children as an employee of childcare services, a school, or through a program, activity, or service, such as a babysitter or day care staff person
- Individual who is at least 14 years of age residing in the same home as the child
- Relative who is 18 years of age or older who does not reside in the same home as the child, but is related within the third degree of consanguinity or affinity by birth or adoption to the child
- An individual 18 years of age or older who engages a child in severe forms of trafficking in persons or sex trafficking, as those terms are defined under section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (114 Stat. 1466, 22 U.S.C. § 7102).

A perpetrator of child abuse for failure to act can be a:

- Child’s parent/guardian
- Spouse or former spouse of the parent/guardian
- Paramour or former paramour of the parents/guardians
- Person 18 years of age or older who is responsible for the child’s welfare or who resides in the same home as the child

Mandated reporters do not have to determine whether the person meets the definition of perpetrator in order to make a report.

Mandated Reporters

Mandated reporters are those people who are required by law to report suspected child abuse. Mandated reporters are held to a higher standard of responsibility and may receive serious consequences for not reporting suspected abuse.

All employees and volunteers who have identified, suspected, or self-reported child abuse by any person should immediately report the incident to ChildLine at **1-800-932-0313** and then complete the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania CY 47 form.

This form is in the appendix of this document. It can also be found on the Diocese of Greensburg website. (600 C)

After the report is made to ChildLine, the staff person or volunteer may discuss the ChildLine call with his or her supervisor, but the reporting individual must then notify the Bishop Delegate's Office of the mandated report in writing, via a copy of the CY 47 form.

The Chancellor for the Diocese of Greensburg serves as the safe environment coordinator.

Among the occupations specifically listed in Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) as mandated reporters are many associated with Catholic institutions:

- Clergy, teachers, day-care personnel, social service workers, school administrators, school nurses, foster-care workers, health care personnel and mental health workers.
- Other types of Church personnel who should be considered mandated reporters are parish and school administrative personnel, music ministers, child-care personnel, youth ministers, athletic coaches, food service personnel, classroom aides and playground monitors.
- Non-paid and voluntary personnel who perform services for the Church should also consider themselves to be mandated reporters if they encounter children during the course of their volunteer church work.

A mandated reporter need not make a first-hand observation of the suspected child abuse victim. Second-hand reports of abuse must be reported to the proper authorities if the mandated reporter has "reasonable cause to suspect" that child abuse has occurred.

Permissive Reporter

Permissive Reporters are individuals who are encouraged to report suspected child abuse, although not required by law.

Reporting

Mandated reporters are required to make a report of suspected child abuse if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse under any of the following circumstances:

- They encounter the child in the course of employment, occupation, and practice of a profession or through a regularly scheduled program activity or service.
- They are directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance, or training of the child, or are affiliated with an agency, institution, organization, school, regularly established church, or religious organization or other entity that is directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance, or training of the child.
- A person makes a specific disclosure to the mandated reporter that an identifiable child is the victim of abuse.
- An individual 14 years of age or older makes a specific disclosure to the mandated reporter that the individual has committed child abuse.

It is not required that the child come before the mandated reporter in order to make a report of suspected child abuse nor are they required to identify the person responsible for the child abuse to make a report of suspected child abuse.

Reporting is made to ChildLine either electronically at www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis or by calling 1-800-932-0313. If an oral report was made to ChildLine, a report or suspected child abuse (CY 47) must also be completed and forwarded to the county children and youth agency within 48 hours after making the report.

CHEATING

Cheating of any type will not be tolerated. The administration reserves the right to assign appropriate consequences.

COMMUNICATION WITH SCHOOL

Communication between parents/guardians and classroom teachers is encouraged. This can be accomplished by note, phone call, email, or meeting by appointment. Teachers will reply to parents/guardians within two school days. A parent/guardian may make an appointment to speak with a teacher by sending in a note, voice mail, email, or a message through the school office.

Spontaneous visits to the classroom are forbidden. If there is a problem and it remains unsolved, the parent/guardian is encouraged to contact the school principal. Together, and with the student's best interest in mind, communication can create a healthy school climate.

CRISIS PLAN

Multi-Hazard Plan

The Diocese of Greensburg, in cooperation with the schools in the diocese, have developed a diocesan multi-hazard plan that follows the PEMA (Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency) format. Each school has a copy of this plan, which has been individually tailored to meet each school's individual needs and circumstances.

School safety and security are important issues of concern for every school principal. All diocesan schools shall have a Safety Committee consisting of the building principal, pastor, custodian and representatives from the faculty, fire department and police. This committee shall review the building for safety issues and develop a plan for evacuation and lock-down situation.

All schools in the diocese must review their plan each year to update information and ensure teachers and staff are familiar with their roles and responsibilities.

The Crisis Management Plan designed by the diocese shall be available and accessible for all school employees.

The principal will conduct monthly fire drills, one of which is an evacuation drill annually to a secure site. Lock-down mode is to be conducted once per semester.

All buildings must have an operational security system within the building limiting the access of unauthorized persons.

All visitors must report to the office and sign in and sign out.

Fire Drills

Fire Drills shall be conducted at least once each month. Teachers and students shall become thoroughly familiar with the use of fire escapes, appliances, routes, and exits. When students have reached the designated safety area, the teacher shall call the roll from the class record book. The date of the drill shall be recorded on the diocesan fire drill form.

The date of the monthly fire drill/disaster drill should be recorded by the building principal.

Severe Weather Drill

Severe weather drills are conducted annually when announced by the Pennsylvania Emergency Management System through the county offices. The purpose of this exercise is to test procedures in the event of such an emergency. When announced, schools will respond to the scenario presented. The principal reports the results of the drill to the Office of Catholic Schools, and the drill is marked on the fire drill sheet.

Bus Drills

All schools using or contracting for school buses for the transportation of school children shall conduct on school grounds, two emergency evacuation drills on buses during each school year. The first is to be conducted during the first week of the first school term, and the second during the month of March, and at such other times as the chief school administrator may require. Each such drill shall include practice and instruction concerning the location, use, and operation of emergency doors and fire extinguishers, and the proper evacuation of buses in the event of fire or accident.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline is an integral part of the learning process. To develop self-control, the student must be helped to understand her/his emotions and impulses, to live in harmony with others, to respect the rules of family, to keep the laws of the country, and to obey the laws of God. The dignity of the student demands that humiliating and embarrassing punishments be avoided. Acceptable means of settling behavior problems are reproof, loss of privileges, and detention. Extreme disciplinary problems are referred to the principal for appropriate action. Good classroom control should eliminate the need for rigid disciplinary measures.

Any discipline imposed, including reproof, loss of privileges, and detention should be calculated to be a positive vehicle for the student to develop self-control and adhere to the rules and regulations of the school. Humiliating, embarrassing, or physical punishment does not achieve that goal.

After-school detention should be utilized to reinforce with the student that she or he is expected to adhere to the rules and regulations of the school, and to supplement the child's education by providing appropriate class assignments. More severe penalties authorized by the Diocesan Handbook of Policies are suspension, and as a last resort, expulsion.

Physical punishment is expressly prohibited. Of course, teachers and administrators are permitted to take appropriate action, including physical restraint to quell a disturbance, for the purpose of self-defense, for the protection of students and staff, or to obtain possession of a weapon or other dangerous object which poses an immediate threat to the safety and welfare of the school community.

Because it is impossible to foresee all problems that arise, this clause empowers the administration and faculty to take disciplinary action for any behavior that violates the spirit and philosophy of the school even though it is not specified in the Discipline Policy. The principal is the final recourse in all disciplinary situations and may waive any regulation for just cause at his or her discretion.

Standards of Conduct

Every teacher and the principal shall have the right to exercise the same authority as to conduct and behavior over the students attending her/his school during the time they are in attendance, including the time required in going to and from their homes, as the parents/guardians or persons in parental relation to such students may exercise over them.

Conduct, whether inside or outside of school, that is detrimental to the welfare of the school may result in disciplinary action.

Detention

Students may be detained after school hours for repeated tardiness, unexcused absences, and disciplinary infractions.

- Parental notification must be given and acknowledged prior to the time of detention.
- Assignments for detention should be related to furthering student achievement.

Suspension

A student may be temporarily suspended by the principal for a serious infraction of school regulations or for repeated detentions. A suspension may vary in length from one to ten days. No prior notice to parents/guardians is needed for a suspension.

- The principal shall meet with the parents/guardians and the parents/guardians shall receive a written notice of suspension.
- The written Notice of Suspension is kept on file in the principal's office, and a copy is given to the parent/guardian. This document will not only explain why the student was suspended but will contain an agreement between the student/parents/guardians and the principal describing the student's future cooperation in a program designed to resolve the student's problems.
- Suspensions should be held in school, and the student is not marked absent, unless the offense is particularly egregious, in which case, out-of-school suspension is the remedy. Out-of-school suspensions follow the same guidelines as in-school suspensions except the student is marked absent and assignments are given in the various subject areas for home study.
- The parents/guardians will meet during this suspension period with the principal and teachers to define expectations upon the student's return.

Expulsion

Expulsion is a permanent separation of students at said school for persistent and willful disregard of school rules. Expulsion is a severe punishment that should be used as a last resort and after serious deliberations, or when circumstances warrant.

Reasons for which a student may be expelled, but are not limited to:

- Infractions of school regulations, or the disciplinary codes applicable to the school
- Continued misconduct or conduct detrimental to the physical, educational, or moral well-being of other students
- Continued malicious disobedience or disrespect for authority
- Possession, use or transporting a weapon
- Possession, use, sale, conveyance of any controlled substance, drug, look-a-like drug, alcohol or anabolic steroid
- Assault or battery of a fellow student, teacher or employee
- Bomb threats
- False alarms
- Use of vulgar or obscene language
- Excessive absence or tardiness
- Fighting
- Disrespect toward the school in work or action

An expulsion may also be necessary for a single serious incident or event or situation involving disregard for or a clear violation of a school rule or regulation. An expulsion is a severe punishment and should only be applied in very serious circumstances. Every attempt should be made during earlier offenses, if any, to provide guidance and counseling to the student and parents/guardians under the direction of the principal.

- The principal (or designee) must report the pending expulsion to the Superintendent of Catholic Schools prior to any such decision being finalized and communicated to the student or parents/guardians. Immediate suspensions are possible in certain circumstances to allow the principal time to consider an expulsion by gathering the necessary data. Such notification of the pending expulsion should be made at the time of the suspension, both through a phone call and, as a follow up, in writing.
- Through consultation between and among the Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Principal, and legal department, if necessary, the expulsion decision will be finalized and formalized. Usually, the decision for expulsion will be made within ten (10) school days from the commencement of the suspension. All procedures as outlined in the applicable student handbooks must be followed, including appropriate communications to the student and parents/guardians.
- A written report of the expulsion must be completed and forwarded by the principal to the Superintendent of Catholic Schools. The report must include a copy of the letter of expulsion sent to the student and parents/guardians, including a statement that any request for further review of the matter must be forwarded to the Superintendent of Catholic Schools within five (5) days from the date of the expulsion.
- If such a request for a review of the expulsion is made by the student's parents/guardians, it must be received in writing by the Superintendent of Catholic Schools within five (5) days from the date of the expulsion. The Superintendent will determine who will participate in this review. The review will be made within a reasonable period. The decision from this review will be communicated to the principal by the Superintendent of Catholic Schools. The parents/guardians and student will be mailed a written notice of the outcome of this review.

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

Drug and Alcohol Policy and Administrative Guidelines-Students

A student on school grounds, during a school session, or anywhere at a school-sponsored activity who is under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or mood-altering substances or possesses, uses, dispenses, sells or aids in the procurement of alcohol, narcotics, restricted drugs, mood altering substances or any substance purported to be a restricted substance or over the counter drug shall be subjected to discipline. **The school reserves the right to search anything brought on school property.**

The policy including its rules, regulations, and guidelines is a coordinated effort by the Office of Catholic Schools to openly and effectively respond to the potential and current uses and abuses of drugs, alcohol, and mood-altering substances by the entire student population.

Through the use of curriculum, classroom activities, community support and resources, a strong and consistent administrative and faculty effort, and rehabilitative and disciplinary procedures, the Office of Catholic Schools will work to educate, prevent, and intervene in the use and abuse of all drugs, alcohol, and mood altering substances, and alcohol related situations.

Definition of Terms

Drug/Mood Altering Substance/Alcohol: Shall include any alcohol or malt beverage, any drug listed in Act 64 (1972), 35 P.S. 780-101 et. seq., as a controlled substance, chemical, abused substance or medication for which a prescription is required under the law and/or any substance which is intended to alter mood, and/or any anabolic steroid.

Examples of the above include but are not limited to beer, wine, liquor, marijuana, hashish, chemical solvents, glue, look alike substances, and any capsules or pills not registered with the nurse, annotated within the student's health record, and given in accordance with the Office of Catholic Schools policy for the administration of medication to students in school.

Student Assistance Team: is a multi-disciplinary team composed of school personnel (teachers, staff, administrators, nurses, counselors) and other members of the community. This team has been trained to understand and work on the issue of adolescent chemical use, abuse, and dependency and will play a primary role in the identification and referral process of students coming to their attention through the procedures outlined in this policy.

Distributing: deliver, sell, pass, share, or give any alcohol, drug, or mood-altering substances, as defined by this policy, from one person to another or to aid therein.

Possession: possess or hold, without any attempt to distribute, any alcohol, drug or mood-altering substances determined to be illegal or as defined by this policy.

Cooperative Behavior: shall be defined as the willingness of a student to work with staff and school personnel in a reasonable manner, complying with requests and recommendations of the members of the Student Support System.

Uncooperative Behavior: is the resistance or refusal, either verbal, physical, or passive, on the part of the student to comply with the reasonable request or recommendations of school personnel. Defiance, assault, deceit, and flight shall constitute examples of uncooperative student behavior. Uncooperative

behavior shall also include the refusal to comply with the recommendations of the members of the Student Support System.

Drug Paraphernalia: includes any utensil or item which in the school's judgment can be associated with the use of drugs, alcohol, or mood-altering substances. Examples include, but are not limited to roach clips, pipes, and bowls.

Guidelines

As an integral part of the Office of Catholic Schools' Drug and Alcohol Prevention Program, these guidelines represent one component to respond effectively to drug, mood altering substances and alcohol-related situations that may occur at school or at school-sponsored activities. These guidelines are intended to provide a consistent minimum disciplinary means to respond to drug, mood altering substances and alcohol related incidents. The Superintendent of Catholic Schools reserves the right to use any extraordinary measures deemed necessary to control substance abuse even if the same is not provided for specifically in any rule or regulation enumerated herein.

Discipline Procedures-Sale, Use, Possession, or Procurement of Intoxicating Beverages, Narcotics, or Other Restricted Drugs Such as Anabolic Steroids

A student who on school grounds during a school session, or anywhere at a school-sponsored activity, does sell, use, possess, or aid in the procurement of alcohol, narcotics, or restricted drugs, including marijuana or anabolic steroids or other material purported to be such, shall be subject to exclusion from school.

The school reserves the right to search anything brought on school property.

Parents/guardians of the students involved are to be contacted immediately by the appropriate school administrator with a recommendation that the student be taken to a physician for a complete examination and request that the parents/guardians notify the school of the results of the examination. The principal shall also give immediate notice to the police of the incident and efforts shall be exerted to obtain positive identification of the substance whether it be a narcotic, a restricted drug, alcohol, or marijuana. The school will make every effort to protect a student by assisting the police in the apprehension of the person or persons who made such substances available.

Anabolic Steroids- The use of anabolic steroids, except for a valid medical purpose, by any student involved in school-related athletics is prohibited. Body-building muscle enhancements, increasing muscle bulk or strength, or the enhancement of athletic ability are not valid medical purposes. Anabolic steroids include any material, compound, mixture, or preparation that includes any of the following or any isomer, ester, salt, or derivative of any of the following that acts in the same manner on the human body:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Chorionic gonadotropin | 11. Nadrolone decanoate |
| 2. Clostebol | 12. Nandrolone phenpropionate |
| 3. Dehydrochlormethyltestosterone | 13. Norethandrolone |
| 4. Ethylestrenol | 14. Oxandrolone |
| 5. Fluoxymesterone | 15. Oxymesterone |
| 6. Mesterolone | 16. Oxymetholone |
| 7. Metenolone | 17. Stanozolol |
| 8. Methandienone | 18. Testosterone propionate |
| 9. Methandrostenolone | 19. Testosterone-like related compounds |
| 10. Methyltestosterone | |

Human Growth Hormone (HGH) shall not be included as an anabolic steroid.

The following minimum penalties are prescribed for any student found in violation of this regulation:

- For a first violation, suspension from school athletics for the remainder of the season.
- For a second violation, suspension from school athletics for the remainder of the season and for the following season.

No student shall be permitted to resume participation in school athletics unless the principal has received a medical report indicating that no residual evidence of steroids exists. As a further condition of reinstatement into the school athletic program, the student shall be required to participate in a drug counseling and/or treatment program satisfactory to the principal.

The Superintendent of Catholic Schools must be advised immediately of any student(s) who violate this policy.

LEGAL REFERENCES: Act 93 of 1989
Public School Code of 1949
24 P.S. 407, Rules and Regulations

EMERGENCY CARDS

The school office will maintain an emergency card for each enrolled student. The card shall contain the following information:

- Student's name
- Name and address of parents/guardians
- Phone numbers where they may be reached during school day
- Name and phone number of two emergency contacts other than primary care givers who may be contacted in the event the parents/guardians cannot be reached
- School District
- Parish
- Physician/Preferred Hospital
- Primary mode of dismissal transportation
- Name and grades of siblings

ESAP

Each diocesan school is required to participate in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Student Assistance Program (SAP) or Elementary Student Assistance Program (ESAP), which are designed to assist school personnel in identifying issues including alcohol, tobacco, other drug, and mental health issues which pose a barrier to a student's success. The primary goal of the SAP/ESAP is to help students overcome these barriers in order that they may achieve, remain in school, and advance.

SAP/ESAP is a systemic process using techniques to mobilize school resources to remove barriers to learning. The core of the program is a professionally trained team, including school staff and liaisons from community alcohol and drug and mental health agencies. SAP/ESAP team members are trained to identify problems, determine whether or not the presenting problem lies within the responsibility of the school and to make recommendations to assist the student and the parents/guardians. When the problem lies beyond the scope of the school, the SAP/ESAP team will assist the parents/guardians and student so they may access services within the community. The student assistance team members do not diagnose, treat or refer to treatment; but they may refer for a screening or an assessment for treatment.

There are four phases to the student assistance process:

- **Referral** - Anyone can refer a student to SAP/ESAP when they are concerned about someone's behavior -- any school staff, a student's friend, a family member, or community member. Any student can go directly to the SAP/ESAP team to ask for help. The SAP/ESAP team contacts the parents/guardians for permission to proceed with the process.
- **Team Planning** – The SAP/ESAP team gathers objective information about the student's performance in school from all school personnel who have contact with the student. Information is also collected from the parents/guardians. The team meets with the parents/guardians to discuss the data collected and meets with the student. Together, a plan is developed that includes strategies for removing the learning barriers and promoting the student's academic and personal success to include in-school and/or community-based services and activities.
- **Intervention and Recommendations** – The plan is put into action. The team assists in linking the student to in-school and/or community-based services and activities. The team might recommend different types of assessment.
- **Support and Follow-Up** – The SAP/ESAP team continues to work with and support the student and their family. Follow-up includes monitoring, mentoring, and motivating for academic success.

It is the parents/guardians' right to be involved in the process and to have full access to all school records under the applicable state and federal laws and regulations. Involvement of parents/guardians in all phases of the student assistance program underscores the parents/guardians' role and responsibility in the decision-making process affecting their child(ren)'s education and is key to the successful resolution of problems.

FIELD TRIPS

Field Trip Policy

Class visits to places of cultural or educational significance give enrichment to the lessons of the classrooms. To ensure the desired outcomes of such trips, teachers should prepare the students for the place that is to be visited and the things that are to be seen. A discussion should be held regarding the purpose(s) and goal(s) of the trip.

The written consent of parents/guardians must be obtained for every child participating on a field trip. A Field Trip Participation Form must inform parents/guardians of the following:

- Name, location, and date(s) of the event
- Times of the event
- Cost to the student
- Mode of transportation to be used
- Name of the supervisor overseeing the activity
- Parents/guardians' responsibility

No student may participate unless a signed Field Trip Participation for the specific event is on file with the principal. This form is in the appendix of this document.

Whenever possible, bus transportation should be provided. The use of private vehicles is strongly discouraged. If a private passenger vehicle must be used, the parents/guardians of the student driver of the vehicle and the parents/guardians of the student passenger(s) must sign the proper form indicating their approval of the field trip circumstances. If a private vehicle is being used, two adults must be in the car with the students. These types of field trip arrangements should be used only on

special rare occasions. The special driving form must be complete and submitted to the principal prior to departure along with proof of insurance.

The driver and/or chaperon should be given a copy of the approved itinerary including the route(s) to be followed and a summary of their responsibilities. For trips other than interschool athletics, supervision of one (1) adult per ten (10) students is recommended for the elementary and one (1) adult per fifteen (15) students in the secondary school.

Parents/guardians may not act as drivers on school field trips unless through discussion with and designation by the school principal.

FUNDRAISING

Aquinas Academy budgets a specific fundraising amount that is instrumental to the operation of the school. Every effort is made to limit fundraising to a minimal number of events. Because of this, we hope that all families will see the importance of participating in our two major fundraisers (Lottery Calendars and Auction Gala,). There are a few minor fundraisers, and together, they all help in meeting the school's budget.

Parents/guardians can also participate in the SCRIP/Raise Right program. This program allows for parents/guardians to reduce their own tuition costs directly. Please contact the school office for more information.

GIFTS

Students should not exchange individual gifts at school. This gesture only creates hurt feelings among other students.

Invitations for parties should be sent to the homes of students unless an invitation is being given to *every student in the entire grade*.

If choosing to send Valentines, they are to be distributed to every child in the class. A class list will be supplied.

GOVERNANCE

The elementary schools in the Diocese of Greensburg are Pennsylvania Charitable Trusts with the Bishop of Greensburg as the Trustee. They are governed by a Civil Structure and a set of bylaws.

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

Students may benefit from additional educational services. Based on the results of standardized tests, teacher observations, and/or recommendations, students are eligible for the following auxiliary services:

Speech
Math/Reading Title I
Math/Reading Act 89
Guidance Services
Nursing Services

A consent/refusal form signed by the parent/guardian will be obtained for those students recommended and will be kept in the student's file.

GRADING SCALE

Cheating, late work, and missing work is recorded as "incomplete" rather than a zero. There is an opportunity to replace an "incomplete" with a score without penalty.

The school year is divided into four quarters. Formal grades for each quarter appear on the report card. Report cards will be sent home in an envelope at the end of each quarter. The envelopes are to be signed and returned to school.

Parents/guardians can see grades daily by logging into their PowerSchool account.

It is recommended that teachers do not grade homework, participation, or behavior.

The following code is a general guide to grading for grades 3-6:

A+	= 99–100
A	= 95-98
A-	= 93-94
B+	= 91–92
B	= 87-90
B-	= 85-86
C+	= 83-84
C	= 77–82
C-	= 75-76
D+	= 73-74
D	= 67–72
D-	= 65-66
E	= 64 or below
I	= <i>Incomplete, grade given when circumstances prevent the completion of quality work.</i>

The following code is a general guide to grading in each Subject including Specials for grades 1-2:

O	= <i>Outstanding</i>
G	= <i>Grade level</i>
S	= <i>Satisfactory</i>
H	= <i>Has difficulty</i>
I	= <i>Incomplete, grade given when exceptional circumstances prevent the completion of quality work.</i>

The following code is a general guide for Special grades for grades 3-6:

O	= <i>Outstanding</i>
G	= <i>Grade level</i>
S	= <i>Satisfactory</i>
H	= <i>Has difficulty</i>
I	= <i>Incomplete, grade given when exceptional circumstances prevent the completion of quality work.</i>

HOMEWORK

Homework is essential for the full scholastic development of the child. Students are expected to do a reasonable amount of home study, and it is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to supervise this work, being careful, however, not to do the homework for a student.

Homework may consist of written work, reading, study for review, memorization, or work on special projects. Some assignments are long range and are not meant to be completed in a single evening. A parent/guardian can assist students with home assignments in the following ways:

1. Provide a quiet spot away from the television, cell phone, or other distracting elements;
2. Check to see what was accomplished during the designated study time regarding completeness, neatness, correctness;
3. Be willing to listen to reading, spelling, and math facts and to explain procedures, but never do the assignment;
4. Consult homework online or with the teacher if the child uses the excuse “no homework” too often.

If a child cannot complete an assignment, the parents/guardians should inform the teacher by written note stating the reason. Arrangements should be made as soon as possible to make up incomplete assignments.

Each student in grades 2 – 6 is required to maintain an Aquinas Academy Student Planner. This planner remains the primary source for recording and checking homework assignments. Additionally, a homework chart is available in each classroom as a resource to every student. Another homework resource is available on Schoology. Parents and students may log onto their Schoology account to see daily assignments.

HOMEWORK DUE TO VACATIONS/PLANNED ABSENCES

All students are responsible for the following when absent from school:

1. Obtaining all assignments
2. Making up all assignments and tests missed during an absence from school
3. Turning completed assignments to the teacher at the time designated

With prior written or verbal notice, classroom work will be given in advance. Regular assignments are posted on the school website. A student may take textbooks when absent unless the text is for classroom use only.

Ordinarily, homework should not be requested until after a child is absent for two consecutive days. To obtain homework and materials on the third day a student is absent, it is necessary to notify the school office before 8:30 AM. Homework may be picked up at or after 3:15 PM in the school office or sent home with a designated person.

If you wish your child’s homework to be sent home with another student, please make those arrangements with the particular student. That student must go after the end-of-day prayers and announcements to the office to obtain the other student’s homework. It is the student’s responsibility to obtain the assignments and return them completed to the teacher at the time designated.

IMMUNIZATIONS

All students need the following vaccinations for attendance in all grades:

- 4 doses of tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis*
(1 dose on or after the 4th birthday)
- 4 doses of polio (4th dose on or after the 4th birthday and at least 6 months after the previous dose given)**
- 2 doses of measles, mumps, rubella***
- 3 doses of hepatitis B
- 2 doses of varicella (chickenpox) or evidence of immunity

*Usually given as DTP or DTaP or if medically advisable, DT or Td

**A fourth dose is not necessary if the third dose was administered at age 4 years or older and at least 6 months after the previous dose

***Usually given as MMR

On the first day of school, unless a student has a medical or religious/philosophical exemption, all immunizations must be current and up to date.

- If a student does not have all the doses listed above, needs additional doses, and the next dose is medically appropriate, the student must receive that dose within the first five days of school or risk exclusion.
- If the next dose is not the final dose of the series, the student must also provide a medical plan within the first five days of school for obtaining the required immunizations or risk exclusion.
- If a student does not have all the doses listed above, needs additional doses, and the next dose is not medically appropriate, the student must provide a medical plan within the first five days of school for obtaining the required immunizations or risk exclusion.
- The medical plan must be followed or risk exclusion.

ITEMS BROUGHT TO SCHOOL

Aquinas Academy is not responsible for the loss or damage to any items brought to school by a student. This includes but is not limited to all electronic devices.

LIBRARY

The mission of the library media program is to prepare students to think critically, creatively, and independently when locating and evaluating information and technology.

The purpose of the library media program is to meet the following goals for students and faculty:

- Provide a welcoming, safe, and caring environment
- Provide on-going skills of library use
- Support the curriculum by working collaboratively with faculty
- Promote literature appreciation through weekly book exchange and interactive activities
- Use and appreciate the computer technologies available for informational use and research
- Encourage everyone to be independent, lifelong learners, and users of libraries

Computer instruction is essential in today's educational process. A computer is a basic tool for teaching logical thinking and problem solving, creative writing, communication, the handling of information, and many other aspects of the curriculum. Formal instruction in the basic skills begins in grades PK3. Students advance in confidence and competence in various skills through cross-curricular project-based activities.

Technology involves the use of the internet, computers, videos, digital cameras, and much more. The Diocese of Greensburg has an Acceptable Use Policy. Each school year every parent/guardian, student, and faculty member must sign and agree to follow this policy. If the agreement is not signed, the internet, the computers, and any other form of technology may not be used at school.

LITURGY

Aquinas Academy attends Mass as a unified school approximately once each month. There are also evening Masses offered at specific times of year. In addition to these liturgical opportunities, three grades (K-6) will attend Mass weekly. There are also prayer services held for specific celebrations. Students will have the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation twice each year.

LOCKERS

Students may go to their lockers and/or desks in the morning, before and after lunch, and at dismissal. The school reserves the right to search all lockers.

LOST AND FOUND

The school is not responsible for money or valuable items brought to school by students. Such items are the responsibility of the student and should not be brought to school. Money sent to school should be placed in a sealed envelope marked with the student's name, room number, amount, and the purpose for which the money is to be used. Please send checks-NO CASH.

Lost items that are labeled are returned to the owner. Please make sure your child's lunch box, hats, sweaters, jackets, etc. have his/her name on them. Lost items of value, such as watches, glasses, keys, jewelry, etc., are turned into the office. Other lost-and-found articles are placed in a container just outside the nurse's office. Students can check the box for items they may have lost. At the end of each school year, we dispose of unclaimed items.

LUNCH PROGRAM

Aquinas Academy provides a hot lunch, or students may bring their own lunch. Aquinas Academy will have a combination of prepared lunches in house and lunches from various third-party vendors. Lunches must be pre-purchased on the weekly lunch link. There is also milk, water, and various a-la-carte items for purchase.

Parents/guardians will be sent lunch order forms by email for the upcoming week. There will be a separate lunch calendar that will contain the daily lunch menu.

Lunch accounts will be run through PowerSchool called PowerLunch. Parents/guardians are responsible for maintaining a positive balance in this account.

MEDICATION

Administration of Medications Policy

The Office of Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Greensburg recognizes that parents/guardians have the primary responsibility for the health of their children. It also recognizes that many children are able to attend school because of the effective use of medication in the treatment of chronic disabilities or illnesses. The Office of Catholic Schools believes that every effort should be made to administer medications at home. However, any student who is required to take medication during the regular school day must comply with school regulations. These are necessary for the protection of both the student and the school personnel.

This policy shall be implemented in collaboration with public school districts who provide health services to Catholic schools.

Only essential medications will be given at school with parents/guardians taking full responsibility for any medication sent into the school.

The following regulations are in effect:

Administration of Medication During School Hours

Private physician's written request for administration of specific dosage of medication should include:

- Date
- Student's name
- Diagnosis
- Medication, dosage, how administered, time schedule and length of time to be administered in school
- Possible side effects or contraindications
- Any curtailment of specific school activity (lab, sports, shop, driver's training, etc.)
- Listing any other medications which have been prescribed by the physician
- Physician's signature and telephone number
- Parents/guardians' signature

School Nurse Responsibilities

The nurse is responsible for orientation of the person(s) authorized to administer medication. Orientation should include:

- Principles of medication administration
- Review of specific medications which are to be administered, including side effects
- For students on long-term medication, the nurse should have conferences with the parents/guardians regarding responses to medication, and a written report should be given as needed for the family to give the physician

Parents/guardians' written request and authorization to give each specific medication accompanies the physician's written approval/request. Information should include:

- Date
- Student's name
- Prescribing doctor's name
- Statement requesting and authorizing the administration of the medication, name of medication, dosage, and time interval
- List of all current medication taken by the student (home or school)

The school nurse or a person designated by the school administrator will administer the medication.

Delivery of Medication

Medication is to be delivered to the school by the parents/guardians or responsible adult to the school nurse.

- If the school nurse is not available, the principal will need to designate someone.
- The medication will be recorded in the log with the date, name and amount of medication delivered and signed by the parents/guardians.
- The physician's written request and parental authorization is brought with the medication and delivered to the school nurse or designated person.
- When possible, the parents/guardians should notify the school nurse in advance that the child will need medication.
- When someone other than the parent/guardian brings the medication to the school, the medication should be placed in a sealed envelope by the parents/guardians. It should be marked with the name of the child, the name and the amount of medication sent, or be in a pharmacy labeled bottle.

Medication Restrictions

Supply of medication to be kept at school:

- Single day supply for short-term illness.
- One or two weeks for long-term chronic illness. This would afford the nurse the opportunity to meet the parents/guardians and discuss the child's response to medication, etc. The amount of medication stored by the school should be based on the length of time medications are to be administered and other individual factors.

Labeling and Storage of Medication in School

- Medication brought to school must be in a properly labeled container. (The container should be labeled by the pharmacist or doctor.)
- Label must include:
 - Student's name
 - Name of physician
 - Date of prescription
 - Name and telephone number of pharmacy
 - Name of medication, dosage, and frequency of administration

Medications are stored in a secured area, which is convenient to the person responsible for administering medication. Medications requiring refrigeration are stored in the refrigerator.

Unused medication will be given to parents/guardians for disposition. Record date, time, amount, and signature of parents/guardians or adult receiving medication.

Personnel Responsible for Administration of Medication

The school nurse, when available, is the primary person to administer medication.

Functions of the school nurse:

- Confers with parents/guardians at the time the medication is delivered
- Responsible for the administration and recording of medication
 - Medications to be given by injection will be given only by the school nurse
 - Injectable medications must comply with the same regulations required for oral medications
 - Supervises appropriate self-administration of medication
 - Medications should be taken in the presence of the person administering the medication

- Alert appropriate school staff to possible side effects of medication which need to be reported. Alerts appropriate teacher(s) if student should refrain from any school activity (e.g., lab, shop, sports, etc.)
- Confers with physicians and pharmacists as needed
- Consults by phone or in person with physician or parents/guardians at any time

Responsibilities of the Principal:

- Designates in writing the person(s) authorized to administer medications (if other than the school nurse)
- Reviews school policy regarding administration of medication by designee
- Contacts the school nurse on receipt of medication request
- Reviews specific medications with the school nurse. Review to include student response and emergency procedures
 - The school will administer only essential medicines prescribed by a physician and accompanied by written instructions signed by a physician. Essential medication includes only medicine prescribed by a physician, and without which the student could not attend school. No over-the-counter medicine such as: Aspirin, Tylenol, Midol, cough syrup will be dispensed. No cough drops
 - Fully inform parents/guardians that if the school nurse is not available and the parents/guardians cannot administer the medication, someone designated by the administrator will give the medication
- When someone other than the nurse administers medication, school policies should include guidelines which will direct and protect the school personnel.

It is required that:

- School personnel supervise the student's self-administration of medication when a student is old enough or capable to do so
- An area be designated for administration of medication which will afford the student privacy
- In-service for emergency procedures (e.g., what to do if a pill becomes lodged in the throat) be made available by the school nurse
- School personnel responsible for observing and reporting to nurse or school administration report any side effects or other problems concerning administration of medication.

Documentation of Medication Administration

- Physician and parental medication requests become part of student's health record
- Log or written record indicating the administration of medication should be established
- Teachers are responsible for observing and reporting to nurse or school administration any side effects
- School nurses are responsible for reporting side effects to the prescribing physician.

OFF-CAMPUS CONDUCT

The administration of Aquinas Academy reserves the right to discipline its students for off-campus behavior that is not in line with behavior expectations of its students during the school day. This off-campus behavior includes but is not limited to *cyber-bullying*.

Pennsylvania Act 26 (effective September 28, 2015)

What is at Issue? Act 26 makes it a criminal offense for a person to:

- Intend to harass, annoy, or alarm a child
- Use electronic means to directly address a child or indirectly through social media
- Engage in a continuing course or conduct which either:
 - **Threatens to inflict harm on the child**
 - **Makes a seriously disparaging statement or opinion about a child's**
 - Physical characteristics
 - Sexuality
 - Sexual activity
 - Mental or physical health

PUNISHMENT: A third degree misdemeanor, punishable by a maximum \$2500 fine and/or one year in prison.

***Juveniles charged with the crime may be referred to a diversionary program, which might include an education program on cyber harassment. Once completed, the juvenile's record may be expunged.**

WHERE is the Crime Committed? The crime may be deemed to have been committed where the victim child reside.

Cyberbullying complaints should be directed to law enforcement in which the child lives.

HOW does this affect Schools? The law does not place any duty, mandatory reporting or otherwise, upon schools; however, schools should:

- Educate students and families that cyberbullying is now a criminal offense (“cyberharassment”);
- Refer families complaining of out-of- school cyberbullying incidents to law enforcement in their hometown; and
- Contact police and advise of any cyber harassment occurring on school grounds and refer the victim's family to do the same.

OFFICE RECORDS

Parents/Guardians are requested to notify the school office in writing of any change of address, home school district, parish, custody, home telephone numbers, cell phone numbers, business phone numbers, e-mail addresses and/or phone numbers of emergency contacts. This will guarantee that office records are accurate, complete, and up-to-date.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS AS PARTNERS

As partners in the educational process at Aquinas Academy, we ask parents/guardians to:

- Set rules, times, and limits so that your child:
 - Goes to bed early on school nights
 - Arrives at school on time and is picked up on time at the end of the day
 - Is dressed according to the school dress code
 - Completes assignments on time
- Actively participate in school activities such as Parent-Teacher Conferences.

- See that the student pays for any damage to schoolbooks or property due to carelessness or neglect on the part of the student.
- Notify the school with a written note when the student has been absent or tardy.
- Notify the school office of any changes of address or important phone numbers
- Meet all financial obligations to the school.
- Inform the school of any special situation regarding the student's well-being, safety, and health.
- Complete and return to school any requested information promptly.
- Read school notes and newsletters and show interest in the student's total education.
- Support the religious and educational goals of the school.
- Attend Mass and teach the Catholic faith by word and example.
- Support and cooperate with the discipline policy of the school.
- Treat teachers with respect and courtesy in discussing student problems.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS' ROLE IN EDUCATION

We, at School, consider it a privilege to work with parents/guardians in the education of children because we believe parents/guardians are the primary educators of their children. Therefore, it is your right and your duty to become the primary role models for the development of your child's life--- physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally, and psychologically. Your choice of Aquinas Academy involves a commitment and exhibits a concern for helping your child to recognize God as the greatest good in his/her life.

Good example is the strongest teacher. Your personal relationship with God, with each other, and with the Church community will affect the way your child relates to God and others. Ideals taught in school are not well rooted in the child unless these are nurtured by the example of good Catholic/Christian morality and by an honest personal relationship with God in your family life.

Once you have chosen to enter into a partnership with us at Aquinas Academy, we trust you will be loyal to this commitment. During these formative years (Pre-K to 6), your child needs constant support from both parents/guardians and faculty in order to develop his/her moral, intellectual, social, cultural, and physical endowment. Neither parents/guardians nor teachers can afford to doubt the sincerity of the efforts of their educational partner in the quest of challenging, yet nourishing, the student to reach his/her potential. It is vital that both parents/guardians and teachers remember that allowing oneself to be caught between the student and the other partner will never have positive results. **To divide authority between school and home or within the home will only teach disrespect of all authority.** If there is an incident at school, you as parents/guardians must make investigation of the complete story your first step. Evidence of mutual respect between parents/guardians and teachers will model good mature behavior and relationships. Talking negatively about a child's teacher at home will only create an attitude of distrust toward the teacher, the school, and the parents/guardians.

Students are naturally eager to grow and learn. However, sometimes in the process of maturation new interests may cause them to lose focus. As this natural process occurs, the student needs both understanding and discipline. At times, your child may perceive discipline as restrictive. However, it is boundaries and limits which provide a young person with both guidance and security.

It is essential that a child take responsibility for grades he/she has earned and be accountable for homework, long-term assignments, major tests, service projects, and all other assignments. Parents/guardians are encouraged to let their child experience a logical consequence for an inappropriate action or behavior. This responsibility also extends to times of absence.

Together, let us strive for a commitment to partnership as we support one another in helping your child to become the best person he/she is capable of becoming.

PARTIES

Four parties are held throughout the year. The office collects a fee of ten dollars for the year at the beginning of the school year. This money is used for all of the above-mentioned parties/breakfasts and for an end-of-the-year celebration. No other money will be collected throughout the year without a written request that must be approved by the principal.

Student may bring a birthday treat to share with their classmates. Please check with your child's homeroom teacher for an appropriate time to bring in the birthday treat.

Gum, Lollipops, Peanut Products and Balloons may not to be given as treats anytime throughout the school year. Please check with a grade level teacher for further information.

PLAYGROUND/RECESS

At lunch time, a PhysEd Extension Program (PEP) exists for Kindergarten through Grade 6 that provides an opportunity for daily physical exercise according to the recommendations of the American Heart Association. The program includes the use of our playground for grades K – 5 and a variety of exercises and activities to invigorate all of our students physically. Students are closely monitored by the designated teachers during each PEP period. At the end of the exercise period, the students cool down by sitting quietly and talking to one another.

PEP RULES

Observe the following rules during PEP time:

1. Enter the gym or playground quietly;
2. Place lunch bags, etc. in the assigned space;
3. Listen closely to and follow all directions;
4. Stay in the group assigned;
5. Stop playing at once when the whistle sounds and walk quietly to the station assigned;
6. Take responsibility of the proper organizing of equipment;
7. Walk to the line assigned when going to the cafeteria after PEP or going to meet the homeroom teacher;
8. Treat others respectfully at all times;
9. Practice good sportsmanship at all times;
10. Report any problems or difficulties to the supervisor immediately.

POWERSCHOOL STUDENT INFORMATION SYSTEM

The Diocese of Greensburg utilizes the PowerSchool Student Information System (SIS) to administer and maintain our student records across all areas, some of which include demographics, attendance, and grading. PowerSchool is widely adopted across the world and contains one of the largest user communities in K-12 education technology. PowerSchool provides an end to end platform for all user types, sharing information through various portals. School Administrators maintain student demographic information, schedules, and daily attendance records. Teachers enter and maintain meeting attendance records, assignments, quizzes, and tests within a unified teacher gradebook and portal. Parents/guardians and students view school bulletins, attendance records, and grade information through both a web-based portal and mobile device application.

The diocesan PowerSchool implementation also includes an integrated notification product, School Messenger, to broadcast important school information, attendance notifications, weather delays and the like through voice, e-mail and SMS broadcast channels.

PROMOTION POLICY AND RETENTION POLICY

After third grade, students should not be retained. Research shows that retention does not improve achievement, but promotion plus remediation does.

Parents/guardians should be notified early in the school year when there is question of retention of a child.

- Remediation alternatives must be considered before retention of a student, such as providing extra instructional help within the context of normal grade promotion
- Providing remediation through government programs during the school day or tutoring before and after school hours
- Providing remediation through summer school
- Using instructional aides to work with the child in the regular classroom
- Encouraging peer tutoring, as well as other identified recommended strategies

REPORT CARDS/PROGRESS REPORTS

In all elementary schools, reporting student progress to parents/guardians shall occur as soon as possible after the 45-day quarter has ended. Each local elementary school shall use the official diocesan report card either by paper or electronically. The official diocesan report card shall be evaluated every six years by a committee established through the Office of Catholic Schools.

Parent-teacher conferences shall be used in conjunction with the report card as a means of evaluating progress. The principal shall establish policy for scheduling parent-teacher conferences. These conferences shall occur at least one time during the school year.

RETURNING TO SCHOOL AFTER DISMISSAL

Students are encouraged to bring home all assignments at the end of each day. If an assignment is forgotten, parents/guardians can alert the teacher by note or email. The school office is open until 4:00 PM and parents/guardians can bring students back to school to retrieve assignments, but it is not recommended.

SCHOOL HOURS

Aquinas Academy opens for students when school is in session at 7:45 AM. Morning prayers and announcements begin at 8:20 AM. Closing prayers and announcements begin at 2:35 PM. Students are dismissed at 2:50 PM.

SCHOOL OFFICE HOURS

The school office is open on all school days and in-service days from 7:30 AM – 4:00 PM.

The school office is closed on all Holy Days of Obligation.

The school office is closed on weekends.

The school office is open in the summer Monday through Thursday from 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM.

SCHOOL PROPERTY

It will be the financial obligation of the parents/guardians to compensate the school for the replacement of any textbooks, furniture, equipment, buildings, or anyone's personal property damaged by their child. Textbooks loaned to the student must have a proper book cover (no self-adhesive book covers are permitted). Unless the textbook is a consumable, no writing in textbooks is permitted. The parents/guardians will pay for the replacement of damaged or lost text books before any final reports, transcripts, or diplomas are presented.

SEARCH

The school reserves the right to search *anything* brought on school property.

SERVICE PROJECTS

Because parish life and ministry are so vital in our lives, we ask that each student in kindergarten through grade six perform some type of service to his or her parish throughout the year. The following are minimum recommended guidelines for each grade:

Grades	Hours/Year
K-1	3
2-4	4.5
5-6	6

We want to emphasize the importance of being a vital part of the parish. This participation starts at a young age. Teachers will talk about this during religion class and help the students come up with their own ideas.

Each grade will engage in other types of service throughout the year. Encourage your child to follow Jesus by being "a person for others." Many of our students already serve in a multitude of ways just by imitating their parents/guardians. "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served; He came to serve and give His life to redeem many people." Mark 10:45

SEXTING

Students involved in possession or transmission of inappropriate photos on their cell phones or other electronic devices face suspension and/or expulsion plus police notification.

STUDENT DIRECTORY

A family student directory will be created and made available to families for a fee. Participation is optional. Parents/guardians may choose to have their family information withheld. Families who chose to participate will have a published list of student/family name, address, phone numbers, and email address.

STUDENT RECORDS

Aquinas Academy adheres to the Buckley Amendment (Family Education Rights and Privacy) regarding access to student records. Records of students transferring to other schools will only be sent through the U.S. Mail. No records will be given to parents/guardians to transport to the new school.

ONLY health records will be sent to transferring schools of students whose financial commitment is not paid in full.

TELEPHONE

It is important that the school telephone be available for office calls. Students may use the school telephone only with permission, in an emergency, and only for school related business. Teachers and students will not be called from the classroom to receive a telephone call. A message for the student or teacher may be given to the office. Arrangements concerning transportation and after-school activities are to be made before the child leaves home in the morning.

TESTING

The Office of Catholic Schools in consultation with school representatives shall determine the standardized testing program to be used through grades 3-6 to ensure continuity of results and student progress. The use of other tests shall be determined locally. Standardized tests will be given to students according to the grade in which they are registered for the year.

Students in grades K-2 will receive the Renaissance Early Literacy Assessment three times a year. They will also take the Star Math assessment twice a year.

TRANSPORTATION

It is important that we know the ordinary means by which each child arrives and departs daily. A note is to be sent when a change is necessary. For reasons of safety and insurance, each student is to ride his/her assigned bus unless special permission is given. In the event of a change in transportation for any given day(s), a student must have a written note from a parents/guardians signed by the principal.

Transportation to and from school is the responsibility of the parents/guardians. If students live more than 1-1/2 miles from school, transportation will be provided by the public school district in which the student resides. Questions concerning bus transportation should be addressed to the public school district in which the student resides.

Students are expected to behave properly on the bus. The safety of all is the prime consideration. A lack of cooperation with safety rules established by the local public school district or the transportation provider may result in suspension from riding the bus as determined by the public-school transportation policy. It may also result in disciplinary action against the student by Aquinas Academy.

TUITION

Aquinas Academy Tuition		
K-6: \$9,733		
Preschool Tuition		
	Half Day	Full Day
PK-3 (2 Days)	\$ 1,745	\$ 2,985
PK-4 (3 Days)	\$ 2,080	\$ 3,555
PK-4 (5 Days)	\$ 3,135	\$ 5,340

Tuition

The Office of Catholic Schools coordinates a tuition policy to be utilized by the Catholic schools within the Diocese of Greensburg. This policy is established to ensure that the tuition procedures and guidelines are consistent and fair among families with children attending Catholic schools within the Diocese. This policy is implemented through the Office of Catholic Schools, under the approval of the Superintendent of Catholic Schools. The Office of Catholic Schools reserves the right to adjust this policy and coinciding procedures as deemed necessary.

Establishing Tuition

The applicable school administration works with the Office of Catholic Schools to establish a tuition rate that is representative of the school's budget needs. The tuition rate is also a product of the communities and families that are served.

Tuition Planning and Payment Schedule

All schools follow the following process:

End of January – beginning of February – Catholic schools open their application process for the upcoming school year and FACTS Grant and Aid application forms are available for parents/guardians to submit for financial aid. If families have applied to FACTS Grant and Aid by March 15, and the student attends the school during the upcoming school year, the FACTS application fee will be deducted from the student's tuition.

End of May – Once parents/guardians have completed the FACTS Grant and Aid financial aid application process and this information has been verified, financial aid award letters are disseminated by the school to parents/guardians noting the tuition amount with any scholarships and financial aid awards.

Options for payment:

- One lump sum payment by **July 15** of the upcoming school year
- Two equal payments – Set up on FACTS Payment Plans due by **July 15** of the upcoming school year and the second payment due by **January 15** of the current school year
- Monthly payment plan set up on FACTS Payment Plans that will bring the balance to zero by May 30 of the current school year
- No cash will be accepted as payment.

The chosen method for payment must be indicated on the Tuition Payment Agreement and signed and returned by all parents/guardians.

Tuition Payment in Default

If a payment is not made, for whatever reason, the following process will be followed:

- The parents/guardians will be notified in writing of the payment not being received.
- The parents/guardians will be given 20 calendar days to bring the account to current status or meet with school administration to have an adjusted payment contract approved (not a guarantee).
- If the account is not brought to current status, or an adjusted payment contract is not agreed upon and approved by school administration, the student enrollment will cease at the end of the current quarter.

The parents/guardians must agree to the following:

- To pay all amounts due under the tuition payment agreement/policy. If another person is responsible to pay any part of the amount due for the child(ren), and she/he fails to pay when due, the parents/guardians must agree to pay all amounts due immediately upon notification by the school
- To pay for the entire semester if the child(ren) leave before that semester is completed
- To abide by the student-parent handbook and know that if the child(ren) violates any portion of the student-parent handbook and/or is removed or expelled from school for any reason consistent with the student-parent handbook or Office of Catholic Schools policy, then the parents/guardians are not entitled to a proportionate refund of tuition. In addition, the parents/guardians are legally responsible for paying any tuition owed at the time the child(ren) stopped attending the school.
- To be legally responsible for paying the tuition described above according to the tuition payment agreement and within the applicable timeframes. The school may take any action available and consistent with applicable law to collect unpaid tuition owed by the parents/guardians including but not limited to withholding academic transcripts and diplomas.
- To understand that their child(ren) may be subject to restriction of school activities or events while tuition is in default.

Transfer of Students with Past Balance

No students will be accepted at any Catholic school within the Diocese of Greensburg if they are carrying a past due balance from any other Catholic school within the Diocese of Greensburg.

UNIFORMS AND DRESS CODE

Uniform Requirements:

Students in Grades K-6 must wear the daily school uniform.

Students in Grades K-6 must wear the gym uniform on physical education days.

Uniforms can be purchased only at the following vendor:

Log Cabin Embroidery (Murrysville) – 724-327-5929

- Provides Every School Uniform Item
- Can arrange to have a fitting time at the store

Disciplinary Actions:

A single abuse of this privilege may result in a dress code referral. Three referrals will result in a detention. Referrals for dress code violations will be sent home as needed. Violations of this code will result in the student not being able to represent the school publicly on the playground, gym, field trips, etc. Pictures of uniforms are available upon request for reference.

Aquinas Academy Boys' and Girls' Dress Code Policy

Shoes/Socks:

- Dress Shoes with Rubber Soled Shoes – Brown, Black or Blue or Conservative Athletic Shoes
- Socks must be worn at all times – Solid White or Navy Blue Colors Only – No Logos – Must be at ankle length or longer. For girls, tights may be worn in place of socks – Solid Navy Blue or White Only

- Boots of any type may not be worn in school. Snow boots can be worn to school, but must be changed for school shoes prior to the beginning of the day. No crocs, mules (backless shoes), or sandals. Shoes with laces must be tied.

Belts:

- Navy blue, brown or black belt must be worn with all pants and shorts.

Hair & Accessories:

- Hair styles are to be simple and neat and not obstruct vision.
- Boy's hair must be completely above the collar of the shirt.
- Bleached or colored hair is not permitted. Mild natural tone highlights in accord with the student's natural hair color are permitted.
- Ear Piercing is acceptable, for girls only. Small earrings are permitted – no dangling earrings. No piercings are acceptable for boys.
- Tattoos are unacceptable.

Physical Education Uniform: (Must be purchased at Log Cabin)

- Physical Education Uniform T-shirt—Short or Long-Sleeved Shirt
- Physical Education Uniform Shorts – right above the knee (front and back)
- Physical Education Uniform Pants
- Conservative Athletic Shoes

Dress-Down Days (Must have a dress-down coupon)

Unacceptable Dress-Down Attire includes:

- o Tight-fitting and immodestly revealing clothing
- o Mini-skirts and tops/dresses with off-the-shoulder or low neckline styles
- o Clothing that is ripped, torn, ragged or dirty
- o Short shorts, spandex shorts, tank tops, midriff tops or short tops
- o T-Shirts with rock band advertising, slang, violent pictures, etc.

Students' dress must reflect the spirit and philosophy of the school. Students are to apply the standard dress code regulations to their casual dress, i.e. Short length, pants at waistline, etc.

Aquinas Academy Girls' Uniform Policy

Polo Shirts:

- All Polo Shirts must have the school logo emblem
- White or Uniform Carolina Blue Polo Shirts – Long or Short Sleeve
- Uniform White Banded Polo Shirts – Long or Short Sleeve
- Uniform White Peter Pan Collar Blouse or Oxford Shirt
- Uniform Solid Navy Blue Sweaters (cardigan/v-neck/crew neck)
- Solid white undershirts only permitted under uniform shirt
- Shirrtails tucked in at all times, unless banded-bottom shirt, worn at the waistline

Pants/Shorts:

- Navy Blue Uniform Pants must be worn at the waistline
- Navy Blue Uniform Shorts – right above the knee (front and back)
- No faded, baggy or cargo items may be worn

Jumpers/Skirts:

- Uniform Plaid Crew Neck Jumpers
- Uniform Plaid or Navy Blue Skirt/Skort

- The hemline must be at knee front and back.

Miscellaneous:

- Make-up is not permitted.
- Scout Uniforms may be worn on Scout meeting days or during Scout Week.

Aquinas Academy Boys' Uniform Policy

Polo Shirts:

- All Tops must have the school emblem
- Uniform White or Carolina Blue Polo or Button Up Oxford Shirt – Long or Short Sleeve
- Uniform White Banded Polo Shirt
- Uniform Solid Navy Blue Sweaters (cardigan/v-neck/crew neck)
- Solid white undershirts only permitted under uniform shirt
- Shirrtails tucked in at all times

Pants/Shorts:

- Navy Blue Uniform Pants must be worn at the waistline
- Navy Blue Uniform Shorts – right above the knee (front and back)
- No faded, baggy or cargo items may be worn

Miscellaneous:

- Boys must be clean shaven – no facial hair is permitted.
- Scout Uniforms may be worn on Scout meeting days or during Scout Week.

***Please Note: When choosing styles of clothing for your child, please make sure that he or she is able to zip and unzip, button or unbutton the article of clothing by themselves.

The official uniform company is: Log Cabin Embroidery— www.logcabinembroidery.com
3941 William Penn Highway
Murrysville, PA 15668
Phone: 724.327.5929

ALL UNIFORM REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES ARE SUBJECT TO THE DISCRETION OF THE PRINCIPAL

UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS

In schools, knowing who carries an infectious disease and what germ may be present is not always possible. Persons with infections do not always have outward signs and often are not aware of being infected. However, there are precautions that can be taken at schools that will help protect from infectious diseases. These protections will protect staff and students from many infectious diseases and result in fewer illnesses.

- Wash your hands with soap and running water at regular times during the school day. Common infectious diseases may be contracted from dirt and waste encountered in the work place.
- Avoid punctures with objects that may contain blood from others.
- Handle discharges from another person's body (particularly body fluids containing blood) with gloves and wash hands thoroughly with soap and running water when you are finished.

- Carefully dispose of trash that contains body waste and sharp objects. Use special containers with plastic liners for disposal of refuse that contains blood or for body fluids that may contain blood. For disposal of sharp objects, use containers that cannot be broken or penetrated. Do not bend, break, or recap needles.
- Promptly remove another person's blood and body waste from your skin by washing with soap and running water.
- Clean surfaces that have blood or body waste containing blood on them with an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved disinfectant or a 1:10 solution of household bleach and water; (The solution should be fresh daily to ensure proper strength.)
- Have a vaccination for protection from hepatitis B if you are in contact with developmentally delayed students, or if you are a school nurse.
- If you are responsible for administering first aid to others or may be placed in a position where you may give first aid, obtain current instruction in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Current instruction will include modification of first aid needed to protect the rescuer from infection.

VISITORS

Anyone entering the building must first report to the office to receive a visitor pass and sign the visitor book. For reasons of safety, the school principal must know who is in the building.

ALL VOLUNTEERS ARE REQUIRED TO OBTAIN ALL NECESSARY CLEARANCES PRESCRIBED BY THE STATE AND THE DIOCESE.

Any person not following this procedure may be asked to leave the building and may be subject to future exclusion from the building. All visitors upon leaving the building must return to the office and sign out. Adults helping with lunch time supervision must sign the visitor book in the school office. Visitor passes are available in the office and must be worn while supervising.

Lunches, shoes, books, etc. may not be taken directly to the classroom. Any such transaction to child or teacher must be made through the school office. This practice helps to eliminate interruptions for the teachers and the students during class hours. Any student who needs to be dismissed early for medical or health reasons, must be met by the parents/guardians in the school office and follow sign-out procedures.

VOLUNTEERS

Aquinas Academy has a high level of parent/guardian involvement directed by a volunteer team. All parents/guardians are highly encouraged to volunteer for at least one activity yearly.

A Volunteer Opportunity Form will be sent home in the first family envelope.

All volunteers in any capacity are required to obtain and have on file at the school office, the following clearances: (All links are located on the website.)

- [Diocesan Code of Conduct](#)
- [PA Mandated Reporter Training](#)
- [VIRTUS Training](#)
- [PA Criminal History Check Form](#) - Every Five Years

- PA Child Abuse Form - Every Five Years
- FBI Fingerprint Check - Every Five Years **OR** Affidavit - Every Five Years
- ACT 24 Clearance.

If you are applying for the FBI Fingerprint Clearance, please use one of the following two service codes:

School Volunteer (PDE-Volunteer) Service Code: 1KG6Y3

School Employee (PDE-Non-Public Schools) Service Code: 1KG6TR

WEATHER EMERGENCIES AND SCHOOL CLOSINGS

Sometimes it becomes necessary to cancel or delay school due to inclement weather (snow, heavy winds, etc...). Aquinas Academy will determine its own designated cancellation. Therefore, always listen or watch carefully for Aquinas Academy, Greensburg as there is also an Aquinas Academy in Gibsonia.

There are several ways this information can be obtained. Parents/guardians are directed to tune into the following TV stations: WTAE, KDKA, or WPXI; the school message system: automated phone call, email, and/or text message; or website www.wpxi.com regarding school delays, closings, and early dismissals. If there is no report regarding Aquinas Academy, Greensburg, you may assume that school is in session.

Parents/guardians, and students are directed not to call the school for such information. Any announcement applies to the total school, preschool through grade six.

Announcements regarding other home school districts affect transportation to or from Aquinas Academy.

(e.g. If District X has a two-hour delay and Aquinas Academy does not, students from District X who ride the bus would not be picked up at the regular time but at the delay time. If District X is closed and Aquinas Academy is open, there would be no bus transportation for Aquinas Academy students living in the District X area. Parents/guardians are expected to provide their own transportation.)

Due to the number of incoming calls from districts and carriers, it is impossible to notify parents/guardians regarding each carrier's departure time. Parents/guardians are asked not to call the school for such information but to listen to the TV stations when bad weather occurs.

Please refer to Aquinas Academy's website for up-to-date information regarding school closings and delays at www.aquinasacademy.org. The school's Facebook and Twitter pages are additional sources of information.

WEAPONS

Possession of Weapons on School Grounds

No person other than public officers in uniform in the exercise of their duties shall bring any weapon as defined in Section 912 of the Pennsylvania Crimes Code, 18 Pa C.S. § 912, onto school grounds or in any school building or vehicle even if they have a legal permit to carry such weapon.

Non-school personnel or students who violate this policy shall be prosecuted as trespassers.

Weapons

The Diocese of Greensburg recognizes the importance of a safe school environment to the educational process. Possession of weapons in the school environment is a threat to the safety of students and staff and is prohibited by law.

The school reserves the right to search anything brought on school property.

Definitions

Weapon: the term shall include, but not be limited to, any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nunchaku stick, brass or metal knuckles, firearm, shotgun, rifle, bb or pellet gun, look-alike gun, chemical agent, explosive device, and/or any other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury.

Possession: a student is in possession of a weapon when the weapon is found on the person of the student; in the student's locker; under the student's control while she/he is on school property; on property being used by the school; at any school function or activity; at any school event held away from the school; or while the student is on her/his way to or from school.

Authority

The Diocese of Greensburg prohibits possession of weapons and replicas of weapons in any school building, on school property, at any school sponsored activity and in any conveyance providing transportation to school or a school sponsored activity.

The Diocese of Greensburg may expel for a period of not less than one (1) year any student who violates this weapons policy. Such expulsion shall be given in conformance with formal expulsion proceedings of the Diocese of Greensburg. The Superintendent may recommend discipline short of expulsion on a case-by-case basis.

In the case of an exceptional student, the Superintendent shall take all necessary steps to comply with the *Individuals with Disabilities Act*.

Delegation of Responsibility

The principal shall report the discovery of any weapon prohibited by this policy to the student's parents/guardians.

The principal will refer the matter to police, if in the sole discretion of the school administration, such a referral is appropriate.

After a review of the facts concerning the incident and in consultation with the Superintendent of Catholic Schools, the administration of the school will decide upon the appropriate disciplinary measure to be taken.

Guidelines

An exception to this policy may be made by the Superintendent, who shall prescribe special conditions or procedures to be followed.

Weapons under the control of law enforcement personnel are permitted.

WELLNESS POLICY

The vision for Catholic education in the Diocese of Greensburg is one where the environment of every school physically, mentally, morally, spiritually, and socially nurtures children to feel and be secure and loved, to love and respect themselves as children of God, to love and care for one another, and to love coming to school, learning, and succeeding.

The schools in the Diocese of Greensburg recognize that wellness and proper nutrition are related to students' well-being, growth, development, and readiness to learn. Research continues to support the inextricable links between student health, behavior, and academic achievement. Schools that exemplify healthy eating and physical activity strongly influence the development of sound lifetime habits, preferences, and practices for good, all-around health.

To ensure the health and well-being of all students, the Office of Catholic Schools establishes that the schools in the Diocese of Greensburg shall provide to students:

- A comprehensive nutritional program consistent with federal and state requirements.
- Access at reasonable cost to foods and beverages that meet established nutrition guidelines.
- Physical education courses and opportunities for developmentally appropriate physical activity during the school day.
- Curriculum programs for grades K-12 that are designed to educate students about proper nutrition and lifelong physical activity, in accordance with Pennsylvania curriculum regulations and academic standards.

Nutrition Education

Nutrition education will be provided within the sequential, comprehensive health education program in accordance with curriculum regulations and the academic standards for Health, Safety, and Physical Education.

- Nutrition education shall teach, model, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Promoting student health and nutrition enhances readiness for learning and increases student achievement.
- Nutrition education shall provide all students with the knowledge and skills needed to lead healthy lives.

RIGHT TO AMEND

Aquinas Academy reserves the right to amend this Handbook.

