



# Parent and Student Handbook Highlights

2025-2026

\*Diocesan policy is in black print, school specific policy is in maroon  
\*\*for the complete handbook, visit our website [www.holycrossweb.com](http://www.holycrossweb.com)



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## **PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK**

Each school shall utilize the Office of Catholic Schools (OCS) template to develop and distribute a handbook for students and parents. All local policies and procedures must be in conformity with the Office of Catholic Schools' policies, guidelines' and regulations.

A committee, representative of the total school community, shall be involved in the development and periodic revision of this handbook. The handbook shall be updated annually to reflect policy and procedural changes. Principals shall establish a process for review and revision of local school policy to ensure changes reflect the input of key stakeholders. All parents, along with students in middle and high school, are required to provide a signature of receipt acknowledging they have read the rules and regulations outlined in the handbook, and they agree to abide by those rules (Appendix AG-1 and AG-3). An acknowledgement form will be provided to students upon receipt of the handbook. The form must be signed and returned by Friday of the first week of school. Failure to have a signed form on file will not prevent the school from enforcing its policies and/or prevent a student from enrolling or continuing to be enrolled at the school.

Faculty and staff members shall be given access to all school handbooks.

In light of the unique situations which may arise in the educational process, and because it is impossible to foresee all school issues that arise, the faculty and administration reserve the right to address and to take appropriate action for any such situations not specifically referenced in this handbook. In addition, in view of the unique and essential religious mission of the school, it is expressly understood that the school may take action in cases where moral offenses occur which reflect adversely on the school, the Catholic Diocese of Arlington, or the Roman Catholic Church, or which interfere with the ability of the school to perform its religious mission or effectively maintain the intimate working relationship of the school and the Community of Faith.

This handbook may be modified by the school after reasonable notice to the parents/students of the effective date of any changes. Any section headings are for convenience of use and shall not affect the interpretation of any provisions. If the school should elect not to take action in a particular situation, this shall not be construed or interpreted as a waiver or preclude the school from acting in a subsequent situation of the same or similar kind.

Handbooks and all subsequent changes are subject to prior written approval by the Diocese. To the extent any local handbook or policy statement therein may be inconsistent with the policies, guidelines, or regulations of the Office of Catholic Schools, the Office of Catholic Schools' policies, guidelines, or regulations shall be of controlling force and effect.

# **DIOCESAN PHILOSOPHY OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION**

*Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations*

*Teaching them to carry out everything I have commanded you. Matthew 28:19-20*

These words of Christ addressed to the apostles at the Ascension bestowed on the Church the office of teacher. Obedient to this divine challenge, the Church provides education permeated with the spirit of Christ and dedicated to promoting the full development of the human person.<sup>1</sup> The two-fold goal of Catholic schools is to provide an environment which will foster rich religious training as well as solid academic education in a Catholic, value-oriented manner.

## **DIOCESAN MISSION STATEMENT**

The Catholic schools in the Diocese of Arlington are an essential component in the educational ministry of the Church. Our schools are committed to providing an education rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ where Catholic doctrine and values and academic excellence prepare each student for a life of faith, service, and integrity.

## **SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT/PHILOSOPHY**

### **MISSION STATEMENT OF HOLY CROSS ACADEMY**

Holy Cross Academy forms young men and women to be saints, scholars, and leaders in the image of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Blessed Mother.

### **HCA CORE BELIEFS**

Holy Cross Academy forms saints by:

- instilling a love of the Church and her Sacraments so each student might take up their cross and follow Jesus.
- leading students in love to greater personal growth as a ministry of Saint Mary of the Immaculate Conception Parish under the direction of her pastor and priests.

Holy Cross Academy forms scholars by:

- developing the whole child: academically, emotionally, spiritually and physically.
- ensuring that parents, teachers, and students work together to see our students fully develop their unique, God-given gifts and talents.
- supporting children to learn their best in a safe, supportive environment, surrounded by caring adults using a variety of traditional and modern educational practices and social experiences.

Holy Cross Academy forms leaders by:

- igniting in our students a passion for supporting their community through acts of service.
- fostering in our students the virtues and character necessary to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ at the foot of His Holy Cross standing with the Blessed Mother.

## PHILOSOPHY OF HOLY CROSS ACADEMY

Holy Cross Academy is a Catholic elementary school in the Diocese of Arlington, which serves the educational needs of children of varying intellectual abilities within the parish of Saint Mary of the Immaculate Conception from preschool through the eighth grade.

The school partners with parents in the task of educating their children and assisting them to attain their fullest potential. The school strives to instill the principles of scholarship and service into the minds and hearts of its students.

As students grow academically within the parish/school community, they see and experience the constant interaction of a living "community of faith" through the care, example, concern, and involvement of their parents, teachers, and priests. As a result, Christ and his message permeate all areas of the students' experience of learning and living.

At Holy Cross Academy we celebrate the gifts of each child, recognizing that every individual is created in the image of God. Within a student-centered learning environment, children are challenged to achieve their potential and to recognize the gift of God in one another. With our primary objective being the education of our students in the Catholic faith for now and for eternity, we emphasize religious instruction in the truths of our faith, character formation, and authentic experiences of prayer and worship. Recognizing that parents and guardians are the first and best teachers of their children, we commit ourselves to establishing strong relationships of trust through frequent home-school communication so that an effective partnership supporting the needs of each learner is cultivated.

Drawing upon the diverse backgrounds of our students, teachers collaborate to create lessons that will teach and reinforce basic skills, as well as challenge students to attain higher levels of learning. In all areas of the school, students are taught to take particular pride in the final product of each assignment as an outward expression of themselves. Extra-curricular offerings help to meet the needs and interests of students beyond the classroom.

At Holy Cross Academy our children learn through active engagement in their classes. This is achieved through creative lesson plans enhanced by interactive technology and hands-on learning. Various teaching styles, including lecture, small group discussion, observation, hands-on experiments, group projects, and student presentations, help to meet the diversity of learning styles present among our students. Teachers incorporate higher level thinking skills into classes at all levels to help each learner attain his or her fullest potential.

Finally, as citizens of the world and learners in a Catholic School, our students participate in meaningful service opportunities so that they form the habit of responding to the challenge of the Gospel of Christ throughout their lives and are inspired to take on leadership roles so that they may be a positive influence on society.

## ***PARENT/GUARDIAN ROLE***

In this handbook, the term “parent” refers not only to a child’s natural or adopted parent, but to a student’s non-parent legal guardian or to any person or agency authorized to act in place of parents.

Since parents have given their children life, the Catholic Church recognizes parents as the primary and principal educators of their children. The Catholic parents' promise at baptism to raise their children as Catholic supports this premise. The Catholic school exists to assist parents in the Christian formation of their children. Since the school is a continuation of the education children are receiving at home, schools should demonstrate respect and support for the parents in their important and challenging task.

As foundation for a faith-community, parents are invited and encouraged to participate in the school’s celebration of prayer and liturgy. Parents are encouraged to participate in the programs which are developed for the education of their children. The wide spectrum of this involvement includes volunteer work, participation in parent-teacher conferences, attendance at meetings and seminars designed to help parents assist their children at home, and active involvement in the school’s Parent-Teacher Organization.

Parents are expected to support the mission and commitment to Christian principles and support the school policies as outlined in school handbooks (i.e., annually sign the school’s Handbook Agreement Form). One of the conditions for initial and continued enrollment at the school is receipt of this signed form indicating the parent’s support of the school’s philosophy, policies, and regulations.

If a parent repeatedly or seriously violates proper school protocol, displays inappropriate or disruptive conduct toward students, or displays disrespectful, disruptive or harassing behavior toward teachers or toward school, parish, or diocesan staff (in verbal, written or digital form), the school may take corrective action. Such corrective action may include, at the discretion of the principal (and, for parish schools, the pastor of the parish) the following: imposition of particular rules or procedures the parent must follow in interacting with the school and its students and staff; restriction or termination of the parent’s access to school or parish property; dismissal of the parent’s child(ren).

The school may impose other appropriate corrective action, without prior recourse, based upon the nature of the parent’s conduct and the surrounding circumstances.

Recognizing that each person is created in the image and likeness of God ensures that dignity is safeguarded, and safe environments are fostered. When parents send their children to Catholic schools and when persons choose careers in Catholic education, they should expect an environment consistent with the truth that God-created sexual identity speaks to His vision for each person’s relationship to Him, oneself and others. Behavior and expressions of a person’s sexual identity within the school environment that are inconsistent with these principles and/or which cause disruption or confusion regarding Catholic teachings on human sexuality are prohibited.

The full cooperation with this policy of school officials, faculty, parents and students is required and a condition precedent to the continued enrollment of each student and the continued employment of each employee, and the enforcement of this policy by the school is deemed a spiritual mandate.

## ***NON-DISCRIMINATION CLAUSE***

Catholic Schools, administered under the authority of the Catholic Diocese of Arlington, comply with those constitutional and statutory provisions, as may be specifically applicable to the schools, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, age, marital status, disability, national origin, or citizenship in the administration of their educational, personnel, admissions, financial aid, athletic, and other school administered programs.

This policy does not preclude the existence of single sex schools, nor does it conflict with the priority given to Catholics for admission as students. This policy also does not preclude the ability of the school to undertake and/or enforce appropriate actions with respect to students who advocate on school property or at school functions, any practices or doctrines which are inconsistent with the religious tenets of the Catholic faith.

## ***OTHER FAITH STUDENTS***

The presence of students from other faiths provides a wonderful diversity to the school. However, the presence of other faith students in the school shall not alter the primacy of Catholic religious formation as an integral component of the school's education program. As such:

- a. Other faith students are expected to participate in the religious formation and education programs of the school.
- b. Other faith students must participate in liturgies (except for reception of the Eucharist), retreats, other religious functions, and religion classes for credit.
- c. Other faith students may be exempt from formal co-curricular or extra-curricular sacramental preparation programs but not from the catechesis held during the school day.
- d. All students are expected, for testing and discussion purposes, to be knowledgeable of the Catholic Church's positions on scripture, revelation, and moral practices. While Catholic teaching respects the various faith traditions of the students attending the Catholic school, parents must be aware that it is the Catholic position that will be taught.

Religious formation and character development are of primary importance at Holy Cross Academy. The students have daily instruction in their faith, not only through their religion classes, but also through the witness of the parish/school community that surrounds them. Teachers base the content of their religion lessons on the diocesan curriculum guidelines. Teachers will use the Virtues in Practice program to help reinforce positive character traits.

Opportunities to worship and to express devotion are an integral part of the spiritual life of the school. These shall include classroom prayer, school Masses, school-wide Rosary, the May Crowning, Stations of the Cross in Lent, confessions, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation.

In order to instill in our students the critical principles of Catholic social teaching, community service, will be incorporated into the curriculum of each grade level. Students will be encouraged to work for the special needs of the community, such as the Advent Giving Tree and lunches for the homeless shelter twice a year.

## ***RESPONSIBLE USE POLICY FOR TECHNOLOGY AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS***

There is no expectation or right to privacy or right to freedom of speech when using the school's computer resources, which are the school's property. Any use of the school's computers and internet access must be in support of education and research and be consistent with the educational objectives of the Office of Catholic Schools.

Using school facilities for internet access and e-mail is a privilege, not a right. Inappropriate use which includes, but is not limited to; unauthorized transmittal or improper use of copyrighted materials or materials protected as trade secrets; transmission of threatening or obscene materials; vandalism of computer files; and violation of computer security as determined by the school administration can result in a cancellation, denial, suspension and/or revocation of those privileges by the school administration and also subject the user to other disciplinary action.

Electronic and/or digital communications with students should be conducted for educationally appropriate purposes and employ only school-sanctioned means of communication.

Users must adhere to local school policy that may further define uses of mobile devices. Access will be determined by the administration of the school. If a particular mobile device is to be used for an educational purpose, the school administration and/or teacher will provide parameters for this use.

Additional responsibilities for use of school facilities for the internet and e-mail are:

- a. When using networks or computing resources of other organizations, students must observe the rules of that organization regarding such use.
- b. Users should not reveal their personal addresses or phone number(s) and shall not reveal the personal address or phone number(s) of others without their authorization/permission.
- c. Users are reminded that e-mail is not guaranteed to be private. Operators of the network/system have access to all e-mail. Messages relating to, or in support of illegal activities, may be reported to the authorities.
- d. Students shall immediately notify the system administrator/school administration if they suspect that a security problem with the system and/or the internet exists.
- e. Any attempt to log onto the internet or the school's network/system as a systems administrator will result in a loss of user privileges at the school. Any user identified as a security risk by the school administration/systems administrator due to a history of actual or suspected unauthorized access to other computer(s), network(s), or system(s) may be denied access to the school's computers, networks, and/or systems.
- f. Users of artificial intelligence (AI) shall generally abide by:
  - i. Teachers and administrators are responsible for supervising students using AI technologies to ensure compliance with this Responsible Use Policy (RUP).
  - ii. Users are accountable for their actions when using AI technologies. Any misuse or violation of this RUP may result in disciplinary action.
  - iii. Students must use AI technologies in a respectful and responsible manner, treating

others with courtesy and consideration in both virtual and physical interactions. iv. Students are expected to create and consume content that is appropriate for an educational setting. Content that is offensive, discriminatory, or violates school policies is strictly prohibited. v. Users should create and access AI content appropriate for an educational environment. Permission and supervision by a teacher or school administrator are mandatory for students to use AI tools at school. Please note that many AI programs require users to be at least 13 years of age for use. Schools should be thorough in their research of the AI programs' Privacy Policy.

- g. Users shall abide by generally accepted rules of network etiquette, which include but are not limited to:
  - i. Messages to others shall be polite and shall not be abusive.
  - ii. Messages shall use appropriate language and shall not use obscenities, vulgarities, or other inappropriate language.
  - iii. Use of the network shall not disrupt use of the network by others.
- h. The diocese/school makes no warranty of any kind, whether express or implied, for internet service. The diocese/school will not be responsible for any damages suffered. This includes loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, mis-deliveries, or service interruptions caused by its own negligence, user errors, or omissions. Use of any information obtained via the internet is at the user's risk. The school specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through internet sources.
- i. Examples of Unacceptable Uses – Users are not permitted to:
  - i. Use technology in sexting or cyber bullying: to harass, threaten, deceive, intimidate, offend, embarrass, or annoy any individual.
  - ii. Post, publish, or display any defamatory, inaccurate, violent, abusive, profane, or sexually oriented material. Users must not use obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, or threatening language. Users must not knowingly or recklessly post false information about persons, students, staff, or any other organization.
  - iii. Use a photograph, image, video, or likeness of any student or employee without express permission of the individual, individual's parent, and the principal.
  - iv. Create any site, post any photo, image, or video of another except with express permission of the individual, the individual's parent/guardian, and the principal.
  - v. Attempt to circumvent system security.
  - vi. Deliberately visit a site known for unacceptable material or any material that is not in support of educational objectives.
  - vii. Violate license agreements, or copy other protected media.
  - viii. Use technology for any illegal activity.
  - ix. Use of the internet for commercial gains or profits is not allowed from an educational site.
  - x. Breach confidentiality obligations of school or school employees.
  - xi. Harm the good will and reputation of the school or school employees.

- xii. Transmit any material in violation of any local, state, or federal law. This includes, but is not limited to: copyrighted material, licensed material, and threatening or obscene material.

Users must immediately report damage of school equipment to the appropriate school officials. The school has the right to monitor student use of school computers, computer-accessed content, AI, and social media. Social media refers to activities that integrate technology, telecommunications, and social interaction through the use of words, images, video, or audio tools. Examples include, but are not limited to, social websites, blogs, message boards, wikis, podcasts, image and/or video-sharing sites, live webcasting, and real-time communities. Because this is a constantly evolving area, this policy applies to all new social media platforms whether or not they are specifically mentioned in this policy.

Violation of the above policy will be dealt with by the administration of the school. Violation of this policy may result in any or all of the following:

- a. Loss of use of the school network, computers, and software including internet access.
- b. Disciplinary action including, but not limited to, dismissal and/or legal action by the school, civil authorities, or other involved parties.

The school retains the right to discipline students for their actions, regardless of when or where they occur, when those actions negatively impact the school's image, reputation, and/or the safety and well-being of the school community. This covers inappropriate behavior in cyberspace including but not limited to messages, chat room commentary, comments/pictures, videos, postings on social networking sites, blogs, wikis, gaming chats, digital transmissions, and other technology related activity.

**Students may only use the internet when given specific permission from a teacher and as long as the student is directly supervised. If the teacher leaves the room, the student must disconnect from the internet immediately.**

Students are to be reminded that their use of the media on school-related projects should reflect the mission of Holy Cross Academy. The goals and mission of the school must be foremost in all media presentations and communications.

Students are advised that any derogatory use of the name of the parish, school or any person associated with the school, including priests, religious, administrators, teachers, staff members, parents, students and volunteers, will be considered a very serious disciplinary infraction. This includes both on-line use and printed or spoken comments. Students who maintain personal social-networking websites are reminded to pay very careful attention to this regulation. Students will be held responsible for anything posted on their site or for a posting they make on any other site. Defamation of the Catholic Church or any church, the faith, the parish, the school or any of its employees, students or families will be cause for out-of-school suspension or expulsion.

*At the beginning of each school year, Holy Cross Academy provides the option to parents to withhold their child's pictures from publication online, in newspapers, etc. We are extremely careful in this matter. For this reason, all parents are reminded that you cannot publish a child's picture online unless you have received that child's parent's permission or a teacher/staff member's permission for his/her picture. The school and its employees respectfully request that no pictures or videos be posted of teachers, staff or classroom events on social media. We appreciate your cooperation.*

## **TESTING**

The school's testing program is intended to assist teachers and administrators in a systematic evaluation of the academic and religion programs, to identify students' strengths and weaknesses, and to aid in the revision of the curriculum and planning of instruction.

In addition to academic tests for grading purposes, the school will administer standardized religion and achievement tests according to the diocesan testing program. All eighth grade students take the high school placement test used in determining placement in diocesan high schools. Teachers are encouraged to review only the format and style of the High School Placement Test as well as test taking strategies with their students. Extensive class time to prep students for this test is not encouraged.

The following tests are administered at Holy Cross Academy:

- School Readiness test – incoming kindergartners, administered in June
- First Grade readiness test - administered throughout the year in kindergarten and first grade
- NWEA/MAP - Administered fall, winter, and spring to all students in grades 3 – 7
- NWEA/MAP – Administered in the winter and spring to grades 2 and 8
- High School Placement Test - Grade 8, administered in December
- Assessment of Catholic Religious Education (ACRE) - Grades 5 and 8, administered in the spring.
- World Language Exam – Grade 8, administered in May

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework reinforces skill acquisition, retention of content knowledge, and formation of good study habits. Although homework has different purposes at different grades, homework is required at all grade levels. The amount of homework a child may have on any given day will vary depending upon the nature of the assignment, the amount of work the child completes in school that day and the speed at which the child completes his/her work at home.

### **SUGGESTED TIME ALLOTMENTS**

Below are the Office of Catholic Schools' guidelines for homework. Homework does not have to be assigned every day, but should generally fall within these ranges:

Grades 1-3: 10 to 30 minutes daily  
Grades 4-6: 30 to 60 minutes daily  
Grades 7-8: 60 minutes to 2 hours daily

All homework will be checked. Teachers will coordinate their schedules so that no more than two tests are given on any one day. Quizzes will not be given when students have two tests scheduled unless they are on one short section or concept. Teachers of the same grade will make every effort to coordinate homework so that work is distributed evenly between the classes. In the beginning of each school year, each teacher will make known to the students and their parents the policy for late or incomplete assignments.

## ***PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION***

Teachers are expected to be reasonably available to parents throughout the school year to keep the lines of communication open in the best interest of the students. Parent-teacher conferences can be scheduled throughout the school year if necessary. Parents should first privately contact a teacher with any concerns about a student or class concerns before seeking intervention by the school administration.

In the event a parent desires to discuss a problem with his/her child's teacher, the parent should make an appointment for a private meeting with the child's teacher. Teachers welcome the opportunity to discuss a matter of concern with parents before it becomes an actual problem. Any parent who wishes to speak with the principal may do so after an initial meeting with the classroom teacher. Similarly, parents should discuss matters of concern with the school principal, and pastor when necessary, before bringing them to the Office of Catholic Schools.

### **SCHEDULING AND OTHER CONFERENCE INFORMATION**

Holy Cross Academy respects the role of parents as the primary educators of their children. Since the school is a continuation of the education children are receiving at home, the school pledges itself to demonstrate respect and support for the parents in their important and challenging task and calls upon the parents to display an attitude of respect and support toward the school, the staff, and the educational process. This attitude of the parents is the most important requirement for the school to fulfill its mission. Parents are asked to attend particularly to the following:

- to support the school's mission and commitment to Christian principles
- to support the goals of the school's administration
- to support the school policies as outlined in this handbook and published by the school administration or the classroom teacher
- to discuss any disagreement with a teacher privately
- to take care that their children adhere to the dress code
- to check their children's homework until the child achieves independence
- to assist their children to maintain a good attendance record and to arrive to school on time, except when the child is sick
- to read all school publications, especially the weekly Crusader Chronicle.
- to volunteer to help out at the school as required by the school, and in other ways as possible
- to support the teachers in their role as instructor by requiring their children to be attentive to all classroom and school rules

Because Holy Cross Academy is first and foremost a faith community, parents are invited to participate in all school liturgies. As a means of positive and ongoing communication between the home and the school, parents are strongly encouraged to attend open PTO meetings and the Academic Fair.

Parents who wish to consult with a teacher are asked to send an email to the teacher or a note with their child requesting a conference. The teacher will respond to arrange the specific date and time.

All families are expected to attend a parent/teacher conference in early November. The purpose of these 15 minute conferences is to provide an evaluation of the child's progress and to allow the teacher and parents to discuss ways of working together for the good of the child. These conferences will be

scheduled on-line through Sign-Up Genius with the homeroom teacher. Longer appointments can be requested at any time during the year. It is an expectation of the school that parents will attend a conference when requested by a teacher or an administrator.

**Under no circumstances may a parent confront or admonish a student who has been involved in an incident with his/her child. If there is a disagreement with the teacher or a classmate, other students should never be involved. It is advised to request the assistance of the principal or assistant principal in settling any disagreement. A child who is questioned by the parent of a friend is put in a very difficult position. This practice is never condoned by the school.**

## **GRADING/REPORT CARDS**

Evaluation of the student is based on teacher judgment and observation of the student's daily work, class participation, effort, and performance on teacher-prepared assessments, to include but not be limited to tests, projects, portfolios, and other tools of assessment.

The purpose of report cards is to present to parents/guardians information about how their student is performing in his/her academic studies, and to alert them to any problems..

Students with identified disabilities who have a current IEP or Student Assistance Plan should receive an asterisk on their report card grade when modifications have been made to the curriculum. A modification changes the content, instructional level, or student workload of subject matter or tests. Conversely, accommodated programs should not be denoted.

### **GRADING SYSTEM**

#### **Grades 1-2**

- M Meets Grade Level Standards – Child consistently meets skills
- P Progressing Towards Grade Level Standards - Child is in process of developing skill
- NI Needs Improvement – Child is not demonstrating skill

### **ACADEMIC PROGRESS SCALE**

The letter M, P or NI is indicated in the appropriate box for each subject area.  
\* (asterisk) indicates modified curriculum

**Grades 3-8** use numeric (percentage) grades. Below 70 is designated by an F.

### **INDICATORS FOR EFFORT, SPECIALS, AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT:**

- 3 Very Good
- 2 Satisfactory/Good
- 1 Needs Improvement
- X Unsatisfactory

Report cards are distributed each trimester. They are an important communication tool between the home and the school. Parents are asked to look over them carefully and to discuss them with their children, paying particular attention to the effort and the social and work characteristic grades. Signed report cards should be returned to the school within three days. Extra credit requested at the end of the trimester will not be given to students so that they can raise their grades. Trimester grades are to reflect the work of the entire trimester.

The grade distribution guidelines for students in 3<sup>rd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade are as follows:

|                                                   |     |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Tests and projects:                               | 50% |
| Quizzes:                                          | 20% |
| Classwork, including notebooks and participation: | 10% |
| Homework:                                         | 20% |

Any class that does not use all 4 of these categories will reassign the weight to one of the above categories. This weighting will not apply to all Specials.

### **Interim Progress Reports**

Interim reports are sent home in the middle of the first and second trimesters. Parents are also encouraged to access to their child's grades through Schoology/Powerschool. Parents who are concerned about a grade are encouraged to contact their child's teacher. It is the school's expectation that parents will access the online grading program regularly.

### **Honor Roll**

Because one of the core goals of Holy Cross Academy is to educate our students to strive for excellence at each level of instruction by developing the necessary skills and principles of scholarship, scholastic honors will be recognized each trimester with the distribution of report cards in grades 5 to 8. Eligibility for honors is as follows:

**Principal's Honor Roll** - 93 or above in all academic subjects, 2 or 3 in all specials

**First Honors** - at least four grades of 93% or higher, no grades lower than 85%, 2 or 3 in all specials

**Second Honors** - 85 or above in all academic subjects (students may not earn below a 2 in consecutive marking periods in a special area course)\*

\*An exception will be made for handwriting if the student is showing effort in this area.

### **National Junior Honor Society**

Candidate selection is based on five criteria: scholarship, service, leadership, character, and citizenship. If selected for membership, a student's grades and behavior will be evaluated throughout their term to ensure continued qualification. The criteria for Holy Cross students are defined as follows:

**Scholarship** – Students who have a cumulative middle school grade point average of 93 percent or higher. For 8<sup>th</sup> graders this is based on grades received in 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and the first two trimesters of 8<sup>th</sup> grade. For 7<sup>th</sup> graders this is based on grades received in 6<sup>th</sup> grade and the first two trimesters of 7<sup>th</sup> grade. These students are then eligible for consideration on the basis of service, leadership, character, and citizenship.

**Service** – This quality is defined through voluntary contributions made by a student to the school or community, done without compensation and with a positive, courteous, and enthusiastic spirit.

**Leadership** – Student leaders are those who are resourceful, good problem solvers, promoters of school activities, idea-contributors, dependable, and persons who exemplify positive attitudes about life. Leadership experience can be drawn from school or community activities while working with or for others.

**Character** – The student of good character upholds principles of morality and ethics, is cooperative, demonstrates high standards of honesty and reliability, shows courtesy, concern, and respect for others, and generally maintains a good and clean lifestyle.

**Citizenship** – The student who demonstrates citizenship understands the importance of civic involvement, has a high regard for freedom, justice, and democracy, and demonstrates mature participation and responsibility through involvement with such activities as scouting, community organizations, and school clubs.

## ***PROMOTION/RETENTION/PLACEMENT POLICY***

A major goal of the school is to help students to complete each academic year satisfactorily. The repetition of a grade is recommended when it is deemed by the school to be necessary and advantageous to the particular needs of the student.

- a. The final decision to promote or retain a student is based on the student's academic performance and best interest as determined by the principal.
- b. Teachers will notify parents if their child is not progressing satisfactorily toward a passing grade in the course.
- c. Elementary students failing one or two academic areas must successfully complete summer school or another program approved by the principal in order to be promoted to the next grade. If a student fails three or more core academic subjects, the student will not be promoted to the next grade.
- d. Students who have not successfully completed summer school or another program approved by the principal but would not benefit from being retained in the grade may be "placed" in the next grade level; however the school must prepare and implement an "Academic Intervention Plan" for the student as a condition of placement.

If a teacher believes that a student should be retained, a conference will be held with the parents no later than the end of the second trimester. Parents who question their child's readiness to move on are encouraged to approach the teachers at any time. A student who fails or does poorly in an individual subject will be required to be tutored or to attend summer school. Parents will be informed if a student must attend an approved summer school program. A written report of the tutoring given or summer school program attended must be sent to the school at least one week before the beginning of the new academic year.

## ***SCHOOL COUNSELORS***

School counselors are available to confer with students in areas which may extend beyond academic matters. While the conferences are generally confidential, the counselor may need to disclose certain information to parents, school administration, or other authorities.

Holy Cross Academy is fortunate to have the services of a student support coordinator (SSC) to assist students with their social and emotional needs. In ordinary circumstances the SSC will not inform parents when she has spoken with their child. There is an expectation of confidentiality. When the SSC has concerns about the safety or welfare of the child, parents will be notified of these concerns. When additional help is needed, the school will make every effort to assist the parents in obtaining the services of a mental health professional who will uphold our faith tradition.

## ***ATTENDANCE***

### **DIOCESAN POLICY FOR ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS**

In order to achieve the goals and objectives of the curriculum, regular attendance by the student is mandatory. The school is normally in session no fewer than 180 days per academic year or the length of time as required by the Virginia Catholic Education Association.

Once a child is enrolled in the school as a student, it is the duty of the teachers and administration to insist on regular attendance in order that the school can progress successfully through the curriculum. Neither the Diocese, the Office of Catholic Schools, the school, nor any of its employees are, however, responsible for ensuring actual attendance. This is the responsibility of the student's parent(s)/guardian(s).

Students in grades kindergarten through grade eight who miss ten or more days of the school year, whether excused or unexcused, and who have not satisfactorily completed the required work, may be considered for retention. Certification of absence by a physician is an exception to the ten-day limit. However, satisfactory completion of required work is still required.

If efforts to work with a family to improve a student's attendance are unsuccessful, a school should not keep an absentee student enrolled. Relatedly, schools should not continue to collect tuition from a family whose student is not regularly attending school.

### **ABSENCE/TARDINESS/LEAVING SCHOOL**

In order to ensure continuous progress in school, regular attendance and habits of punctuality are essential. The school defines proper procedures as:

- a. A written excuse, explaining the reason for absence and signed by the parent, must be presented upon a student's return to school.
- b. Persistent absences may cause serious academic problems (including but not limited to course failure) and could result in the dismissal of the student. The administration or the class teacher will normally review the matter with parents before a decision is made by the administration. Persistent absences may also result in appropriate administrative action.

- c. Except in cases of emergency as determined by the principal/administration and/or a faculty member (as applicable or necessary), a student may only (a) be released from school with the prior written authorization of the student's parent, or (b) leave the school grounds with the prior authorization from the principal/administration.
- d. except for urgent/unique situations, pick-ups after 2:30 are discouraged as it is disruptive to the instruction for all students during the last class of the day.

### **TARDINESS**

Students should arrive at school by 8:05, which is when the first bell rings. This allows the students to organize themselves for the day. A student is tardy if not present in the classroom by 8:10 A.M. A student who is tardy must report to the office for a late slip before going to his/her homeroom. Parents are reminded that they must give themselves extra time for bad weather or heavy traffic. If a student will be considerably late or absent, parents must call the school office before 8:20 A.M. Upon returning to school the student must have a note stating the reason for the absence.

The tardy student will normally be subject to appropriate disciplinary action by the school administration or by the class teacher. A student who is tardy, as determined by local policy, should report to the principal's office or attendance office. A student who arrives late with an excused reason (i.e. doctor's note) is counted tardy. The student who is tardy due to unexcused reasons may be subject to appropriate administrative action. Frequent cases of tardiness should be brought to the attention of the principal so that the parent/guardian may be contacted.

### **ABSENCE FOR OTHER REASONS**

When parents wish to take their student out of school for several days for personal and/or medical reasons, the parents should discuss the student's progress with the teacher. However, the school is under no obligation to provide a tutor, make-up work, or special testing schedules for such a period of absence.

Teachers will provide information about assignments missed, but will not reteach the material. Upon return, students have the number of days they were absent to make up and missed work, including tests, quizzes, and projects. Work that is not complete in the allotted time will be graded as a zero. The administration has the sole discretion to determine the conditions and terms governing such absences.

### **MEDICAL EXCUSES**

In the case of a medical appointment, the student must provide the excuse card issued by the medical office upon return to school. Arrangements must be made with the teacher for all missed assignments and assessments. Parents must sign students out for early dismissals.

Students who return to school after an absence of three or more days must provide the school with a note from the doctor saying that the student may return to class. A student who returns to school after a prolonged illness with a medical excuse which prohibits him/her from participating in physical education or outdoor recess must present a doctor's note stating the reason for these restrictions. This note must be kept on file by the school nurse.

## STUDENT MATERIALS

Keeping track of make-up work is the responsibility of the student and the parents. If a parent wishes to pick up a student's books and assignments, the teacher must be notified before noon. Parents can call the school office and ask that the office staff notify the teacher. The books and assignments will be sent to the school office by dismissal. Parents may not stop by the classroom for the books unless they have made previous arrangements with the teacher.

## ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Each school should formulate a policy of traffic, pedestrian, bike, and bus safety for its students and communicate this policy to all school personnel, students, and their parents. Older students in elementary schools and secondary school students may serve as traffic/pedestrian safety patrols at the discretion of the school principal. Within the scope of this designation, the students shall work under the supervision of and in cooperation with the school principal and the local police liaison for safety issues.

### DAILY BELL SCHEDULES

#### Monday/Tuesday/Thursday Schedule

|       |                                                                                                                    |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 7:00  | Students begin to arrive in Immaculate Conception Hall                                                             |
| 7:45  | Aides walk students to classrooms                                                                                  |
| 7:55  | Teachers pick up remaining students                                                                                |
| 8:05  | First bell, students should be in their classrooms                                                                 |
| 8:10  | Second bell, Morning Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance ( <b><i>Students not in their classrooms are tardy.</i></b> ) |
| 8:18  | First Period                                                                                                       |
| 9:09  | Second Period                                                                                                      |
| 10:00 | Third Period                                                                                                       |
| 10:51 | Fourth Period                                                                                                      |

|       |                       |
|-------|-----------------------|
| 11:05 | Recess for grades K-2 |
| 11:30 | Lunch for grades K-2  |
| 11:39 | Recess for grades 6-8 |
| 12:02 | Lunch for grades 6-8  |
| 12:05 | Recess for grades 3-5 |
| 12:30 | Lunch for grades 3-5  |

|       |                                                                                                             |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 12:28 | Fifth Period                                                                                                |
| 1:19  | Sixth period                                                                                                |
| 2:09  | Seventh period                                                                                              |
| 2:57  | Classes end                                                                                                 |
| 3:09  | Closing Prayer                                                                                              |
| 3:10  | Dismissal begins                                                                                            |
| 3:15  | Aviat Care begins<br>( <b><i>All students remaining at the end of dismissal must go to Aviat Care</i></b> ) |
| 6:00  | Aviat Care ends                                                                                             |

#### Wednesday Schedule

|       |                                                        |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| 7:00  | Students begin to arrive in Immaculate Conception Hall |
| 7:45  | Aides walk students to classrooms                      |
| 7:55  | Teachers pick up remaining student                     |
| 8:05  | First bell, students should be in their classrooms     |
| 8:10  | Second bell, Morning Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance   |
| 8:15  | Mass                                                   |
| 9:13  | Advisory                                               |
| 9:35  | First Period                                           |
| 10:18 | Second Period                                          |
| 10:58 | Third Period                                           |
| 12:25 | Fourth Period                                          |

|       |                       |
|-------|-----------------------|
| 11:05 | Recess for grades K-2 |
| 11:30 | Lunch for grades K-2  |
| 11:35 | Recess for grades 6-8 |
| 12:00 | Lunch for grades 6-8  |
| 12:05 | Recess for grades 3-5 |
| 12:30 | Lunch for grades 3-5  |

|      |                                                                                                             |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1:05 | Fifth Period                                                                                                |
| 1:45 | Sixth period                                                                                                |
| 2:25 | Seventh Period                                                                                              |
| 3:02 | Classes end                                                                                                 |
| 3:09 | Closing Prayer                                                                                              |
| 3:10 | Dismissal begins                                                                                            |
| 3:15 | Aviat Care begins<br>( <b><i>All students remaining at the end of dismissal must go to Aviat Care</i></b> ) |
| 6:00 | Aviat Care ends                                                                                             |

#### Friday schedule

|       |                                                                                                                    |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 7:00  | Students begin to arrive in Immaculate Conception Hall                                                             |
| 7:45  | Aides walk students to classrooms                                                                                  |
| 7:55  | Teachers pick up remaining student                                                                                 |
| 8:05  | First bell, students should be in their classrooms                                                                 |
| 8:10  | Second bell, Morning Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance ( <b><i>Students not in their classrooms are tardy.</i></b> ) |
| 8:18  | First Period                                                                                                       |
| 9:05  | Second Period                                                                                                      |
| 9:52  | Third Period                                                                                                       |
| 10:39 | Fourth Period                                                                                                      |

|       |                       |
|-------|-----------------------|
| 11:05 | Recess for grades K-2 |
| 11:30 | Lunch for grades K-2  |
| 11:39 | Recess for grades 3-5 |
| 12:02 | Lunch for grades 3-5  |
| 12:10 | Recess for grades 6-8 |
| 12:35 | Lunch for grades 6-8  |

|       |                                                                                                             |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 11:26 | Fifth Period                                                                                                |
| 1:03  | Sixth Period                                                                                                |
| 1:52  | Seventh period                                                                                              |
| 2:40  | Rosary                                                                                                      |
| 3:09  | Closing Prayer                                                                                              |
| 3:10  | Dismissal begins                                                                                            |
| 3:15  | Aviat Care begins<br>( <b><i>All students remaining at the end of dismissal must go to Aviat Care</i></b> ) |
| 6:00  | Aviat Care ends                                                                                             |

**\*Classes for Middle School and Specials will be shortened on half-days to 20 minutes:**

|                  |             |
|------------------|-------------|
| 1st period       | 8:18-8:38   |
| 2nd period       | 8:41-9:01   |
| 3rd period       | 9:04-9:24   |
| 4th period       | 9:27-9:47   |
| 5th period       | 9:50-10:10  |
| 6th period       | 10:13-10:33 |
| 7th period       | 10:36-10:56 |
| advisory/rosary  | 11:00-11:20 |
| prayer/dismissal | 11:29       |

## **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

In the morning, students are to be dropped off in front of the school building. Drivers are asked to pull up as far as possible. **Drivers must not pass on the left since some students must exit their vehicles on the left side.** When the front car in the line moves, all cars that are unloaded should begin to exit very slowly. The next car that needs to unload should pull all the way up to the front of the line. Since students are getting out of their cars at all different times, extreme caution is urged on all drivers. All drivers are asked to look out for the safety of all children in the parking lot.

Parents wishing to walk their child into the building will park in front, facing the building and proceed to the main entrance. Parents may walk their child into the lobby, where faculty, staff or another student can assist them to their classroom. **These parents may need to remain parked until after dismissal so as not to disrupt the drop off line.**

For dismissal, all cars must display their carpool number so that it can be read easily. Cars are to form a double line in front of the building, without blocking the entrance and leaving a fire lane closest to the building. Once the front lot is filled, cars will begin to fill the middle parking spaces in the side lot and then form a double line around. All other cars will form a single line on Stafford Lakes Parkway.

When the students begin to exit the building, we ask parents/guardians to be extra vigilant in observing children and other drivers. **Parents are encouraged to avoid cell phone use at this time.** Students should be picked up at the sidewalk and escorted to the cars. Handicapped drivers or those with small children who need assistance are asked to let one of the adults or student safeties know that they cannot leave the car to get their children. We will gladly assist you. Cars will be allowed to exit when all parents and students are in the cars. All students should be seated and have their seat belts buckled before the driver begins to exit. We prefer to wait the extra minute to insure the safety of all the children.

Once the side lot is emptied, the last cars will form a single line in front of the school. These students will exit the main entrance. Once all these cars have been dismissed, the remaining students will be taken inside. Parents will need to park in the spaces in front of the building to come in to get them. The students will be signed in to Aviat Care and parents will be charged the late pick-up fee.

**Because we are focused on student safety during dismissal, parents may not go to the classroom to get their children, pick up assignments, or speak to a teacher. Teachers are responsible for the safety of all of their students during dismissal in the classroom and in front of the building. We thank parents for respecting the teachers' obligation to focus on student safety during this time.** Students may not leave until their carpool number is posted. Parents who must occasionally leave before dismissal begins will give their carpool numbers to the office. These numbers will be called at the

beginning of the regular dismissal. These drivers are asked to park in such a way that they can leave without disrupting the carpool line. Drivers are reminded that parking in the circle is illegal.

When coaches take students to games, they must follow these carpool procedures. The office will call the students to the front lobby once a coach or supervising parent is present. They may change for the game at that time. Drivers may park along Stafford Lakes Parkway. They may not park in the circle with the ***no parking*** signs.

## **SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS**

### **PRINCIPAL'S COMMUNICATION**

The Crusader Chronicle, our weekly school e-blast, will be sent home electronically each week during the school year. The purpose of this newsletter is to keep families informed about what is taking place in school and to provide timely reminders of school events and procedures. It is important that at least one parent read the Crusader Chronicle each week. Parents are encouraged to contact the teacher first if they have any concerns related to the classroom and to look upon the principal and assistant principal as resources to facilitate communication within our school community. Both the principal and the assistant principal will make themselves available for parents in a timely manner.

The school maintains an on-line calendar that is included in the Crusader Chronicle and available on our website. Families are encouraged to refer frequently to this calendar, which is updated regularly.

### **TAKE-HOME COMMUNICATION**

All materials prepared by parents/guardians for release to the parish or school community must be approved by the Principal or his/her designee.

All items for the family newsletter must be emailed to the principal by the end of the school day on Thursday. Any flyer or information that a parish or school organization wishes to be sent to the school families must first be approved by the principal and must be sent by email.

Parents are strongly encouraged to contact their child's teacher with any concerns they might have by sending in a note or an email message requesting a conference or a phone call. The principal, assistant principal and teachers will willingly schedule a conference to discuss any concerns or suggestions a parent may have. It is important to keep open the avenues of communication as we partner for the success of our students.

### **TELEPHONE USE/MESSAGES FOR STUDENTS**

Cell phones in class are a distraction and take away from instruction. Parents who give their child a cell phone to bring to school, must sign a Cell Phone Agreement and the phone must be handed in to the student's homeroom teacher or the front office upon coming to school. **Students are not permitted to carry cell phones in school.** The student is responsible for retrieving it at the end of the day.

In the case of an emergency, the student can make a call from the office with their teacher's permission. Students who forget their lunches are able to purchase lunch, they do not have to call

home. At any time that a parent wants to speak with his/her child or wants the child to call, they will contact the office for this to take place.

**If a student is seen with a cell phone on school property, whether in use or not, before, during or after the school day, the phone will be taken and held in the office until a parent comes to pick it up.**

#### **INCLEMENT WEATHER/SCHOOL CLOSINGS**

In addition to the traditional 180 school days, schools should add at least three extra days to the school calendar each year to accommodate days off due to inclement weather or other non-weather-related emergencies. In the event these inclement weather/emergency days are not used, schools may dismiss for the summer after completing the required 180 school days. If, however, during the course of the year, the school uses more than three inclement weather/emergency days, it is not necessary for the school to extend its school year beyond the 183 budgeted days, provided the school has surpassed 1038 hours of instructional time (as defined by the Commonwealth of Virginia).

If, during the course of the year, the school uses inclement weather/emergency days, it may be necessary to modify the published school calendar. **Three snow days are built into the school calendar.** If those days are not used, the last day of school will be adjusted.

When Holy Cross Academy must modify its schedule for bad weather, families will be notified as early as possible via School Messenger. School Messenger sends an email, text, and phone call to all contacts that families add to Powerschool.

Families should use their best judgment concerning inclement weather. Parents should keep their child home if they do not feel the driving conditions in their area are safe. If parents keep their children home or will be delayed in bringing them to school, parents are requested to call the school office. Families who have their children in Aviat Care are asked to make arrangements to pick them up within one hour of the school closing.

If school closes unexpectedly for a single day, there will be no academic requirements for that day. If, however, the school will be closed for an extended period due to weather or community concern, the school may transition into virtual instruction for the required duration. These will count as instructional days.

#### **PHOTOS AND OTHER MEDIA**

Parents may opt their children out of participating in videotaping, audio recording, school pictures, other photography, or participation involving the Internet. When a parent decides to exercise this right, the school is required to use the Waiver/Right to Object Form (*Appendix N*). All student or parental publications are subject to review and approval by the school administration prior to publication.

Students are reminded that their use of the media on school-related projects must reflect the mission of Holy Cross Academy. The goals and mission of the school must be foremost in all media presentations and communications.

## ***PARENT ORGANIZATIONS***

Parent-Teacher Organizations (and like-named entities) support the critical relationship between schools and parents, the primary educators of their children. These organizations support the principal to advance the school's mission.

Every school should have an effective parent-Teacher Organization. It can help mobilize the parent community regarding legislative proposals impacting Catholic education. The work of PTOs and like organizations shall be guided by the PTO Handbook and the direction of the pastor and principal.

All parent organization activities and all materials prepared by parents for release to the Parish or school community must be submitted to the principal or designee for approval prior to implementation and/or distribution.

All PTO monies must be deposited in the parish or school account as designated by the pastor. In consultation with the principal, the PTO officers should prepare a budget and submit it to the pastor and principal for approval

PTOs shall have by-laws which establish, among other things, term limits for officers as well as the organization of committees. Persons nominated to serve as a PTO board member must receive the approval of the pastor and principal.

### ***Family Service Program***

The support of each family is critical to the success and continued growth of our school community. Holy Cross Academy offers many opportunities for parents to be involved in the education of their children. All parents are encouraged to participate in school activities and to find some opportunity to be involved in the school. Together the home and the school can accomplish great things!

Each family with children in grades K-8 is required to contribute a minimum of eight (8) service hours per school year. Parents, guardians and other adult family members may contribute to their family's required service hours by volunteering to support events, activities and initiatives that strengthen the school community. **Family members must be background compliant in order to supervise children on or off campus. See the office staff, business manager or school website for information and instructions on how to fulfill this requirement.**

There are some opportunities that are more extensive and require more hours of service. These opportunities will completely fulfill the family's 8 hour requirement for the year. They are:

- PTO board positions
- Room parents
- Auction/event committee chair
- Extra-curricular club moderator
- Athletic coach or assistant coach

Other opportunities will be tracked by the hour and include:

- Lunch/recess monitoring

- Working a PTO or school event
- Assisting with a “specials” class (library, art, computer K-4)
- Scrip program volunteer

If you are unsure about qualifying hours that you have or plan to serve, please check with the office. The academic year for counting service hours is from July 1<sup>st</sup> – May 31<sup>st</sup> (8<sup>th</sup> grade families should submit their service hours by May 15<sup>th</sup>). Families who fall short of the service-hour obligation will be billed at a rate of \$20 per unserved hour. This amount must be paid in full before final report cards or transcripts are released.

### ***SCHOOL PROGRAMS***

Parents are invited to all programs which are given by the school. If for some reason, a parent cannot attend an evening performance, the parent is encouraged to request the information about a daytime performance given to the students. This may or may not be listed in the Family Newsletter but parents are always welcome to take seats behind the students as they do at Mass. During both daytime and evening performances, everyone is expected to remain seated, except for picture taking, and to be silent during the performance. Siblings who attend the performance in the evening are expected to sit with their families. **No one may reserve seats** except for the yearbook photographer and the family whose seats will be reserved by the PTO as part of the school Auction.

## ***VI. CO-CURRICULAR AND EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES***

### ***PARTICIPATION***

In order for sportsmanship to be rooted in Catholic values, it is expected that coaches, athletes, and fans display respect, civility, and responsibility in words and actions before, during, and after all athletic contests and/or practices. These policies are developed to assist the four diocesan high schools in accomplishing their goal of providing a Catholic education which is rooted in the teachings of the Catholic faith, especially the practice of respect for each person. The policies outlined in this section exist to ensure good sportsmanship and fair play.

Participation in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities is a privilege, not a right. Students who successfully meet the school’s academic requirements and adhere to the code of conduct may participate in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

### ***OTHER EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AT HCA***

#### ***Instrumental Music***

Holy Cross Academy participates in a Band and Keyboard Program. Students in grades 3 to 8 will receive all the necessary information at the beginning of the school year. Lessons are given during school hours on a rotating basis. Full band practice is usually held during lunch or after school. It is the responsibility of each band member to make up any class work that has been missed. If participation in band creates a conflict with a particular class, the student or parent is encouraged to contact the band instructor so that other arrangements can be made.

### **Chorus**

Students in grades 5 to 8 are invited to join our school chorus, Youth of Note. The Chorus provides music for our school liturgies and performs concerts twice a year.

### **Safety Patrol**

Eighth grade students provide a valuable service to the school by serving as safeties and assisting with the dismissal of younger students. Safeties are asked to take this commitment very seriously and to arrive at their designated spots promptly. All students and drivers are asked to respect the directions of the safeties whose first concern will always be the welfare of the school children. Parents are strongly encouraged to speak respectfully to the safeties, even in moments of frustration, since the students learn a great deal from the example of adults.

### **Scout Programs**

Holy Cross Academy sponsors scouting programs at different grade levels. Parents who are interested in starting a scout troop are encouraged to contact the office.

### **Altar Servers**

Boys and girls in grades four to eight who wish to serve on the altar must sign up to do so in their own parishes. Those who serve in their parishes will be permitted to serve school Masses.

### **Athletics**

Holy Cross Academy is not part of the CYO program. Athletic programs are offered by the school to Middle School students. Therefore all athletes are under the direct authority of the school at all times, whether on the school property or not.

Parents who are willing to coach teams are encouraged to contact the school's athletic director. The athletic director reserves the right to assign coaches to teams and to terminate the services of any coach who does not comply with the school's philosophy and goals. The athletic director is appointed by the principal.

Holy Cross Academy sponsors many other extracurricular programs each year, **including Battle of the Books, Chess Club, Yearbook Club and Science Squad**. Information about all these programs is given in the family newsletter.

Students who are still at school after dismissal is completed and who are not part of an activity will be signed into Aviat Care. Students who are not picked up when an activity ends will be signed in to Aviat Care as well.

## ***ACADEMIC POLICY***

The academic success of each child is of primary importance to our school. When a student does not meet the minimal standards established to pass a subject, the school must take the necessary action to remedy this situation. Involvement in extracurricular activities demands a significant time commitment. It is hoped that by relieving this demand on the student's time, he/she can devote sufficient time to homework and studying.

If a student's course grade drops below 70%, the student will be suspended from school-sponsored activities. The period of suspension will last until the teacher informs the athletic director that the student has shown notable effort to improve this grade. The student will be evaluated by the teacher within two weeks. At this time the student may be allowed to participate in the activity. Participation will remain dependent upon the student's continued effort and progress until a passing grade is obtained.

## ***SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS***

The school is not responsible for providing supervision for students who remain on school property after the conclusion of the instructional day, unless the student is enrolled in an extended day/after care program, or participating in a school-sponsored activity (such as athletics or theater).

All students who remain on school property must sign into Aviat Care unless they are in a designated activity. Once the activity in which a student is participating ends, the coach or sponsoring adult (tutor or club moderator) must remain with the student until the parent comes or until the student is signed into Aviat Care. Students may not remain unsupervised at any time at Holy Cross Academy.

## ***VII. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES & BEHAVIOR***

### ***Formation of Holy Cross Academy Students***

Below are examples of how students conduct themselves when they act as saints, scholars, and leaders:

#### **Holy Cross Academy students display the traits of saints by...**

- Developing an unwavering faith in God and commitment to their religious beliefs
- Treating others with compassion as they would want to be treated
- Being responsible for their actions and setting a positive example for others
- Doing the right thing, even when no one is looking
- Showing humility, recognizing their own limitations and giving credit to others
- Giving generously with their time, talents, and treasures
- Participating with their whole heart and mind in Mass and during all prayers
- Exhibiting a strong sense of self-discipline
- Practicing the virtue of forgiveness, letting go of grudges and showing mercy
- Cultivating a spirit of gratitude, appreciating the gifts and blessings in their lives

#### **Holy Cross Academy students display the traits of scholars by...**

- Giving their best possible effort each day to maximize their God-given abilities
- Applying their knowledge to make positive difference in their self, community and others
- Sharing their understanding of Catholic teachings with clarity and conviction
- Listening carefully to and learning from their parents, teachers, and peers
- Using learning resources and technology appropriately to aid in their learning
- Completing their assignments each evening to the best of their ability
- Expressing meaningful ideas through speech, writing and action

- Recognizing that knowledge is a lifelong journey and a gift from God.
- Recognizing that a strong educational foundation enhances their ability to contribute meaningfully to the world
- Understand that education is not solely about academics but also encompasses spiritual, moral, and social dimensions

### **Holy Cross Academy students display the traits of leaders by...**

- Dedication to serving others, whether through acts of charity, community service, or helping those less fortunate
- Serving in leadership positions on campus and in our parish
- Contributing to the well being of the school community by setting an example for others to follow
- Looking to the saints as role models for leaders in the faith
- Integrating their faith into their leadership roles, guiding others with a love
- Putting the needs of others before their own and serving the community with humility
- Communicating with clarity and empathy, fostering a positive environment within HCA
- Working well with others, valuing different perspectives and ideas
- Considering their impact on the community and aligning their choices with the values of Holy Cross Academy
- Taking initiative, identifying areas for improvement and implementing positive change within the school community

## ***DRESS CODE***

The dress code provides a standard for our students, which fosters an environment conducive to learning and respectful behavior. Final decisions regarding the HCA uniform and dress code rest with the principal/administration. For a consistent appearance, uniforms are to be purchased only through Flynn O'Hara. (available at HCA used uniform sales, [www.flynnohara.com](http://www.flynnohara.com), or at one of their stores).

## **UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS**

### ***Footwear for All Grades***

- HCA shoes must be all black (including logos) with no other colored designs. Any type of boots, clogs (shoes without a back), shoes with an open toe, ballet flats, or shoes with heels above one inch are not permitted. Shoes must fasten and stay on the student's foot, even when enjoying recess
- boys wear gray crew socks, girls wear maroon crew socks, tights or knee socks (no leggings)

### ***Optional Uniform for Pre-School/Pre-Kindergarten***

- gray uniform elastic band shorts/pants or gray sweat pants
- maroon or gray HCA pre-printed t-shirts (offered in short sleeve or long sleeve)

### ***Regular (Winter) Uniform for Girls in Kindergarten (May be worn year round)***

- HCA plaid jumper with white peter pan collared blouse or turtleneck
- gray elastic waist dress pants without belt and white peter pan blouse (only under ¼ zip or school sweater)
- Gray HCA logo ¼ zip sweatshirt or school sweater (¼ zip to be worn on Mass and picture days)

***Regular (Winter) Uniform for Boys in Kindergarten (May be worn year round)***

- gray elastic waist dress pants without belt and white button down shirt (tie may be worn as an option)
- gray HCA logo ¼ zip sweatshirt or school sweater (¼ zip to be worn on Mass and picture days)

***Optional “Summer” Uniform for all Kindergarten (only August - October and April - June)***

- gray uniform elastic waist shorts without belt
- maroon HCA logo polo

***Regular (Winter) Uniform for Girls in Grades 1 to 5 (May be worn year round)***

- HCA plaid jumper with white peter pan collared blouse or turtleneck and maroon HCA logo sweater
- gray dress slacks with black belt and white blouse under maroon HCA logo sweater

***Regular (Winter) Uniform for Girls in Grades 6 to 8 (May be worn year round)***

- HCA plaid skirt with white oxford blouse and maroon HCA sweater/sweater vest
- gray dress slacks with black belt and white oxford blouse and maroon HCA sweater/sweater vest
- 8th grade only - maroon HCA logo ¼ zip sweatshirt or HCA logo sweater (¼ zip to be worn on Mass days)

***Regular (Winter) Uniform for Boys in Grades 1 to 8 (May be worn year round)***

- gray dress slacks with black belt and white button down shirt with uniform tie and maroon HCA logo sweater
- Middle School only option- sweater vest with HCA logo
- 8th grade only - HCA logo maroon ¼ zip sweatshirt or HCA logo sweater (¼ zip to be worn on Mass days)

***Optional “Summer” Uniforms for 1-8 (only August through October and April through June)***

- gray uniform shorts with black belt
- maroon HCA logo polo

***Physical Education Uniforms for Grades K to 8***

- gray athletic shorts and gray or maroon t-shirt with HCA logo
- gray or maroon sweat suit with HCA logo (no other sweat suit may be worn)

***Accessories and Grooming***

- Girls’ jumpers and skirts may not be more than three (3) inches above the knee. Parents are asked to exercise caution in hemming them at the beginning of the HCA year. Correct uniform length must be maintained and adjusted as necessary through the end of the HCA year.
- No part of the uniform may be rolled.
- Girls may have one piercing in each earlobe only and earrings must be small posts. Hoops and dangling earrings may not be worn. Boys may not wear earrings.
- Students may only wear one religious necklace; bracelets and smart watches may not be worn.
- No make-up may be worn, including false eyelashes and nail polish.
- Hair spray, perfume and cologne are not to be brought to HCA.
- Tattoos, henna, or tattoo transfers are not permitted.
- Students are expected to maintain neat hairstyles. Extreme hairstyles or hair extensions are not permitted.
- Students should maintain their natural hair color. Artificial color, bleaching, and highlights are not permitted.
- Boys’ hair may not touch the shirt collar and faces should be clean shaven.
- Students’ hair may not be in their eyes. It must not go below their eyebrows.
- Girls with hair in their faces will be required to pull it back with a hair tie, barrette or headband maroon, gray, white, black or brown in color. Bandanas are not permitted.

- A base layer worn under the uniform shirt must be solid white.
- Students may not wear sweatshirts or jackets in class or at assemblies except when they are in their PE uniforms. Students who are cold will wear the HCA sweater.
- While the students are in the winter uniform, they are required to wear the HCA sweater at Mass each week. Students are reminded to make special efforts to wear their uniforms properly and to be clean and neat for Mass.
- Hats may not be worn indoors.
- On the day the students have PE, they are expected to wear their PE uniform.

### **Dress Down Days**

When students are permitted to dress down on a HCA day or at a HCA function, including Middle HCA dances, they must abide by the following dress code:

- Guidelines on grooming and appearance apply to dress down days just as traditional HCA days.
- Clothing should be neat and fit properly - neither too tight nor too loose.
- Clothing must not be transparent or prevent students from participating in the day's activities (keep in mind gym class and/or recess).
- Shirts for both boys and girls must reach past the waist and have a full back and shoulders. Strapless or spaghetti straps are not permitted.
- Students may either wear their Holy Cross Academy gym shorts or other shorts that are no shorter than three inches above the knee.
- Girls' skirts or dresses may not be more than three inches above the knee.
- Clothing with any inappropriate words or images are not permitted.
- Jeans, sweat pants, or slacks are acceptable but must be free of rips or tears.
- Students may not wear tights, leggings, jeggings, yoga pants, or other tight fitting pants.
- Students may not wear flip-flops, sandals, Crocs, or heels taller than one inch.

Students who come to HCA or a HCA function with inappropriate clothing will wait in the office until their parents can pick them up. If a parent cannot pick up their child, the students will be lent a sweat suit from the Lost and Found to wear for the day. Students who are out of dress code on a dress down day will be prohibited from participating in the next dress down day.

### **Spirit Wear Days**

At certain times during the HCA year, students will be permitted to wear Holy Cross Academy attire to show off their HCA spirit.

- Students may wear their choice of tennis shoe/sneaker and socks on spirit days.
- Students may wear their choice of HCA shirt, jersey, or sweatshirt with HCA gym shorts, HCA gym pants, or blue jeans.

### **UNIFORM VIOLATION**

Uniform violations will be noted by the homeroom teacher for the deliberate improper wearing of uniforms. Students with multiple uniform violations may not participate in the next scheduled "dress down day."

It is the responsibility of the student's homeroom teacher to issue uniform violations. If another teacher notices that a student is repeatedly out of uniform, he/she shall mention it to the student's homeroom teacher for them to contact the parents. Ongoing uniform concerns should be passed on to the assistant principal.

## **BULLYING POLICY**

Bullying is defined as any aggressive and unwanted behavior that is intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate the person being bullied; involves a real or perceived power imbalance between aggressor or aggressors and person being bullied; and is repeated over time or causes severe emotional trauma. Bullying includes cyber bullying. Bullying does not include inappropriate developmental teasing, horseplay, argument, or peer conflict.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- a. Physical intimidation or assault
- b. Extortion
- c. Oral or written threats, including text messaging
- d. Malicious teasing
- e. Putdowns
- f. Name calling
- g. Threatening looks
- h. Gestures or acts of aggression (overt and covert)
- i. Cruel rumors & false accusations
- j. Social isolation
- k. Cyberbullying

Bullying is prohibited. School personnel will not tolerate any bullying on diocesan school grounds or at any school-sponsored activity (on or off school grounds). In addition, the Office of Catholic Schools expects students and parents who become aware of an act of bullying or cyber bullying to report it to appropriate school personnel (e.g. principal, teacher, school counselor). The Office of Catholic Schools expects staff members who become aware of an incident of bullying to take appropriate steps to intervene unless intervention would be a threat to staff members' safety. If a staff member believes that his/her intervention has not resolved the matter, or if the bullying persists, he/she shall report the bullying to the school principal for further investigation.

In cases of reported bullying, the principal or designee shall interview all students involved (i.e. the aggressor(s) and the person being bullied) and investigate, as appropriate. This investigation may include interviews with students, parents/guardians, and school staff; review of school records; and identification of parent and family issues. Any student who retaliates against another for reporting bullying may be subject to appropriate consequences. Consequences for students who bully others shall depend on the results of the investigation and may include:

- a. Counseling
- b. Parent conference
- c. Detention
- d. Suspension and/or expulsion

Depending on the severity of the incident(s), the principal may also report incidents of bullying to law enforcement, if appropriate.

## ***DETENTION***

Administration, faculty and staff have the authority to give a student detention for the following infractions:

- Defiance of school rules
- Leaving an assigned area without permission
- Disobedience or disrespect to authority
- Repeated inappropriate lunchroom behavior
- Use of foul language or disrespect to God's name
- Taking or damaging others' belongings
- More severe disruptive behavior: i.e., throwing objects
- Gossiping
- Copying homework. This will also result in both parties receiving a 0% for the assignment(s) assuming that the second student was aware of the copying.
- Hitting – minor incidents
- Bullying – minor incidents
- Repeat infractions of chewing gum
- Inappropriate touching. If this is sexual in nature, a suspension will be given.
- Any inappropriate behavior which the principal or assistant principal considers serious enough to merit a detention.

## ***IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION***

In-school Suspension may be given by the principal or assistant principal for the following infractions:

- Fighting, verbal or physical harm to another person
- Sexually inappropriate behavior
- Damage of school or personal property
- Disregard for a teacher's personal property
- Obscene language or gestures
- Serious or repeated disrespect to authority
- Repeated incidents of bullying or one serious incident of bullying
- Cheating on a test, paper or project
- Use of a cell phone at school, to include texting, posting on social media, taking photographs or videos of others
- Threatening another member of the school community, including electronically. Depending upon the severity, this could lead to an Out-of-school Suspension or Expulsion.
- Any inappropriate behavior which the principal or assistant principal considers serious enough to merit an in-school suspension.

## ***OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION***

Out-of-school suspension may be given immediately for the following infractions and can last from two to ten days.

- Fighting, verbal or physical harm to another person, including threats of harm
- Repeated incidents of fighting
- Sexual harassment

- Texting, posting on social media, taking photographs or videos of faculty or staff.
- Inappropriate Internet use, including, but not limited to, misuse of the name of the parish or school or any of its employees and any show of a lack of respect to anything pertaining to our faith or any faith and anyone associated, however remotely, with Holy Cross Academy
- Repeated incidents of bullying or one serious incident of bullying
- Repeated infractions listed above
- Any seriously inappropriate behavior that the principal or assistant principal considers serious enough to merit an out-of-school suspension.