

Ave Maria Catholic Academy
Mission Statement

Inspired by the faithfulness of the Blessed Mother, Ave Maria Catholic Academy exists to provide an everlasting spiritual foundation and superior academic background for all of its students, who in time, will strengthen, enlighten and better our community, our Church, and our world.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide information about the school's structure, which may assist parents as they work with the faculty in the education of their children. The focal point of all education is the growth and development of the human person. The special nature of Catholic education enables us to ensure that your child's intellectual growth is coupled with his/her spiritual growth to become true disciples of Christ. We work to accomplish this in a nurturing yet challenging atmosphere within a Christian perspective. Our aim is to guide our students to a sense of responsibility, self-discipline, and an appreciation of each person's uniqueness.

A good school system can only be maintained and improved by a sincere interest and cooperation between the home and school. We encourage your participation and support of our various school activities, especially school liturgies. As we strive to instill a positive faith experience in your children, we know that our example as Christians is the model for our students to follow. It is also your example at home through prayer, service, and participation in the Mass that encourages and fosters your child's spiritual, moral, Catholic development.

Thank you for entrusting the education of your child/children to us. The board, administration, faculty, and staff of Ave Maria Catholic Academy assure you of our complete dedication to this task.

Sincerely yours,
Mrs. Maria Cuomo

SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

Ave Maria Catholic Academy is dedicated to building an atmosphere of love, trust, and care among students, parents, and staff. We share with the family the threefold mission of the Church: to teach the Gospel message, to build community in the life of the Church, and to provide service to the Church and world community.

At AMCA we are actively involved in forming the whole person spiritually, mentally, and physically. Students develop a positive life outlook and self-image through the teaching that all people are worthy of respect, have a right to their dignity, and are special in the eyes of God.

Through the integration of religious truths and values within the curriculum, students form Christian insights into the problems that face individuals and society today. Students also acquire skills to address these issues effectively. Through prayer and in conjunction with parents, priests, and community, our mission is to instill a love of life, respect for others, an eagerness to learn, and a willingness to grow and follow the Gospel of Jesus Christ in word and action.

POLICY OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

In addition to our educational purposes, Ave Maria Catholic Academy bases all of our activities on the Christian teaching of the essential equality of all persons as rooted in the Fatherhood of God, Christ's love, and our supernatural destiny. Thus, we shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or ethnic origin in the administration of educational and admission policies and athletic or other school-administered programs as subscribed to by all Catholic elementary schools/academies in the Diocese of Brooklyn.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION, FACULTY, AND STAFF

- ❖ Ave Maria Catholic Academy is administered by the principal, Mrs. Maria Cuomo. The faculty and staff consist of a school secretary, eleven full-time teachers, four part-time teachers, and four assistant teachers. **In order to help organize and support the efficient operation of the school, the school office is open daily from 8:30-9:30 and 1:00-2:00 for matters of records clarification, payments, and other questions/concerns. Unless unforeseen circumstances arise, please conduct school business during these times only.**
- ❖ *If you need to meet with the principal, please contact the school office first to set up an appointment. If an emergency arises, and you need to see the principal immediately, we will make every effort to accommodate you.*
- ❖ Teachers are available for set conference days throughout the school year. If you have any questions or concerns about your child at any other time during the school year, please call the school to set up an appointment to meet with the teacher. It is unsafe to conduct such meetings while teachers are dismissing students, as they must have their full attention on the children.
- ❖ It is always recommended that you discuss any concerns you have with the teacher first and then request to meet with the principal if needed.
- ❖ Please keep this school year calendar in a prominent place for easy referral. You will receive a calendar update each month with any changes or additions to the original calendar. The back of the calendar update also contains school information. Letters from the principal and teachers are sent home as needed. **Please read all correspondence and refer to the calendar updates in order to be fully informed of AMCA happenings.**
- ❖ Whenever possible, please send all items for the school office with your child. These will be sent down to the office in the teacher's office envelope. We do not recommend sending cash payments with your child.
- ❖ Emergency situations sometimes require that a student call home. On such occasions students may come to the office with their teacher's permission and use the phone.
- ❖ **Children MAY NOT call home for forgotten homework, projects, lunch or other items, and we ask that you not bring these items to school for your child. These items will NOT be accepted for delivery to your child**

Please know that the administration, faculty, and staff take very seriously our commitment to you, your children, and the education community of Ave Maria Catholic Academy. We strive to keep communication lines open, resolve any issues swiftly and fairly, and to be supportive of the needs of our school families.

SCHOOL POLICIES

I. Arrival and Dismissal

1. Arrival

- ❖ Students in grades Pre-Kindergarten to 8 should plan to arrive at school between **7:55 and 8:05am** and enter through the 101st Street doors. Students will meet their teacher in the school auditorium. Nursery students enter at 8:30 or 11:30 through the main doors. Nursery students will meet their teacher at the door. **Parents are NOT PERMITTED to accompany their children into the school building in the morning. This is for the safety of the children.**
- ❖ Teacher supervision of the entrances begins at 7:55. School doors DO NOT open before 7:55am regardless of weather conditions, so please plan accordingly.
- ❖ Parents are reminded that double parking is NOT permitted around the school, and there is NO PARKING where buses pick up or drop off children. This is a SERIOUS SAFETY ISSUE, as children can be injured trying to get around double-parked cars where other drivers cannot see them. Please be conscious of this. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES ARE PARENTS TO DRIVE THEIR VEHICLES INTO THE SCHOOLYARD, AS THIS IS A SAFETY ISSUE.

2. Daily Schedule

Grades K-8: 8:05-2:30pm, with lunch/recess from 12:05-12:45. First class period begins at 8:20am.

Pre-Kindergarten Full: 8:05-2:15 *PK Half:* 8:05-12:00

Nursery AM 3 Day: 8:30-11:00 *Nursery PM 3 Day:* 11:30-2:00

Nursery AM 2 Day: 8:30-12:30

On the first Friday of each month, dismissal for grades Pre-K to 8 is at 12:00 to allow for faculty conferences.

3. Dismissal

- ❖ Parents may meet their children at dismissal time either on 101st Street or in the schoolyard depending upon the doors through which the class is dismissed. **Parents waiting in the schoolyard should stand behind the yellow line; otherwise teachers have difficulty matching students to the person picking them up.** Parents are not permitted to wait for their children inside the building. **For the safety of all the children, please DO NOT approach teachers with questions, etc at dismissal time.**

- ❖ All parents and children are to leave the school and schoolyard at dismissal, unless there is an appointment scheduled with the principal or teacher. Loitering by students in the schoolyard or around school grounds is not permitted beyond 2:30pm. There will be two teachers stationed in the schoolyard and at the 101st Street exit for after school supervision.
- ❖ Students are not permitted to be anywhere in the school building after dismissal unless requested by a faculty member/administration or unless they are participating in a supervised after school activity.
- ❖ If a student forgets anything at dismissal time, he/she is **NOT permitted** to come back into the building/classroom to get it without permission from the principal. This is a precaution to ensure the safety of our students.
- ❖ Children will only be permitted to go home with the parent/guardian designated to pick the child up. **Please DO NOT take another child home with you unless the teacher has been notified in writing by that child's parent. If you know that you or your regular pick-up person will not be able to meet your child at dismissal, please let the teacher know in writing. In the case of an emergency, please call the school office and let us know who will be picking your child up.**

4. Entrance/Exit Procedures

Nursery Students	Enter on 101 st Street, exit through 101 st Street doors closer to church
Pre-K Students	Enter on 101 st Street, exit through 101 st Street doors closer to convent
Grades K-8	Enter on 101 st Street, exit through designated doors in schoolyard

5. Bus Service

Bus service is provided for students who meet the Department of Education requirements for age and distance from school. Parents wishing to have their children ride the bus should complete the form that is sent home in September. Students who take the bus are to remain seated at all times while the bus is moving, they should speak in moderate tones, and they should obey all safety rules required by the bus company/driver. Any student who is consistently unruly on the school bus will be prohibited from riding the school bus. **Also, students who are not approved by the Board of Education are not permitted on the school bus.** Please do not compromise the driver by asking for your child to ride without Board of Ed consent. Students who ride the school bus are met in the morning and escorted to the bus in the afternoon. Bus passes will be furnished for those students who live outside the area for yellow bus service.

II. Absence and Lateness

1. Attendance

Consistent school attendance is necessary for academic success. If your child is sick, or there is a medical or family reason for his/her absence, your child will be marked legally absent, provided you send in the required note upon your child's return to school. Other absences such as extended weekends, vacations, or absences not reported by a parent in an absent note, are considered illegal absences. Ave Maria Catholic Academy's attendance policy consists of the following:

- ❖ A written, signed note from the parent/guardian must be presented to the teacher for re-admission to class following an absence. This is a New York State requirement, and notes are kept on file for one (1) year. The note must include the dates of absence as well as the reason.
- ❖ If your child has a contagious illness (strep throat, pink eye, lice, chicken pox, etc), please notify the school office immediately.
- ❖ In the interest of your child's safety, we ask that you call the school by 9:30 to report his/her absence. **For students in grades 5-8 it is mandatory that you report your child's absence to the school office by 9:30.**
- ❖ Each student is responsible for any missed work/tests during his/her absence and should be prepared to make up any missed tests on the day he/she returns to school unless other arrangements have been made with the principal or teacher. Parents should not take students out of school for vacations, etc. In that event teachers may not be able to provide work for the student to take on the vacation. The student will have to complete all missed work upon his/her return.
- ❖ You may call the office between 7:30am and 9:30am to report your child's absence and request that your child's class work and homework be sent to the office for pickup between 2:15 and 3:00 or that it be sent home with a sibling or friend. ***Calls received after 9:30 will not guarantee that your child's work is ready for that day.***
- ❖ **Any student who is absent in excess of 35 days during a school year risks both his/her re-registration for the following year and promotion to the next grade. Excessive absence may cause retention of the student in the current grade.**
- ❖ Students who are absent excessively may also be asked to provide doctor's notes in addition to parental absence notes.

2. Lateness

The first school bell rings at 8:05 each morning, and students are expected to be in their classrooms at this time. A second bell rings at 8:10. **Any student arriving after the 8:10 bell is considered late and must stop at the main office for a late pass.** Lateness is recorded in the New York State attendance register. Lateness is very disruptive to the teacher, other students, and requires a great deal of record keeping by the school office. Please work with your child on arriving on time for school. ***EXCESSIVE LATENESS WILL RESULT IN A LOWER CONDUCT GRADE (complies with school policies), WHICH MAY AFFECT HONOR ROLL OR OTHER AWARD STATUS. In addition, students who are consistently late may be asked to meet with the principal in the morning, have an in-school suspension, or be required to attend detention.***

3. Illness During the School Day

Parents will be notified and expected to take their child home in the event of illness during the school day. **If your child is sick before school, please keep your child at home.**

4. Medication

If a child requires medication during the school day, the parent or parent's delegate may come to school to administer the medicine. If there is a school nurse available, he/she can also administer the medication. If your child is old enough and able to self-medicate, please advise the school office in writing, and the medication will be kept in the office with your note and instructions. **No faculty or staff members are authorized to dispense medication.**

5. Release of Pupils from Class:

If a child needs to be released during the school day, an explicit, written, signed request from the parent/guardian must be submitted to the teacher, who will notify the school office. The parent/guardian must sign the child/children out at the main office. Except in cases of emergency or unforeseen circumstances, a phone call to the school is not adequate authorization to release a student; the request must be in writing.

III. Students' Bill of Rights

Each child has the right to work in a school atmosphere that is conducive to good spiritual, physical, aesthetic, intellectual, emotional, and social growth. It is expected that this environment will help him/her experience living and learning in a Christian community. Each child has the right to be treated with respect and fairness by those children and adults with whom he/she interacts each day. Each child has the right to be provided with a safe and secure environment.

IV. Students' Responsibilities

In order for students' rights to be respected and to maintain good order and safety for all concerned, students are expected to assume the responsibility for adherence to the teachers' regulations in the classroom and in the general school community. In addition, parents and students are expected to conform to the guidelines listed in this handbook. A signed letter of intent to comply with school guidelines will be maintained for each student in the school office. This letter of intent serves as your contract with the school. The students' responsibilities include but are not limited to:

1. Obedience and respect to all persons in authority
2. Courtesy and use of appropriate language at all times and in all places
3. Respect and cooperation among classmates and other AMCA students
4. Timely completion of assigned tasks and homework and daily preparedness for class
5. Respect and care for school property, including desks and textbooks
6. Silence in appropriate places and at appropriate times
7. Proper safety and hygiene habits
8. Regular attendance and punctuality
9. Responsibility for any missed work and tests during an absence
10. **Appropriate Christian behavior when in school uniform, whether on or off school grounds**
11. **Full participation and cooperation in school/church activities**

V. Parent-School Relations

1. **Parent Concerns:** By supporting your child's efforts while allowing him/her to experience and understand the consequences of an action, you encourage your child's growth as a successful person. We invite parents to become active participants in their children's school activities and encourage them to be knowledgeable about their children's schoolwork by maintaining open lines of communication between home and school. Because AMCA is a faith community, parental cooperation and support for the school program are essential. Parents or family members who experience any concern with regard to their child's education or with school policy are asked to approach school authorities respectfully and allow them to investigate the concern or clarify the school policy in question. The administration, faculty, and staff will provide prompt and fair action. We also assure privacy in discussing issues, professional courtesy and respect, and sincere efforts to resolve situations so that Christian community is maintained at all times. Parents are asked to use the following procedures to express their concern over a school matter:

- ❖ If the concern involves routine practices such as homework, class work, behavior, tests/grades, or student-to-student problems, the parent should first contact the teacher. If you feel that the teacher conference did not achieve a resolution, an appointment may be made with the principal.
- ❖ If the concern is of a more serious nature, the parent should inform the principal of the situation in writing or via telephone, at which time the parent can request an appointment. Because of job responsibilities, the principal may not be immediately available to see parents without an appointment but will make every effort to accommodate parents, especially in emergency or very serious situations.
- ❖ Please DO NOT discuss your concern in the presence of your child, especially if you are angry or upset.

2. Parent Conferences

Mandatory report card conferences are scheduled at the end of the first and second trimester. In addition to these scheduled conference times, any parent wishing to confer with a teacher should write a note or call the school office to request an appointment. For the sake of the children's safety and privacy, teachers are not permitted to confer with parents during afternoon dismissal or while class is in session. Parents coming into the school for an appointment with the teacher must first report to the office. Recording devices are not permitted during conferences. **PARENTS, INCLUDING THOSE WORKING/VOLUNTEERING IN SCHOOL, MAY NOT APPROACH TEACHERS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY.**

3. Parent/Family Member Conduct

When dealing with school administrators, faculty, staff, and other members of the school community, parents are expected to demonstrate appropriate conduct at all times. **The following misconduct by parents or family members is unacceptable:**

- ❖ Assaulting or harassing any AMCA staff member, parent, or student
- ❖ Threatening or physically intimidating any AMCA staff member, parent, or student
- ❖ Verbally abusing or using offensive, loud language to any AMCA staff member, parent, or student
- ❖ Engaging in any behavior such as, but not limited to the above

Any misconduct by parents/family members may lead to a warning and/or the following actions:

1. Not permitting the child(ren) to re-register for the following school year
2. Asking that persons exhibiting poor behavior have another person represent them on school matters
3. In extreme cases, and with the approval of the diocese, asking families to immediately withdraw their child(ren) from the school.

VI. Discipline Policy

1. Grades PK to 2

Each teacher will set his/her own classroom rules and consequences in order to maintain an organized and safe classroom conducive to learning. Students and parents will be notified of all classroom guidelines in writing at the beginning of the school year. When rules are repeatedly disobeyed, the teacher will inform the parents either in writing or by phone, and a conference may be requested. **If a student is continuously disruptive, he/she may not be invited to re-register for the following school year.** In addition, he/she risks probation, suspension, or expulsion. Teachers of grades Nursery-4 will be focusing on positive reinforcement techniques in regard to student discipline while at the same time encouraging and developing self-control, self-awareness, responsibility, and the understanding of consequences for one's actions. Students may be required to attend lunch school detention for consistent behavior problems.

2. Grades 3 through 8

Students may be issued lunch time or before/after school detention and/or suspension for the following infractions and any other conduct unbecoming a Catholic school student while in school uniform, **on or off school grounds:**

- ❖ Failure to follow school dress code, including wearing makeup/false nails/short skirts
- ❖ Being unprepared for class
- ❖ Use of unacceptable language (verbal, written, computer/internet)
- ❖ Using the lavatory or being in the hallways/commons areas without authorization
- ❖ Talking out in class, in hallways, while changing classes, or during a fire drill
- ❖ ***Chewing gum*** or candy
- ❖ Chronic lateness

- ❖ Disruptive conduct
- ❖ Damage to school and/or other people's property
- ❖ Missing homework assignments
- ❖ Missing an assigned detention, even though present at school
- ❖ Excessive talking

FOR EVERY THREE DETENTIONS A STUDENT RECEIVES, HE/SHE WILL SERVE A ONE DAY AT HOME SUSPENSION, TO BE SERVED THE DAY AFTER THE THIRD DETENTION IS RECEIVED

Special Note Regarding Discipline: Students who disrupt class or harass fellow classmates are being unjust to the teacher and other students. If a teacher makes you aware of a problem/incident with your child, we ask that you support our efforts to correct the behavior. We ask that you remind your child of his/her responsibility to fulfill his/her obligations as an AMCA student.

ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY FOR ALL GRADES: Any student who engages in the following behaviors, (in school uniform on or off school grounds) for which AMCA will have zero tolerance, may immediately receive up to a three day, at home suspension, following a conference with the teacher and/or principal. If the behavior continues, the student will not be invited to re-register for the following school year and may be considered for expulsion from Ave Maria Catholic Academy.

- 1. Cheating on assignments/tests**
- 2. Physical fighting and/or physically aggressive behavior**
- 3. Harassment (verbal, physical, sexual) of any student or staff member**
- 4. Use of profanity/defiance to an authority figure**
- 5. Inappropriate Internet use that affects school community relationships by students and/or parents/guardians**
- 6. Vandalism/theft of school property or any personal property of student or staff members. Students caught defacing property will be assessed a fine for clean-up/repair.**
- 7. Drug/Cigarette/Drug Paraphernalia/Alcohol/Weapons possession/use and any other paraphernalia deemed inappropriate by Ave Maria Catholic Academy. Police will be called in any instances of weapons or drug possession.**

VII. Drug or Alcohol Abuse Policy

Students possessing, selling, or using drugs or alcohol while in school or while engaging in school activities are considered a serious threat to the well-being of Ave Maria Catholic Academy. Possession, sale, and/or use of alcohol, drugs, or any other controlled substance are forbidden at AMCA and are cause for police involvement, immediate three day at home suspension and/or immediate expulsion. See zero tolerance policy.

VIII. Fighting/Smoking/Weapons Policy

Fighting or smoking on school property, during any school activity, or while in school uniform will result in automatic suspension, and parents will be notified immediately. Possession of any weapon (or any other instrument deemed dangerous by the school) on school property, on buses, or during school activities will also result in immediate suspension and possibly expulsion. *In addition, the principal will call the police to report any incidents of weapons possession.* See zero tolerance policy. **New York State Law prohibits smoking in a school building and on school property. Smoking is prohibited at all times in AMCA's school building and in its parking lots. This applies to faculty, staff, parents, students, and all visitors to the school.**

IX. Beepers, Office Phone, Cellular phones, and Valuables

Students are not permitted to call home during the school day to arrange play dates, etc. In an emergency, students are permitted to use the office phone to reach parents/guardians, so there is no reason for students to carry phones in school, during classes. If, however, a parent feels strongly that his/her child should have a cell phone in his/her possession, the following guidelines are in place:

- Students must provide a letter of permission from the parent stating the need for the cell phone
- The school must be provided with the student's cell phone number
- Phones must be in the off position at all times during the school day and must be kept in the schoolbag
- Ave Maria Catholic Academy takes no responsibility for the cell phone if it is lost or stolen
- Any student who uses the cell phone during the school day will surrender it to the teacher/principal, and it must be picked up by a parent. The student then loses the privilege to have the cell phone in school.

Personal possessions such as CD players, Ipods, and electronic games are not permitted in school unless permission has been granted by the principal. Recording devices are not permitted in school or during any conferences. Ave Maria Catholic Academy is not responsible for the loss of valuables that students bring to school. For this reason, we recommend that students not carry large sums of cash and not wear excessive amounts of jewelry.

X. Fire and Emergency Drills

Students, with the help of their teachers, must become familiar with the fire/emergency plans in place. They must respect the various drills as essential in preparing them in the event of an emergency. Parents should reinforce this message at home – that students must be quiet, must listen for directions, and must take very seriously all practice drills. **It is also of utmost importance that parents keep the emergency information card up to date with current addresses and home/office/cell phone numbers.** Those cards leave the building with designated personnel during any evacuations in case parents have to be notified. During drills, students must remain silent and follow all instructions of the school staff. Drills are conducted as evacuations out of the school, into the school from the schoolyard at lunchtime, and as lockdowns in the classroom, so that students are well prepared.

XI. Disciplinary Procedures

When students engage in behavior that is destructive to themselves or the AMCA community, several disciplinary actions may be employed to correct the behavior. These actions include, but are not limited to the following:

1. **Loss of privilege:** When a regulation is broken, the child may lose the privilege attached, as in the case of bus, lunchroom, recess, etc. In the case of 8th graders, the student may forfeit 8th grade privileges and events.
2. **Probation:** A student may be put on probation for a specified time period during which any academic or behavioral misconduct will result in further action.
3. **Suspension:** When other remedial measures have been used without success, or in the case of the Zero Tolerance rule, suspension will be used. A student will not be suspended for more than five consecutive days, and the suspension may be served in school or at home, depending upon the nature of the offense. The student will be provided with an alternate learning environment during the day of in-school suspension, and the student is responsible for all assigned work for that day. In the case of an at home suspension, the student will be responsible for all work that is sent home and must also make up any missed tests upon his/her return to school.
4. **Registration in doubt:** If a child's inappropriate behavior is constant, and attempts to remedy the situation are not successful, the child may not be permitted to re-register for the following year. If re-registration has already occurred, it may become null and void because of the student's behavior.
5. **Before school detention:** Teacher-supervised detention may be served Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7:15-8:00am. Parents will be notified in writing of the detention and on what day the student must serve the detention. Students may also be required to serve after school detention, which will take place from 2:30-3:15 on the day the teacher designates. Students who do not attend a scheduled detention may be subject to an automatic one-day suspension.
6. **Expulsion:** Permanent dismissal of a student will be enacted when a student's incorrigible behavior or conduct threatens the physical or moral welfare of other students or school personnel. Expulsion may also occur for other infractions deemed serious.

XII. Lunch Program:

1. School Lunch Program

A hot lunch program managed by parent volunteers is held 4-5 days per week. The menu will be provided at the beginning of each month, and students must indicate their choices and pre-pay each month.

***PLEASE NOTE: NURSERY LUNCH AND SNACK POLICY WILL BE PROVIDED BY THE TEACHER AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR.**

2. Lunch from home

Children who decide to bring lunch from home should bring a healthful lunch, and the following guidelines will be strictly enforced:

1. Lunch must be brought every day. Except in cases of unforeseen circumstances, parents are NOT PERMITTED to drop off lunches during the school day. Children MUST bring their own lunch with them in the morning.
2. No glass bottles or sodas are allowed.
3. There is no refrigeration or heating available for any lunches
4. Parents are NOT permitted to bring special lunches to their children (McDonald's, pizza, etc)
5. It is highly recommended that parents send lunches in containers that children can open easily
6. An insulated bag or lunchbox with the child's name on it is suggested.

3. Wednesday Snack Sale

Every Wednesday, students in grades PK-8 will have the opportunity to purchase snacks in school. Students may bring in a snack or they may purchase items at the sale on Wednesdays. **On early dismissal days there will be a snack sale.** Suggested snacks for both Wednesdays and for early snacks in the lower grades include:

1. Cut up fruit or vegetables or cheese & crackers
2. Half a sandwich
3. Yogurt, applesauce, or fruit cup (please send in a spoon)
4. MINI (3-4oz) juice boxes or MINI water bottles at teacher's discretion

4. Lunchtime Conduct

The classrooms should have a quiet and orderly atmosphere. No one should leave their table or desk unless given permission by a teacher or lunch supervisor. Each student is responsible to clean up after him/herself. Students should use appropriate table manners when eating in the classroom. Students are expected to follow all classroom rules during the lunch period.

5. Schoolyard/Recess

- ❖ Part of the students' lunch period consists of recess either in the classroom or schoolyard. Supervision of the students is provided by trained, paid lunch supervisors.
- ❖ **Only the paid lunch supervisors are permitted on school grounds during lunchtime and recess. Parents are NOT permitted to visit their children or bring them anything during the scheduled lunch periods. This includes standing at the fences, near the church, or around the perimeter of the schoolyard. The lunch supervisors do not know all the parents, and they may be concerned if they see a child approaching an adult who is waiting at the fence. In addition, they are trained to be suspicious of anyone they see loitering around school property while the students are at recess. This is to ensure the students' safety.**
- ❖ While in the schoolyard, students may play with Nerf balls, small games, and jump ropes. If a child brings a game to play with during lunchtime, it is to remain in his/her schoolbag until lunchtime since school personnel and lunch supervisors cannot be responsible for these items. In addition the school is not responsible for any loss or damage to these items.

- ❖ Students are expected to listen to lunch supervisors and treat them with respect. Rules of behavior that apply in school also apply at recess times. Any students who continually misbehave at lunchtime may be asked to leave the program and will have to be brought home for lunch and returned to school when the lunch/recess period is over.
- ❖ To maintain safety during recess, students are forbidden to engage in activities that will endanger themselves or others.

XIII. Telecommunications Policy

Each student who receives Internet access will be instructed in the appropriate use of the network. The use of the Internet must be in support of education and research consistent with the education objectives of the school. Students will not use the Internet in school for personal use, nor will they reveal any personal information about themselves or school personnel on any bulletin boards or in any chat rooms. Further information about the telecommunications policy is available in the school office. Each child attending computer class will have to sign our technology agreement.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

I. Course of Study

The New York State Education Department prescribes the course of study at Ave Maria Catholic Academy. Guided by the needs and abilities of the students, a local curriculum has been developed in each subject area. This is an adaptation of the New York State Standards for Education, set forth by the Brooklyn Diocese. Students receive instruction based on these standards for learning in Language Arts, Reading, Mathematics, Science/Health, Social Studies, Physical Education, Computer Technology and Art.

II. Religious Education

In addition to the New York State Standards, the diocese sets guidelines for religious instruction on all grade levels. The religious education program consists of three major elements: instruction, worship, and service as described below:

- ❖ **Instruction** – presenting God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in such a manner that students will be open to love and celebrate their Creator, Redeemer, and Life-giver. Additionally, Catholic Church history, doctrine, and morality are taught.
- ❖ **Worship** – teaching formal and spontaneous prayer, both individual and communal; creating liturgies and Para liturgies; providing programs which foster a social conscience; participating in monthly Masses and special class Masses, quarterly penance services
- ❖ **Service** – providing programs and opportunities which foster a social conscience sensitive to the needs of all (school, parish, community, world); teaching justice, mercy, and peace through the use of Scripture and the social documents of the Church; requiring service hours of Confirmation students.

The sacrament program is also an integral part of religious education at AMCA. Reconciliation and First Eucharist are received in the second grade. The Confirmation ceremony is held in the fall of 8th grade if all requirements are met. Sunday Mass attendance is imperative for all students, especially those in the sacrament programs. It is recommended that parents attend Mass with the children each week, whether or not the children are in the sacrament program. ***Parents are the primary teachers of the children in their religious formation, and it is your example and commitment to your Catholic faith and its practice that will impact your children's faith development. Please support the school's efforts by attending Mass and the sacrament of Reconciliation on a regular basis.***

III. Homework

Homework is an essential part of the instructional program, serving to reinforce learning, to clarify and review material learned in class, and to provide motivation and opportunity for individual growth. Homework may consist of written practice, supplementary reading, projects, and independent study.

- Parents will be notified at the beginning of the school year of the classroom/subject teacher's expectation regarding homework, including whether it should be signed.
- Written homework is given Monday through Thursday nights. To allow for Mass attendance and family time on the weekends, only reading and studying work will be assigned then.
- No projects will be assigned over school vacations.
- Please inform your child's teacher immediately if you believe your child is having difficulty completing homework assignments. Your child should be able to complete the assignment with little or no help from you. Please DO NOT do your child's homework, projects, or reports for him/her, as it will not be accepted by the teacher and will be cause for a grade of zero.
- Incomplete homework will not be accepted after two days, unless there is an unforeseen circumstance such as illness or a death in the family, etc. Assignments that are not completed and handed in according to the teacher's deadline will receive a grade of zero. This will be averaged into the report card grade.
- If a student is out for a vacation during the school year, he/she is responsible for the missed work upon his/her return to school. Teachers are not expected to provide work ahead of schedule to take on the vacation.

IV. Study Skills and Supplies

In order for children to be successful students, it is important that they adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Bring the proper materials to class, such as notebooks, pen/pencil, and other required books and supplies.
2. Be an active participant in class by listening well, asking questions, and paying attention.
3. Ask for clarification of any work or assignments that are unclear before leaving school.
4. Schedule time for reading and homework each day, and plan the work well.
5. Use what is learned; see how each subject applies to another.

6. Strive to do the best work; do more than necessary, more than to “just get by.”
7. Be responsible for copying assignments into an assignment pad/notebook, calling a friend for any missed notes, etc, and having someone pick up assignments from school if a student is absent.

Students receive a supply list prior to leaving AMCA in June; this list is mailed to new students at the same time. It is expected that students will come to school in September prepared with the supplies requested by the teachers. Parents should check the supplies periodically and replace missing or damaged items. It is highly recommended that supplies be labeled with the student’s name. Supplies and books should be carried to school in a schoolbag. Please note that schoolbags with wheels are **NOT PERMITTED** to be rolled in the school building.

V. Student Paperwork

Class work and assignments are a reflection of the student’s attitude toward his/her work. Student paperwork should be neat and legible. Students should take pride in clear and precise handwriting, both print and script. Script is used exclusively in grades 4-8. The school heading, shown below is to be used on all paperwork, which is formally submitted, such as homework, exams, and projects. A heading is not needed in class notebooks, unless requested by the teacher, but each day’s work in the notebook should be dated.

Student’s Name	Date
Subject	Grade and Class

VI. Textbooks

In accordance with the New York State Textbook Loan Program and other New York City funds, students are supplied with some textbooks. Other textbooks, workbooks, and religion books are purchased with school funds. Each child is responsible for the proper care of these books. Children must pay for books that are lost or damaged. All books should be covered and kept neat and clean. **Please note that clear contact paper is an excellent choice for workbooks but may not be used on textbooks.** Books should be carried in a schoolbag.

VII. Progress Reports and Report Cards

Students’ progress in the subject areas and character development is reported on a trimester basis (December, March, and June) in grades PK-8. It is **mandatory** for parents to attend a report card conference in December and March to pick up the student’s report card for grades PK-8. Report card grades are computed from class examinations, tests/quizzes, written assignments, homework, class participation, and general manifestations of the student’s knowledge of the subject matter. The effort a child displays is very important for academic success and self-esteem, therefore it is advisable for parents to speak to the teachers to determine if the child is working at his/her potential. **Report cards MUST be signed by a parent.**

VIII. Honors

Special merit and achievement awards will be issued as follows

1. Grades PK to 4 – class recognition of achievement awards

2. First Honors – awarded to students in grades 5-8 who achieve an average of 97-100 (A+) with a minimum grade of 95 in all subjects
3. Second Honors – awarded to students in grades 5-8 who achieve an 93-96.4 (A) average with a minimum grade of 90 in each subject area

Please Note: To be eligible for honors or merit awards, students must have conduct/personal progress marks of G or higher, and a G or Higher in Physical Education, Music, Art, Foreign Language, and Computer.

4. Principal's Award – presented to the student in each class at the end of the school year, who best demonstrates Christian values, positive school spirit, and general effort
5. Merit Award – presented to the student in each class at the end of each trimester, who best demonstrates overall improvement and or growth

Award ceremonies will be held three times during the school year in church or in school. Parents will be notified of the time and date and will be invited to attend.

IX. Testing Program

Teacher-constructed tests in each subject area will be administered during the school year. These tests will contain questions of different formats (true/false, multiple choice, fill-in the blank, short answer, and essay) and will reflect the material covered in each marking period. **All tests MUST be signed by a parent/guardian using full signature, not initials.** In addition to regular classroom tests, final exams are administered during the first weeks of June.

Standardized tests will also be administered during the school year as follows:

1. Terranova Tests – given in grades 3-8, this exam tests reading, math, and language as well as social studies and science on some grade levels.
2. New York State English Language Arts Test (ELA) – grades 4, 6, and 8
3. New York State Math Exam – grades 4, 6, and 8
4. New York State Science Exam – grades 4 and 8

X. Promotion, Retention, and Graduation Criteria (Please note the decision of the principal is FINAL in these areas)

1. **Promotion Criteria:** The principal and teacher make all decisions regarding the promotion of a student. The final decision will be based upon a total evaluation of the student's growth in all areas of development.
2. **Retention Criteria:** The principal and teacher make decisions regarding the retention of a student. Where there exists a possibility of retaining a pupil, the parents will be notified in writing in March. The final decision is made in June. The decision to retain a student is made only after all aspects of that student's school growth have been carefully considered. Retention in Kindergarten or Pre-K is determined according to age developmental appropriateness in compliance with the report card criteria. Generally, a student should be retained only once in the elementary grades (K-5) and once in the upper grades (6-8). Retention may occur if the student has been excessively absent (35 days or more).

3. Graduation Requirements

All tuition and school fees must be paid in full by May 10th of the graduating year. NO DIPLOMA WILL BE ISSUED UNTIL ALL FEES ARE PAID. Diplomas will not be distributed, and official school records will not be forwarded to the high school, unless there is complete payment of all obligations. Students who fail any subject will be in danger of not graduating. Students will be required to complete a summer assignment and/or attend and successfully complete summer school for any failed subject in order to receive an AMCA diploma. A graduation fee, determined by the 8th grade teachers and principal, which covers the cost of caps, gowns, diplomas, yearbooks, etc. must be paid in full for students to participate in graduation activities. **If tuition or the graduation fee is outstanding, students may not participate in 8th grade privileges and activities.**

GENERAL INFORMATION

I. Admission Policy

1. **New applicants:** Students will be accepted into Ava Maria Catholic Academy for grades Junior Pre-Kindergarten through

7th according to the following order:

- A. Catholic and registered parishioners
- B. Catholic and enrolled in a Religious Education program
- C. Catholic, but not registered parishioner or enrolled in a Religious Education Program
- D. Non-Catholic

It is advisable that families who wish to enroll their children in the school register in a parish, attend Sunday Mass, and use the collection envelopes. All new applicants may be required to pass a Reading and Math entrance exam in order to be admitted to AMCA. If summer school or tutoring is required, the student must attend, or admittance will be denied. **All NEW applicants in grades Nursery-7 must pay a non-refundable \$40.00 application fee. In addition, there is a \$150.00 per family non-refundable registration fee (\$250.00 late registration fee).** 8th grade applicants are considered only under certain circumstances.

2. **Policy for Re-application to school:** Each year in January, students presently enrolled in Ave Maria Catholic Academy (exclusive of grade 8) will be invited to re-register for the following school year. The procedure will be as follows:

- A. The invitation to re-register at AMCA will be based on academic achievement, satisfactory conduct, and cooperation throughout the school year.
- B. Tuition payments and fees must be up-to-date and fundraising obligations must have been fulfilled.

- C. Students should have participated in regular Sunday Mass attendance and exhibited cooperation with the clergy.
- D. Students will be given a registration form to be completed by the parents and returned to school no later than the designated return date. **The \$150.00 per family registration fee MUST accompany the completed and signed form. If the registration form and fees are not received by the designated date, you may forfeit your child's place in AMCA for the following school year OR you may be considered for late registration of \$250.00 per family.**
- E. The following year's general fee, which is non-refundable, must be paid by June 10th of the current school year.
- F. Your child's registration may become null and void if there are any outstanding tuition/fees. In addition, if a behavior problem arises after the registration period, this may also nullify the registration process. If your child's registration is invalidated because of behavior or arrears, you will be notified by letter.

3. **Late Registration**

Any family (current or new to AMCA) who registers beyond the stated registration period on the school calendar will be assessed the late registration fee of \$250.00 per family.

4. **Withdrawals and Transfers**

A transfer request must be obtained from the school secretary. All books must be returned. All bills must be paid in full before records are transferred to another school.

II. **Tuition and Fees**

Please be advised that there are NO tuition refunds after August 30th if you remove your child from AMCA at any time during the current school year. In addition, all general, registration, and application fees are NON-REFUNDABLE.

1. Tuition: For the 2010-2011 school year, tuition payments may be taken directly out of your designated checking account, or you may pay in full by August 15, 2010 and receive a discount.

2. Fees: For the 2010-2011 school year, fees imposed will be the re-registration fee in January, general fee due June 10th for the next school year, and any application fees for new students.

3. Arrears Policy: Any family in arrears for tuition and/or any other fees risks their child/children not receiving his/her report card, nor will teachers be permitted to confer with the parents. In addition, if in arrears, your child will not receive re-registration information, or your registration may become null and void. Students may not be permitted to attend

class if tuition is one month or more in arrears, and students will not be eligible to sit for final examinations until tuition is brought up to date. You will be notified in writing if your child is affected by this statute. If an unforeseen situation arises that affects your ability to pay tuition/fees, please contact the school principal immediately before unpaid balances become overwhelming. Families who are consistently in arrears may be assessed an additional fine or they may be put on a different payment schedule.

III Dress Code: Every child in grades K-8 must be in complete uniform every day unless permission is granted by the principal. Uniforms should be clean and presentable at all times. The AMCA uniform consists of the following:

BOYS

Navy blue uniform trousers

White button down shirt, plaid tie, sweater vest 5-8

Black oxfords or penny loafers, black socks

Black belt (mandatory in grades 3-8)

**The white AMCA turtleneck is not recommended, but if worn, it must be worn with the official sweater vest or AMCA sweater.

GYM UNIFORMS for boys and girls consist of t-shirt with school logo, navy mesh shorts with school imprint, sweatpants and sweatshirt with school imprint. On gym days, the gym uniform is worn in place of the regular uniform. **ONLY the approved AMCA gym uniform is acceptable on gym days.** If a student does not have or cannot find parts of the gym uniform, he/she MUST wear the regular uniform to school on gym days. Gym uniforms can be purchased at any time during the school year from Flynn & O'Hara, Uniforms Inc.

Detention will be issued to students who do not follow uniform policy.

Uniforms are to be purchased ONLY from Flynn & O'Hara Uniforms, Inc. If students are wearing un-official uniform clothing or shoes, parents will be required to purchase the correct item, usually at additional cost.

In addition to the school uniform, the following are considered part of the dress code at Ave Maria Catholic Academy:

- 1. Only approved, regulation school shoes are permitted. No high heels, sneakers, hush puppies are allowed. Boys' shoe are to be dress shoes; no rugged soles**
- 2. Girls are to have neat hairdos. No fad hairdos or hair dying/highlighting is permitted. Makeup, dangling earrings, excessive jewelry, long nails (natural or false), fake nails (acrylics, wraps, nail coatings, tips, etc) and nail polish are NOT permitted. Fake nails will be soaked off in school and makeup remover provided.**
- 3. Boys are to have neat hairdos. Hair should be no longer than the top of the shirt collar. Earrings, hair dying, hair highlighting, and fad haircuts/styles are NOT permitted on boys.**
- 4. Dockers and other sport style pants are NOT permitted. ONLY regulation school**

- uniform pants are allowed.
5. **Girls' jumpers and skirts should reach JUST AT THE KNEE. Any violation of this rule will result in the girl being required to re-hem the jumper/dress or purchase a new one, or the hem will be taken down in school. Girls are NOT PERMITTED to roll up or shorten their skirts.**
 6. **Students should come to school clean. A daily bath or shower is recommended along with proper dental hygiene.**
 7. **Excessive jewelry is not permitted. Girls may wear post earrings or "hugger" type earrings. No dangling earrings or cartilage piercings are allowed. One earring per ear, please.**
 8. **Sweater vests are worn by boys and girls in grades 5-8 from October 15th through May 1st. Fleeces and sweaters embroidered with the AMCA logo are optional. Students may not wear sweatshirts, sweaters, etc that are not an official, embroidered part of the school uniform.**

It is the parents' responsibility to be sure the students are in full uniform each day. Please be sure your child's attire meets with our established uniform guidelines. Students who consistently violate uniform policy will receive notices, so parents can correct the situation. In addition, students in the older grades will receive detention for violating uniform policy, and students in the lower grades will lose privileges. Unofficial uniforms or shoes will not be accepted, and parents will have to replace the incorrect item at their own expense. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!

IV. School Records

1. Record Update

Please notify the school office immediately if there is a change in home address, phone number, work phone, emergency contact, etc. If you have an unlisted phone number, please let us know, and your privacy will be respected. If you do not notify us, your number will be published on the relay list for your child's class.

2. Privacy of Records

The rights to privacy and access to a student's official records belong to the parents until the student is eighteen (18) years old. At age eighteen, these rights belong to the student. Parents have the right to inspect any and all material, which is part of their child's permanent record. Confidentiality of students' records is ensured since student records are legal documents. Discussion of student records will always be considered a professional and private matter. School may not release copies of official records without the written consent of the parents to any agency or organization other than the following: other school officials (including teachers within the Archdiocesan system who have a legitimate interest in the student's school records), officials of a school in which the student intends to enroll, and court officials who present lawfully issued subpoenas. Any court orders concerning your child must be on file in the office. If there are circumstances that are vital to your child's safety, be sure to have an official letter clearly stating those conditions. Only those AMCA staff members who are in direct contact with your child will be privy to those conditions. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, AMCA school will provide a non-custodial parent with access to academic and other school information. If there is a court order specifying that this is not allowed, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the

school with the court order. Non-custodial parents are generally entitled to receive duplicate sets of report cards, school event notices, etc. In this instance, the non-custodial parent should provide the teacher with a self-addressed, stamped envelope for this purpose.

3. Evaluation/Testing

Occasionally, based upon a student's performance below potential, a teacher or the principal may recommend that a student be evaluated for educational strengths and weaknesses, so that the school can better meet the needs of the student. All information regarding this evaluation process, whether it is conducted by the Board of Education or a private agency, is **CONFIDENTIAL**. Any information learned from this process is shared only with the principal and teacher at the discretion of the parent. Documents such as IEPS and evaluation reports are kept in a separate confidential file and never appear on the student's permanent record. Concerns about confidentiality or the evaluation going on the permanent record should never hinder parents from pursuing this most valuable and helpful service.

V. Health Program Policy

- ❖ Students at AMCA are screened for vision and hearing by the Department of Health. If your child is referred to a doctor by Department of Health personnel, you are responsible for taking him/her to a doctor to verify these findings. All referrals must be followed through by parents, and verification must be sent back to the school office before the end of the school year.
- ❖ Each child is responsible for his/her personal hygiene. We ask you to reinforce the necessity of proper bathing, bathroom use/hand washing, wearing clean clothes, etc. With your support and involvement in your child's personal hygiene habits, embarrassing situations can be avoided.
- ❖ Each child should be seen by the dentist once a year.
- ❖ All new students to AMCA must have a complete medical exam and submit the required medical form.

VI. Inclement Weather

- ❖ On days when it is raining or snowing, students are still to report directly to the auditorium. Please **DO NOT** send your child to school prior to 7:55am.
- ❖ There may be times when weather or other emergency conditions require the closing of school. This information will be posted on our school website at www.avemariacatholicacademy.com. **Please DO NOT call the rectory or school for school closing information, as the phone lines cannot handle the volume of calls.**
- ❖ Whenever practicable, a message will be left on the school's phone voicemail to give school closing information. If you call the school, you will get information from this message.

VII. Participation in School Life

All parents are invited to become active members of our school community. Volunteer parents are the backbone of many of our programs. Parent comments and suggestions are welcomed by the school administration. Your talents, services, and recommendations may be utilized when practicable and can enrich the quality of education at Ave Maria Catholic Academy.

VIII. Student Insurance

Unfortunately, even under the best of conditions, accidents may occur. Your child is covered under the Student Accident Policy that is paid for by the school.

IX. Safety Regulations

- ❖ In order to ensure the safety of our students, it is necessary for all parents/visitors to report to the school office.
- ❖ Parents may not bring their children to the classroom if they are late; school personnel will escort them
- ❖ Parents/Visitors are not permitted to go to any part of the school building without express permission from the principal or her designated assistant.
- ❖ All students are expected to wait at the school office if their parents are delayed at dismissal.
- ❖ We are not permitted to dismiss your child to another parent/adult without your prior written consent.
- ❖ Students are NOT permitted to open school doors leading to the outside of the building at any time.
- ❖ All visitors sign in at the lobby desk with time of arrival and purpose for visit, and then sign out when leaving.
- ❖ Emergency and fire drills are conducted periodically.
- ❖ Students are not permitted in the corridors or classrooms before their scheduled time unless under adult supervision with the permission of the principal.
- ❖ Students should cross with the crossing guard, if one is provided.
- ❖ Students are NOT permitted back into the school building after dismissal to retrieve any items from the classroom unless they have received permission from the principal.
- ❖ **Double-parking around the school is hazardous to all children and is forbidden. There is NO PARKING in the schoolyard during arrival and dismissal times.**
- ❖ In case of emergency closing during the day, parents will be notified and are asked to proceed in a calm, orderly fashion, following the directions of AMCA school staff.

The safety and security of your children is of the utmost importance to the administration, faculty, and staff of Ave Maria Catholic Academy. Our policies are in place to protect your children. We appreciate your support of our efforts to enforce and adhere to our guidelines.

X. Extra-Curricular Activities

1. Extra and Co-Curricular Activities: To provide students with worthwhile leisure time, activities that foster personal, physical, and social growth are offered as part of the extra-curricular program at AMCA. The principal must be assured that such activities are properly supervised and that the necessary safety precautions are taken. Activities vary from year to year, depending upon the requests from the students, parents, and faculty and the availability of instructors. Suggested activities include: bowling league, Science club, student council, and calisthenics. Students who participate in these activities must exhibit proper behavior as outlined in this handbook, or they risk being asked to leave the particular club/activity. In addition to school activities, the parish sponsored Sports Foundation offers soccer, basketball, and softball.

2. Field Trips: Students participate in field trips that have educational value. No students will be permitted to go on a field trip unless a completed, signed permission slip, which contains all of the particulars about the trip, has been received from the parent. For safety purposes, an adequate number of adult chaperones will be required for each trip. Field trips are a privilege, and students will be denied this privilege if they fail to meet academic or behavioral standards. Any student not permitted on a school trip by either parent or school is required by law to attend school that day.

REGULATIONS STIPULATED ARE NOT EXCLUSIVE AND MAY INCLUDE RELATED ACTIVITIES NOT STATED

Ave Maria Catholic Academy Administration, Faculty, and Staff 2010-2011

Mrs. Maria Cuomo
Principal

Mrs. Joanne Maltese
Secretary

Mr. Renan Ruiz
Maintenance

Mrs. Elaine DeRosa
Nursery Teacher

Ms. Carissa Paese
Pre-Kindergarten Teacher

Mrs. Donna Frank
Grade K

Ms. Cristen Naud
Grade 1

Ms. Lauren Curiale
Grade 2

Mrs. Sara Cuccio
Grade 3

Ms. Lisa Calcagnile
Grade 4

Mr. Vincent D'Accordo
Grade 5, Mathematics

Mr. Vincent DiPiazza
Grade 6, Science

Ms. Victoria Amuso
Grade 7, ELA

Mrs. Jennifer Giacalone
Grade 8, Social Studies

Mr. Rudy Mosca
Art

Ms. Silvana Cavaleri
Italian

Mr. Anthony Bisciello
Physical Education

Mrs. Diana Meaney
Music

Mrs. Ann Sapia
Nursery Assistant

Mrs. Linda Arteca
Nursery Assistant

Mrs. Rosemarie Russo
Pr-K Assistant

Ms. Vanessa Brancato
Pre-K Assistant

Mrs. Janice Borello
Receptionist