

Our Lady's Catholic Academy



OLCA

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South Ozone Park, New York 11420
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Family Handbook

2012-2013

Mission Statement

*As did Our Lady in whose name we are founded,
the mission of Our Lady's Catholic Academy
is to
magnify, radiate, and educate
an inseparable love for God, each other, and learning
with our distinctive, diverse, urban community.*

Academy Policies

Admission

Our Lady's Catholic Academy proudly accepts students of all races, religions, and countries of origin. There is a yearly registration fee of \$75 per child, along with a materials fee of \$150 per child which covers the cost of all schools supplies.

New registrants must provide the following:

- Birth Certificate
- Immunization Record
- Parish Affiliation Letter (if Catholic)
- Report Card (if entering Grades 1-8)

All new applicants will complete an interview with the principal and/or assistant principal during the registration process.

Re-registrants must have a zero balance for their child to attend classes in September.

Students transferring from another Catholic school must have a zero balance with that school before registering for Our Lady's Catholic Academy.

Registration is not complete until parents and students have signed the Family Handbook agreement. Continued enrollment in Our Lady's Catholic Academy is contingent on full cooperation with all handbook policies.

Alcohol, Drugs, and Weapons Policy

Bringing to school, or being under the influence of, alcohol or drugs is grounds for immediate dismissal from Our Lady's Catholic Academy, as is bringing to school a weapon of any kind.

Attendance

Absences

Regular and punctual attendance is a requirement for all students. All parents must call the office of the school building which their child attends before 9:00 AM if their child is going to be absent. For an absence to be excused, the student must provide an absence note documenting a valid reason for the absence.

Valid reasons for an absence are: child's illness; family emergency; religious observation; doctor's appointment that could not be scheduled outside of school time. Absences of three days or more due to illnesses require a doctor's note for them to be excused.

Unexcused absences include, but are not limited to: oversleeping; vacation; inability to secure child care; early dismissal day.

More than three **unexcused** absences in a trimester will result in a child becoming ineligible for Honors. Students who miss a test due to an unexcused absence may receive a grading penalty at the teacher's discretion. Teachers are not required to give make-up exams to students with an unexcused absence on the testing day.

Latenesses

School begins at 8:00 AM at the Rockaway Boulevard campus, and at 8:15 AM at the Saint Teresa of Avila Campus. Students enter the Rockaway Boulevard campus through the front doors only.

Before 8:15 AM, students at the Saint Teresa of Avila campus enter through the 130th Street auditorium entrance. After 8:15 AM, they are to enter through the 128th Street entrance.

To be considered on time for school, all students must be in the auditorium and on line with their class at that time. Students arriving after that time will be marked late and given a late pass. No student may enter their classroom without a late pass after school has begun.

More than three **unexcused** latenesses in a trimester will render a child ineligible for Honors.

At the discretion of the principal, latenesses may be waived due to inclement weather.

Birthdays

Students may dress down for free on their birthday. If the birthday falls over the weekend or over vacation, the child may dress down on the day that school reopens.

Classroom birthday celebrations are at the discretion of the classroom teacher. Teachers must be given advance notice and must give their approval of a classroom celebration.

These celebrations should be simple, with prepackaged treats or individual baked goods that do not require cutting. No candles are allowed. These celebrations should not be a replacement for a birthday celebration outside of school, and should not be longer than fifteen minutes. No outside visitors aside from immediate family are allowed.

Bullying/Harassment Policy

The Diocesan Bullying/Harassment Policy is as follows:

Purpose:

The school communities within the Brooklyn Diocese believe in the sanctity of human life and the inherent dignity of the human person. We believe that all students, school employees and volunteers have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. All members of the school community, in turn, have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance and acceptance. Research shows that students who learn in a safe and

supportive environment succeed academically. Students have a right to learn in an environment free of any harassment that substantially interferes with their education.

Definition:

Bullying, bias-based harassment /intimidation are intentional, repeated, hurtful acts (physical, verbal, written) committed by one or more persons towards another person or persons. It usually involves an actual or perceived imbalance of power which can be physical, emotional or verbal.

If not addressed, bullying can lead to the creation of a hostile, offensive or intimidating school environment and can affect a student's educational opportunities.

The behaviors include but are not limited to:

- **Physical:** physical violence, stalking, threats, aggressive or menacing gestures, exclusion from peer groups which is intended to humiliate or isolate the target (relational bullying)
- **Verbal:** taunts, teasing, derogatory language, derogatory jokes, name calling, slurs, spreading rumors
- **Written:** written or graphic material including graffiti containing comments or stereotypes that are electronically written and transmitted via internet, social messaging sites, blogs, instant messaging, text messages, cell phone, webcams,. This would also include forwarding such messages if received. This generally constitutes cyberbullying.

Reporting Procedures:

- The targeted student, parent/guardian of a student or other students in the school (bystanders), or any school staff who believe that bullying has occurred should report the incident to the principal.
- The principal needs to conduct an investigation by interviewing all parties separately.
- The parents of all involved students should be notified.
- If it is determined that bullying has occurred the child who bullied is to be subject to consequences per the school's disciplinary code.
- Parents should be advised to contact the appropriate law enforcement agency if the situation warrants such a report.
- Referral to counseling should be made for all parties if deemed necessary.
- The principal must follow up to see that the offending conduct has stopped.
- All students should be notified that retaliation against anyone who makes a report will not be tolerated and those that retaliate will be subject to disciplinary actions.

At Our Lady's Catholic Academy, the policy above is fully implemented on the local level through the following procedures:

- An incident of violence or bullying will receive, at minimum, an automatic In-School Suspension along with an Incident Report.
- An in-school suspension is used as a consequence for bullying and violence. During this suspension, the child will be given work to complete in the office or in another classroom. Parents will be notified regarding the suspension as soon as it is given.
- Additionally, any incident of a student using the internet to harass, insult, or bully another student will be fully investigated and may result in dismissal from Our Lady's Catholic Academy

- An act of physical aggression, in which a student harms another person's body or property, will result in an automatic In-School Suspension. If a child retaliates with violence, they will also receive an In-School Suspension.
- Any incident of bullying or violence may result in dismissal from Our Lady's Catholic Academy.

Cell Phones & Electronics

Students are never permitted to use their cell phones in the school building. It must be turned off as they enter the school building. Every morning, the classroom teacher will collect the cell phones and lock them in the classroom closet. They will be distributed at dismissal. If a child needs to make a phone call using their cell phone, they must first receive permission from a staff member.

No other electronic devices (iPods, iPads, PDAs, gaming systems, etc.) may be used in the school building.

Any child found using a cell phone or electronic device will have it collected by the principal, member of the faculty, or staff member. For the first offense, it will be returned to the child at the end of the *following* school day. For the second offense, it will be returned to the child *one full week* after it is collected. For the third offense, it will be returned on the last day of school.

Our Lady's Catholic Academy assumes no responsibility for lost, damaged, or stolen electronics that were not given to the teacher in accordance with school policy.

Students who attend the Extended Day program must also give their electronics to the teacher on duty, and will have them returned when they are picked up from the program.

Communication

Electronic methods of communication will be available through e-mail and through Option C, our new student information system. This will allow for written communication between the parents and the school staff, including the principal, assistant principal, and the teachers. Parents may use e-mail to communicate, or may choose to make a phone call or set up an appointment through the office.

Parents should expect a response within two school days of a phone call or written note.

Concerns should be handled at the most local possible level. Persons with concerns about a situation with a teacher should first attempt to address the concern with the teacher. Only after such attempts have failed should the principal or assistant principal be contacted.

Similarly, a situation with the principal should be addressed with the principal. Only after such attempts have failed should the concerned party contact the Board of Directors chairperson, who can be reached through a mailbox in each school office.

Conduct

Students are expected to demonstrate good conduct at all times. Good conduct can best be described as demonstrating respect for self, others, and property.

Students who demonstrate poor conduct may be subject to disciplinary action, including but not limited to: Incident Reports; parental phone calls; behavior contract; removal from extracurricular activities; in-school suspension; and dismissal from Our Lady's Catholic Academy.

Contract

Students who demonstrate significant daily issues with behavior and/or completing their academic work may be placed on a daily contract. This decision will be made after a joint meeting with the parent, teacher, student, and principal. The classroom teacher will complete the contract at the end of every day, and parents will sign it daily. These contracts are an opportunity for parents to provide positive encouragement for what a child has done successfully, and reinforcement for skills the child is still developing.

Counseling Opportunities

OLCA provides counseling services through an on-site counselor several days a week. These professionals can help a child who is struggling with an issue, provide skill development in a group setting, and help facilitate the evaluation process.

Additionally, students and families also have the opportunity to receive counseling services through the office of the Program for the Development of Human Potential. Interested parents may contact our regional representative, Ms. Wendy Brumberg, at (718) 849-2200. For outside counseling through PDHP, fees are determined on a sliding scale.

Dismissal

This year, dismissal at the Rockaway Boulevard campus will be at **2:45 PM**. Grades PreK-8 will dismiss from the auditorium. Nursery will dismiss from the Nursery Classroom door. All parents are to enter the building through the Rockaway Boulevard entrance beginning at 2:30 PM.

Dismissal at the Saint Teresa of Avila campus will be at **3:00 PM**. Nursery, Pre-K, and Kindergarten will dismiss from the classroom. Parents of these grades may enter through the 128 Street campus beginning at 2:50 PM. Students in Grades 1-8 will dismiss from the auditorium. Parents of these grades may enter through the 130th Street auditorium doors beginning at 2:50 PM.

No child may be released from the school to someone other than the parent or guardian without **documented written notice**. Children in Grades 5 to 8 may walk home by themselves (and with younger siblings/relatives) if given **written permission** by a parent or guardian.

Students who walk home must do so immediately. For safety reasons, we will not allow loitering on or around school property. Students who do not comply with this policy may be subject to disciplinary action.

If a child is not picked up within fifteen minutes of dismissal time, they will be placed in the Extended Day program at the parent's expense.

Dress Up/Dress Down

Occasionally, there will be opportunities for students to Dress Up or Dress Down. Please note the requirements below:

DRESS UP

Boys

- Collared dress shirt with tie, leather belt, dress pants, and dress shoes
- Pants must be worn at waist

Girls:

- Knee-length skirt or dress with stockings/leggings, flat dress shoes with strap or buckle. No slip-on/open-toe/ballerina/sandals/flip-flops

DRESS DOWN**Boys**

- Jeans worn at the waist with a belt, correct fit (not too tight or too loose)
- No messages or designs inconsistent with our Catholic identity (i.e., negative/rude messages)
- Sneakers with socks – no lights or loud designs
- If wearing shorts, they must reach the knee when sitting down
- No sleeveless shirts
- Jewelry rules still apply: only post earrings and one small religious necklace/bracelet
- No hats

Girls

- Jeans worn at the waist with a belt, correct fit (not too tight or too loose)
- No messages or designs inconsistent with our Catholic identity (i.e., negative/rude messages)
- Sneakers with socks – no lights or loud designs
- If wearing shorts or a skirt, must reach the knee when sitting down
- No slip-on/open-toe/ballerina/sandals/flip-flop shoes
- No low-cut or sleeveless tops
- Jewelry rules still apply: only small post earrings and a small religious necklace/bracelet, tasteful watch
- Make-up rules still apply: no lipstick, lip gloss, nail polish, nail gloss, nail tips, etc.

Early Drop-Off Program

Our early drop-off program begins at 7:00 A.M. at both campuses. Students may be brought to the Rockaway Boulevard entrance at the Rockaway Boulevard campus, and the 130th Street entrance at the Saint Teresa of Avila campus. They may bring breakfast and should always have a silent reading book with them.

Evaluation

Students in all grades will receive ongoing evaluation throughout the school year in the form of tests, assignments, and teacher observations. Students in Grades 1-8 will be given midterm exams in February and final exams in late May and/or early June. Midterm exams will count for 20 % of the second trimester grade, and final exams will count for 25% of the third trimester grade.

Report Cards will be distributed three times a year. Parents must meet with the teacher to receive their child's report card in December and March. The final report card will go home with the child on the last day of school. All accounts must be in good standing for report cards to be issued.

Additionally, progress reports will be distributed in Grades 1-8. Distribution dates will be announced on the calendar. Parents must sign each progress report and return it to the school in the OLCA folder.

Extended Day Program

Our Extended Day Program begins on Monday, September 10. It operates from dismissal until 6:00 PM at both campuses. Registration for the program is \$10 per child and must be completed before a child can attend. Payment is required the Friday before each week the child will attend.

Students will receive a snack and homework help. Parents must fill out a separate emergency form for the Extended Day program which includes contact information for that time of the day, along with a list of approved adults who may pick the child up from the program.

Delinquent payments or inappropriate conduct may result in dismissal from the Extended Day Program.

Field Trips

Attending a field trip is a privilege given to students. Parents must use the official permission slip for their child to attend. Handwritten notes or permission over the phone are not allowed. A child who is demonstrating poor conduct may be prohibited from attending a field trip. Students who are not going on a field trip are still required to attend school.

Parents may attend a field trip if they are VIRTUS trained. Chaperones will be assigned on a first come, first serve basis.

Fundraising

There are two mandatory fundraisers. Each family must sell three boxes of chocolate (\$50 per box) in the fall and one hundred raffle tickets (\$1 per ticket) in the winter. Please refer to the school calendar for exact dates.

Families who do not submit their fundraising fees by the deadline provided on the calendar will have the total amount of the fundraiser added to their tuition, along with a \$50 late penalty per fundraiser.

Gum

Chewing gum is never permitted on school grounds at any time.

Homework

All homework must be completed on a daily basis. Students who miss more than three homework assignments in one trimester will receive an “N” in homework for that subject area. Parents are to sign homework assignments to indicate that they are aware that their child has done their homework.

Returning tests and graded assignments with a parent signature is part of a child’s homework grade, and is required in Grades 1-8.

Honor Roll

Students in Grades 1-8 who consistently excel in all areas will be eligible for the Honor Roll each trimester.

The criteria for the Honor Roll is as follows:

Principal’s List

1. A combined average of 97 or higher in all major subject areas, and an E in all special subject areas

2. An E in all conduct, homework, and personal progress marks
3. No more than three unexcused absences or latenesses
4. No Incident Reports
5. No more than one Uniform Violation

First Honors

1. A combined average of 93 or higher in all major subject areas, and an E or G in all special subject areas
2. An E or G in all conduct, homework, and personal progress marks
3. No more than three unexcused absences or latenesses
4. No more than one Incident Report
5. No more than two Uniform Violations

Second Honors

1. A combined average of 89 or higher in all major subject areas, and an S or higher in all special subject areas
2. An S or higher in all personal progress marks
3. No more than three unexcused absences or latenesses
4. No more than three Incident Reports
5. No more than three Uniform Violations

Merit Award

1. A combined average of 85 or higher in all major subject areas, and an S or higher in all special subject areas
2. An S or higher in all personal progress marks
3. No more than three unexcused absences or latenesses
4. No more than three Incident Reports
5. No more than three Uniform Violations

IEP Procedures

OLCA can accommodate many specifications found in an IEP. For us to do so, the parent must provide a copy of the IEP and meet with the principal to determine if and how the child's needs will be met.

Incident Report

An Incident Report will be given for a major violation of school rules, including but not limited to: disrespect of a school community member; destruction or damage of property; and dangerous or unsafe activities.

The Incident Report will be completed by the student and signed by both student and teacher. It will be sent home in the OLCA folder, and must be signed by the parent and returned to school the next day. Please note that parent signature indicates that they have seen the Incident Report, not necessarily that they agree with it. If a parent has a concern regarding an Incident Report, they should return it signed and contact the teacher or staff member who issued the incident report.

An incident of violence or bullying will receive an In-School Suspension along with the Incident Report.

Students with more than three incident reports in one trimester will be ineligible for honors.

Inclement Weather

If school will be closed due to inclement weather, an announcement will be made on our website:
www.olcacademy.net

Should school be open on a day of inclement weather, please refer to the Uniform section for information on appropriate dress.

In-School Suspension

An in-school suspension is used as a consequence for bullying, violence, damage of property, cheating/plagiarism, or other serious violation of school policies. During this suspension, the child will be given work to complete in the office or in another classroom. Parents will be notified regarding the suspension as soon as it is given.

Internet Usage Policy

Children may use the internet in school under direct supervision of the classroom teacher. Accessing e-mail, social networking sites, or anything else unrelated to their academic work is strictly forbidden.

Additionally, any incident of a student using the internet to harass, insult, or bully another student will be fully investigated and their actions may result in dismissal from Our Lady's Catholic Academy.

Jewelry & Makeup

Students may wear one small post earring in each ear and a small necklace or bracelet with a religious symbol. No other jewelry is permitted, but students may wear a small watch. Jewelry and watch cannot be in neon colors and should not distract from the uniform in any way. (See **Uniform** for further guidelines.)

Makeup, lip gloss, nail tips, nail polish, rings (other than class ring), bracelets, and anything of similar nature are not allowed. The same policy is in effect on Dress Up, Dress Down, and Gym Days.

Students will receive a Uniform Violation for the first offense and both an Incident Report and Uniform Violation for each additional offense.

Lunch

In both campuses, students in Grades 1-8 will eat in the school auditorium from 11:00-12:00. Students in Grades Nursery, Pre-Kindergarten, and Kindergarten will eat in their classrooms.

Students may bring their own lunch or order from the school lunch program. Lunch orders are due on the Friday before each week the student will be ordering lunch. Lunch orders cannot be completed during the same day or week that the child receives the lunch, as our partner companies need advance preparation time.

Medical Conditions

If a child has an allergy or a medical condition that requires medication, it is the parent's responsibility to ensure that the school is notified and that medication is kept at the school building in the nurse's office.

Please note that if a child has an allergy that requires an EPI-pen, a parent is required to accompany their child on a field trip for their child to attend.

Morning Routines

Christ is the reason for our school, and our Catholic identity defines who we are. Each school day will begin with morning prayers. Family members are invited to join us every morning as we begin our day. We ask that you gather in the rear of the auditorium, behind the students. After prayers, students will go to their classrooms using the stairwell by the stage, while parents exit out the Rockaway Boulevard door at the Rockaway Boulevard campus, and the 130th Street auditorium doors at the Saint Teresa of Avila campus.

Parent Cooperation

The education of a student is a sacred partnership between the parents and the school.

It is required that parents are supportive of all school policies and that they cooperate with the administration and with the faculty in the proper academic and behavioral development of their children. Without mutual respect and trust, Our Lady's Catholic Academy cannot meet the needs of its students.

To preserve this relationship, all discussions over disagreements must be conducted outside the presence of the students. This prevents the students from getting mixed messages from school and home.

Just as the parent has the right to withdraw a child if desired, the school administration reserves the right to require the withdrawal of a student if the administration determines that the partnership with the parents is broken beyond repair.

Progress Reports

Children in Grades 1-8 will receive progress reports at the midpoint of the first and second trimesters. Please consult the school calendar for distribution dates, and return the signed report on the following school day.

School Liturgies

Children will participate in Mass at least once every school month. The date and time of each liturgical celebration will be announced on the monthly calendar.

All liturgical celebrations will be held at the Saint Teresa of Avila-Saint Anthony of Padua worship site on 130th Street, adjacent to the Saint Teresa of Avila campus. Students from the Rockaway Boulevard campus will require completed permission slips, as they will travel by yellow bus to the worship site.

Family members are always welcome to attend, and their presence is encouraged!

Supervision

Students must be supervised by an adult on the staff at all times. A student may never enter or remain in a room that does not have at least one adult staff member present. No student may leave the classroom without explicit permission from their teacher. They must sign out, carry a pass with them while out of the room, and sign in when they return to the classroom.

Tuition & Fees

Tuition is billed in full at the beginning of the school year. However, as a convenience to parents, tuition may be paid over a ten-month period, beginning in August. The first tuition payment is due on Monday, August 6. Future tuition payments are due on the 1st of every month, with the final installment due on May 1. After May 31, late tuition payments must be made using credit card, debit card, money order, or cash. Checks will not be accepted. Additionally, a late fee of \$200 will be added to all delinquent accounts on June 1.

Families can receive a 5% discount on their tuition if they pay their entire yearly balance by October 31. Also, for convenience, payments may be made over the phone using a debit card or credit card.

Families with outstanding tuition may not attend the Extended Day program, field trips, or any additional fee-based activity. Report cards cannot be issued to families with an outstanding balance. For returning students to begin class in September, they cannot have a balance from the previous school year.

Uniform

The uniform must be worn correctly and completely. Students will receive a Uniform Violation when they fail to do so. Accumulating more than one violation in a trimester will impact eligibility for honors. Shirts must always be tucked in.

Boys

- **K-8:** Blue pants, light blue button-down shirt, plaid tie, black leather belt, black socks, and black uniform dress shoes must be worn daily. Alternatively, boys may wear the polo shirt instead of the button-down shirt and plaid tie combination. All other uniform rules apply. A black leather belt must be worn with pants.
- **Gym Uniform:** The OLCA gym uniform may be worn with white socks and sneakers. No light-up features or neon colors may be worn on sneakers.
- **Nursery and Pre-K:** Gym uniform must be worn every day.
- **Turbans:** Boys who wear a turban for religious reasons are allowed to do so. The turban must match the color of the uniform (light blue/navy blue for OLCA, black or hunter green for STA)

Girls

- **K-5:** The OLCA uniform must be worn. Jumper, light blue collar blouse, blue or black knee socks, blue or black nylon tights, and black uniform dress shoes. The pants and polo shirt are also an option. A black leather belt must be worn with pants.
- **6-8:** Box pleat skirt, vest with emblem, collar blouse, blue or black knee socks, blue or black nylon tights, and black uniform dress shoes. The pants and polo shirt are also an option. A black leather belt must be worn with pants. Clothes must fit correctly and not be tight.
- **Dress Shoes:** Must have laces or a strap, must have a rubber sole, and must have a flat heel. NO ballet slippers, slip-on shoes, open-toed shoes, sandals, flip-flops, or boots.
- **Gym Uniform:** The OLCA gym uniform may be worn with white socks and white, blue, or black sneakers. No light-up features or neon colors may be worn on sneakers.
- **Nursery and Pre-K:** Gym uniform must be worn every day.
- Additional options: female students may wear black or navy blue headbands or clips.

September, October, May, and June only:

- Boys and girls may wear navy blue khaki shorts with the OLCA polo shirt, along with white, blue, gray, or black socks, and white, blue, or black sneakers.

Days of Inclement Weather

- Students may wear rain boots or snow boots to school, along with their school shoes in a bag. They must change into their regular school shoes when they arrive at school.
- If the temperature is 25 degrees or lower at 7 AM, students may wear their complete gym uniform (with sweatshirt) to school.

Students at the Saint Teresa of Avila campus may wear their old uniform this year. . All of the above uniform requirements apply, with the adjustment that hair clips/headbands and socks/stockings should be black or hunter green.

Pants must be worn at the waist. Undergarments must never be exposed at any time.

If there is an extraordinary circumstance in which the uniform cannot be worn completely, please provide the child with a note indicating the reason, and we will waive the Uniform Violation if appropriate.

Volunteers

Parent volunteers are highly encouraged. To volunteer at OLCA and to attend field trips, parents must complete free VIRTUS training and a volunteer orientation session at the school. VIRTUS training is offered twice a year at OLCA, but can also be completed at other sites. If you choose to attend another site, you can find a listing at www.virtus.org under the Diocese of Brooklyn organization. Simply bring your certificate to the school and we will keep a copy on file.

In accordance with Diocesan policy, NO PARENT will be allowed to volunteer or attend a field trip without VIRTUS training.

Wall of Fame

Students who meet all of the following criteria in a school month will be placed on the Wall of Fame for that month:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Fully prepared for class every day. | 4. No incident reports. |
| 2. No conduct issues on home reports. | 5. No uniform violations. |
| 3. All classwork and homework fully completed. | 6. No unexcused latenesses or absences. |

Students on the Wall of Fame will get a special pizza and dress down day. They will also be photographed and placed on the Wall of Fame bulletin board in the lobby.

I certify that I have read this handbook and will abide by all policies within. I understand that the principal has the authority to revise this handbook as needed, and will notify parents of any changes in writing. I understand that failure by families to comply with policies may result in dismissal from Our Lady's Catholic Academy.

Student's Name _____ Grade ____

Student's Signature (Gr. 1-8) _____

Parent's Signature (All Grades) _____

PHOTOGRAPHY WAIVER (OPTIONAL)

I give permission for my child's image to be used on the website and in print marketing.

Parent's Signature _____

____ I **DO NOT** give permission for my child's image to be used on the website and in print marketing.

Parent's Signature _____