

Diocese of Altoona- Johnstown Catholic Schools

Parent/Student Handbook



Faith

Excellence

Community

Legal Disclaimer: Nothing contained in this Handbook, or in any other document, custom or practice, is intended to, or shall be construed to, create any contractual obligations, express or implied, on the part of the diocese or the school.

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MISSION STATEMENT

As a Catholic school community, our mission is to cultivate a Christ-centered learning environment where every child is given opportunities to excel and is recognized as a child of God.

VISION STATEMENT

Our vision is for all children to be life-long learners who live out their faith with conviction, compassion, and commitment to use their God-given talents to make positive contributions to the whole world while building up the Kingdom of God.

ADMINISTRATION

Diocesan and parochial schools of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown are those which meet all of the following conditions:

- are recognized as Catholic by the Bishop of Altoona-Johnstown.
- are responsible to the Diocesan Director of Education for such matters as have been determined by the Bishop of Altoona-Johnstown and are subject to the Director's regulations.
- are governed by the Diocesan School Policies and Regulations.
- have written belief and mission statements which identify the school as Catholic.
- have a program of religious education which conforms to the standards determined by the Education Office of Altoona-Johnstown and the Office of Religious Education and Catechesis.
- are recognized by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

ADMISSION POLICIES

In accordance with the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown Policy 5020 Admission:

Since the formation of students in the Catholic faith heritage and its religious traditions is the primary purpose for which our Catholic schools have been founded, both parents/guardians and students must be willing to abide by the values inherent in our Catholic faith and by our philosophy of Catholic education.

All students, regardless of religious preference, enrolled in Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown must take the prescribed religion courses in the curriculum and attend all religious service offered by the school. Religion classes are held on a daily basis. Services include, but are not limited to Liturgy of the Eucharist (Mass), Sacrament of Reconciliation, Rosary, Stations of the Cross, Penance Services, Prayer Services, Daily and Special Prayers, Adoration. Those who are not of the Catholic religion will not be expected to receive sacraments.

Students and parents/guardians who desire an educational experience founded on the Catholic philosophy of education and who fulfill the requirements and conditions for enrollment specified below, are eligible for admission to the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown without discrimination with respect to sex, race, ethnic origin or disability, if with reasonable accommodation, they can meet the school's requirements, according to the subsequent provisions of this policy.

The request for the admission of students from a public or private school must be carefully reviewed and the reasons for the request examined.

In accordance with diocesan policy, the diocese encourages participation of all children in a kindergarten program prior to entering first grade.

Kindergarten Admission

Those seeking admission to kindergarten must be 5 years of age on or before August 31 of the year of entry.

Registration is ongoing and continues until class is full.

In Pennsylvania, kindergarten is not a required grade.

When registering a kindergarten student, the parent(s)/guardian(s) shall present proof of age and (for a Catholic child) a baptismal certificate. A Christian, non-Catholic student shall present a baptismal certificate and note the denomination when possible. Incoming students shall be given a school health examination form, which must be completed by the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student's physician. This form should be returned to the school prior to the beginning of the school year.

Immunizations

The Pennsylvania Department of Health promulgates immunization regulations that require parents or guardians of students enrolled in grades K-12 to have their children immunized against various communicable diseases. Records will need to be given to the administrative offices of the diocesan school on or before the fifth day of class.

Probation Period for all Students

All newly enrolled students are subject to a 9 week probation period. The school reserves the right to determine that the school is not a good fit for the student and to require withdrawal of the student. In such a case, any tuition paid will be refunded.

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Student Progress

The school uses the diocesan system (PowerSchool) for reporting pupil progress. This may include progress reports and interim reports which will be based on evidence from multiple assessments which demonstrate a student's understanding of the different academic content standards, teacher observations, or similar feedback, when appropriate.

Standardized Testing is also to be utilized to track student progress. Diocesan curriculum can be found on the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown website: www.dioceseaj.org .

Honor Roll, Parent Conferencing, and Report Card information will be in the School Section if applicable.

Grade scale:

A = 93-100

B = 85-92

C = 76-84

D = 70-75

F = Below 70

Some Schools of the diocese will use a customized standard-based report card. This will be posted in the school section.

Grade Retention/Promotion

Satisfactory completion of each grade is to be expected of every student. Absence itself, for a valid reason, is not a reason for retention of a student if the student has completed the required work.

Retention of students is appropriate where it is intended to enable a student to gain future developmental, emotional and/or educational maturity and success.

ATTENDANCE

Full day attendance is expected of all students. Information pertaining to your school attendance policy will be posted in the School Section.

COMMUNICATIONS

Open communication between home and school is important for student progress and maintaining a healthy school climate. The proper line of communication in discussing any facet of your child's progress is to first contact the teacher directly. This may be done through a

written message, e-mail or by telephone. Teachers are unavailable during class hours but will respond within two school days. If a satisfactory solution cannot be reached, the parent/guardian and/or teacher will inform the principal. If the problem remains unsolved, then the parents/guardians may have recourse to the pastor and or diocesan education office. Because of the interruptions in the teaching-learning process, spontaneous visits to the classrooms are not permitted.

Weather delays/cancellations will be announced via School Messenger, television, and radio by each individual elementary school.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Administrators, counselors, and teachers will keep confidential information entrusted to them so long as no one's life, health, or safety is at stake. Student progress will only be discussed with parents or legal guardian. Progress cannot be discussed with grandparents, friends, etc. without **written permission** from legal guardian.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Counseling, speech, language, occupational therapy, and other services will be provided through the local Intermediate Units.

EMERGENCY OPERATION PLAN

Diocesan Schools have each developed an Emergency Operation Plan in cooperation with state and local authorities. The plan must be approved by the Education Office of the Altoona-Johnstown Diocese. Parents/Guardians should stay tuned to local media sites for important information.

CUSTODY

Administrators, counselors and teachers will keep confidential information entrusted to them so long as no one's life, health, or safety is at stake.

The school abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, the school will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the academic records and other school-related information regarding the child. A current physical address, e-mail, and phone number must be provided by the non-custodial parent in order to obtain information.

If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order dealing with the education/visitation of the child. It is also the parent's responsibility to inform the school of the addresses where the student's records should be sent.

Divorced parents must provide the school with a court certified copy of the custody section of the divorce decree. If no such copy is on file, school officials will assume that both parents have custodial rights. Parents/guardians must provide the school with the most current court certified copy of the custody decree.

School officials will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that children are released only to the appropriate parent at the time/days according to the court custody arrangements. However, parents must accept the primary responsibility for such arrangements and should instruct their children as to which parent should have physical custody of them on any given day.

Please note: The school, its teachers, and administrators cannot become involved in adjudicating marital disputes. Parents, in such cases, should strive to keep their personal issues out of school. The school's responsibility is with the child and his/her welfare.

MANDATED REPORTING

Everyone working with your child is a mandated report. We are not permitted to contact parents if a child is interviewed by Children and Youth Services and/or police.

DISCIPLINE BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Schools will try to develop the art of discovering the good in every person and show respect for one another. In other words, we...

- include everyone;
- are kind in our words and actions;
- stick up for one another;
- and support and encourage each other.

Students recite a “Peacekeeper’s Pledge” that helps to remind them what the expectations are at Diocesan Schools. “I am a _____ Catholic School Peacekeeper. I promise to be kind in my thoughts, words, and actions. By doing this, I will keep our school a safe place to be as Jesus teaches us, I will do unto others as I would have them do unto me.”

In accordance with the teaching of the Catholic Church, we strive for discipline to have an air of forgiveness and understanding as we are trying to develop thoughtful, caring, and loving individuals. This means we intend our discipline to be caring, fair, consistent, and understanding in the resolution of a situation.

When a child makes a poor choice, teachers will talk to the child and decide what action, if any, is to take place. Depending on the severity and/or frequency of the behavior, the teacher will inform the parents/guardians and/or principal to discuss an appropriate action. Ways to handle poor choices can include (but are not limited to) reflection, discussion, writing, temporary isolation (time-out), loss of privileges, etc.

For certain situations, the school pastor will also be included in the disciplinary action.

General Overview

A variety of behavior management techniques, strategies, and procedures will be used to the extent necessary to ensure that the learning environment provided is not disrupted by inappropriate student behavior. Corporal punishment and verbal abuse are not permitted.

Authority of the Administration, Faculty, and Staff

Every teacher, staff member, and administrator has the right to exercise authority as to the conduct and behavior of students in the school during the time they are in attendance.

Classroom-based Expectations and Management

The following chart illustrates categories of student misbehavior/misconduct and the potential consequences of stated action.

CONSEQUENCE LEVELS

	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4
Examples	<i>Not following classroom / cafeteria / playground rules; dress code violation; horseplay; off task behaviors; running in hallway; name calling; disruptive; talking when others are talking, no cell phones or unauthorized technology devices, no gum</i>	<i>Bus disturbance; lying/cheating; spitting; noncompliance; profanity/vulgarity, forged note/paper</i>	<i>Fighting/physical aggression; harassment/bullying; throwing dangerous objects; property damage/vandalism; reference in conversation, writing or pictures to weapons or acts of violence; internet/technology misuse / cyberbullying; stealing; skipping class</i>	<i>Possession of alcohol/drugs; weapon use / possession; intentional and severe physical harm to another; insubordination, leaving campus</i>
1st Offense	-Verbal Warning	-1:1 private discussion with teacher; -Written reflection (signed by parent)	-Student sent to Principal's office; Principal & Student call parents	-Parent called and asked to come to school for immediate suspension; -Discussion about appropriate placement, potential

				expulsion -Possible probation -Refer to SAP Training
2nd Offense	-1:1 private discussion with teacher; -Written reflection (signed by parent) -Written warning	-Parent Contact	-After School Detention; -Potential meeting with Pastor and Parent, referral to counselor	
3rd Offense	-Parent Contact	- Detention/Reflection Time	- Parent called and asked to come to school for immediate suspension - Discussion about appropriate placement, potential expulsion -Possible probation -Refer to SAP Training.	
4th Offense	-Detention/Reflection Time	- After School Detention; - Potential meeting with Pastor and Parent, referral to counselor		

This chart is not considered a complete or exhaustive list of infractions, but serves to give illustrative examples and their categorization. Since every situation has context and nuance, the administration has the final say as to the category to which a student's specific behavior belongs, as well as the consequences thereof,

Detention/Reflection Time will take place at a designated time and space in the school at the discretion of the administration. The supervising administrator will give the student a task to reflect on his/her actions to be completed during his/her time. Students will not be allowed to do homework or other school-related activities. If detention takes place after school, the student's parent/guardian is responsible for transportation home.

In-school suspension will take place on a date at the discretion of the administration. The student will report to school as usual but will be excluded from classroom participation for the entirety of the school day. He/she will be and given appropriate assignments (School work and tasks to reflect on his/her actions). The student is ineligible to participate in any extracurricular activities (e.g. athletic competitions, band performances, etc.) on the day of the suspension.

In rare cases, out-of-school suspension will be considered. Out-of-school suspension will take place on a date at the discretion of the administration. On the day of the suspension, the student is not to report to school and is excluded from all school activities. The student is ineligible to participate in any extracurricular activities (e.g. athletic competitions, band performances, etc.) on the day of the suspension. The student is required to make-up missed work.

In extreme cases, expulsion is considered. This will only be done with administrative and pastoral counsel. Expulsion is a permanent status and goes into effect at the time of parental notification. Parents/guardians are responsible for making all necessary arrangements for their child to attend another school, per Pennsylvania law.

*Extracurricular activities (e.g. athletic competitions, band performances, etc.) are not considered an excuse to postpone or cancel any consequence.

Parent/Guardian Notification

Depending on the severity of the infraction, if a student commits an infraction, the teacher/administrator may contact the parents/guardians about the situation and meet with the student (and parents/guardians, if applicable) to discuss the consequences. A pattern of continuous infractions will result in a Parent/Guardian Conference.

If a student commits an infraction while riding district-provided transportation (school bus/van), the driver will fill out a referral form and give it to the school office. The administration is responsible for contacting the parents/guardians about the incident and taking any disciplinary action with the student.

Student Consequences of Misbehavior/Misconduct

Each school will maintain a Conduct Record on each student. Each Diocesan Catholic School teacher and/or designated learning support expert maintains his/her own classroom behavior expectations and management procedures. These expectations and procedures are discussed with the students during the first week of classes. Written outlines of classroom expectations and procedures are available upon request. If at any time a student is unwilling or unable to meet the expectations of classroom behavior, he/she may be referred to the administration. Student Conduct Records will be maintained in the school administration office.

FIELD TRIPS

A standard permission form must be signed and returned to the school prior to the scheduled field trip for the student to participate in the trip.

A student who fails to submit a standard permission form prior to the trip will not be permitted to participate. Only the STANDARD PERMISSION FORMS obtained from the school office/published online are acceptable. Notes from parents or legal guardians giving permission are not acceptable.

Field trips must be educational and must be approved by the principal in consultation with Diocesan Education Office

Field trips are a privilege. No student has an absolute right to a field trip. A student may be denied participation if he/she demonstrates inappropriate behavior, or does not meet academic standards including grades, class assignments, and homework. Parents/Guardians have the right to refuse their child's participation in a field trip. However, the child must report to school the day of the field trip or be marked absent.

Participation in field trips is restricted to those students in the class for which the trip is scheduled. Siblings or other children are not permitted to attend field trips. All designated Chaperones are required to have completed the diocesan youth protection requirements.

EXTRA-CURRICULARS

Every Student who does participate in a field trip/school sponsored extra-curricular activity is expected to obey all discipline codes as outlined in this handbook.

Students who participate in an extra-curricular activity should behave as if they are representing their Catholic School and should behave accordingly.

Attendance at school is required to participate in school sponsored extra-curricular activities scheduled that day or evening. The Student must be in school for at least half a day to

participate. Exceptions may be considered but building principal must be consulted in advance.

MEDICATIONS

A policy implemented by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, regulates the administration of prescription and over the counter medication (OTC) to students throughout the school day. The directives are as follows:

1. **No one except a licensed professional** can dispense prescription or over the counter (OTC) medication in a school. **The office personnel will not dispense Ibuprofen, Acetaminophen, Tums, cough drops, or prescription medications.**
2. In the absence of a licensed professional, neither the secretary nor the principal can administer OTC meds or those prescribed by a doctor **UNLESS** it is an emergency Medication (**epinephrine or asthma inhaler**).

A **doctor's order** must accompany **prescription or OTC** medications to be dispensed only by a licensed professional (school nurse). Again, even with a doctor's order, **office personnel are NOT PERMITTED** to dispense any prescription or OTC medications.

For example, if cough medicine is brought to school it cannot be given unless the doctor has signed an order to be administered during school hours and **ONLY IF THE NURSE IS PRESENT** to dispense the ordered dosage.

3. In the event your child is on a maintenance medication, for example Insulin, arrangements can be made with our district school nurse to administer the medication on the contingency that a doctor's order has been issued and is on file with our office.
4. All medications must be delivered to the office by an adult. Students may not transport medications.

Parents/Guardians are permitted to administer their child's prescription and OTC meds during school hours. When your child is ill and unable to finish out the school day, you will be notified so that you can make a decision on what you think would be the best plan of action for you.

PARENT/GUARDIAN COOPERATION

The education of a student is a partnership between the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school. Just as the parent/guardian 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 is irretrievably broken.

Parental/Guardian Rights

- to have your children's safety be a priority;
- to have your children receive an authentic, Catholic education in a Catholic environment;
- to have your child's learning needs met if the program can reasonably accommodate them;
- to have your children taught by competent teachers who respect and care for them;
- to talk with personnel and to have requests for meetings answered in a timely manner;
- to have your children "try out" for all program activities and teams;
- to review records and respond;
- to participate in the life of the school and parish.

Parental/Guardian Responsibilities

- to be a partner with the school in the education and formation of your children;
- to understand and support the Catholic identity of the school; to read all communications from the school and to request clarification when necessary;
- to know your children's teachers and to observe parent-teacher conference dates and any special requests for meetings;

- to discuss concerns and problems with the person(s) most directly involved before contacting other authorities;
- to be as actively involved as you can be in the life of the school and to volunteer assistance when possible;
- to promote our parish(es) and school and to speak well of them to others;
- to know and support school rules; and
- to appreciate that Catholic education/formation is a privilege that many persons do not have.

--adapted from Volunteers in Catholic Education: An Administrator's Guide to Legal Considerations (2nd ed.) by Mary Angela Shaughnessy, SCN (NCEA, 2007.)

Family Responsibilities in Cooperation with School

Parents/Guardians must be the first to foster a loving and discipline d atmosphere at home. The school provides a setting for learning, but can only operate effectively with the cooperation of the family. To achieve a harmonious relationship parents/guardians are expected to:

- Provide for the spiritual, physical and mental development and well-being of the child.
- Be supportive toward the school and education in word and deeds and in social media outlets.
- Help the child develop into a positive, productive member of society and the church, taking seriously their baptismal promises to fulfill the spiritual upbringing of their children including regular mass attendance.
- Cooperate with and respect school policies and school personnel both in word and deed and in social media outlets.
- Be responsible for any financial obligations incurred by the child in school.
- Know and adhere to school philosophy and policy.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act gives parents/guardians the right to inspect their child's educational records, and to have a school official explain the records if requested. Any parent/guardian who wishes to see his/her child's records should contact the school principal for an appointment

Parent/Guardian Service Requirements

If the Diocesan School requires service and/or fundraising, details are provided in the individual school section.

Retreats and Service Program

If the Diocesan School offers retreat and service programs, details are provided in the individual school section.

TECHNOLOGY & INTERNET

The Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown issues an Internet Usage Policy and a Remote Instruction Policy that requires a parent/guardian and student signature of agreement. Schools also issue a Hardware Use Policy that details the use of devices, acceptable behaviors and financial responsibilities should devices be lost or damaged. The full policy can be found in the Appendix

PERSONAL PROPERTY

The school is not responsible for any personal property brought into the school by the student including electronic devices.

CELL PHONES AND PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Cell phones, smartwatches, and other personal electronic devices **are not** to be used during school hours. If used, the device will be taken by the student to the administrative office and can be picked up at the end of the day. The location of the device pick up will be determined by each school.

USE OF SCHOOL GROUNDS

Schools are responsible for students only during posted school hours. Hours should be posted in the Individual School Section. Children are not to be on school grounds unattended at any other times.

AMENDMENTS TO HANDBOOK

The school reserves the right to amend this handbook. Parents/Guardians will be given prompt notice of any amendments.

Prior to the first day of school, parents/guardians must sign and return this agreement either in person or submit electronically:

In consideration of _____ School's provision of a Catholic education for my/our children, I/we, _____ the parent(s)/guardian(s) of _____, have read and agree to be governed by this handbook and to pay all required tuition and fees.

Signature

Date

Appendix

Student Use of the Internet in School

The Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown (DAJ) is fortunate to have a connection to the Internet to supplement the other educational resources already available to staff and students. Through the Internet, your child will have the entire world at his or her fingertips and be able to explore it.

This wonderful resource brings with it additional responsibility. As Internet users, we must be aware of the many issues that surround the Internet. There are many valuable resources available on the Internet that may not be found elsewhere. There are also many sites that can be considered inappropriate for students and serve no educational value. It is the responsibility of all users, staff and students alike, to ensure that, at all times while in a Diocesan School, the Internet is being used only for educational purposes. When using the Internet, students will be supervised by Diocesan School Staff. However, due to the nature of the Internet and evolving technology, even with supervision, students may get to an inappropriate site. It is the student's responsibility to report any inappropriate site to the teacher and return to the educational topic assigned.

As part of our internet safety policy, schools will educate minors about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms, and cyberbullying awareness and response. This is required by the Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act.

The following Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) should be read carefully and understood by all Internet users. As parents/guardians, you should review it in detail with your children before they begin using the Internet in their school. The Acceptable Use Policy was developed to ensure the safety of all users.

The DAJ uses a filtering system designed to prevent access to educationally inappropriate sites. However, it is important to understand that no solution is perfect, and we cannot guarantee that students will not have access to inappropriate sites.

Parents should be aware that DAJ educators can request that a specific site be blocked or un-blocked. Such decisions will be made by those responsible for monitoring the filtering service within the DAJ.

It is important that you and your children understand that any violation of the AUP may result in the loss of Internet and e-mail privileges or other disciplinary action. We ask that you work with your children in reinforcing the behaviors associated with the AUP and the attached student contract. Please also note that our filtering system allows us to track and monitor all computer use on the network.

Acceptable Use Policy for Networks, Including the Internet

It is the policy of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown that all technology used to access the network will be used in a responsible, legal, and ethical manner. Failure to do so will result in the termination of network and e-mail privileges for the user.

Individual users of the network—students and adults—are responsible for their use of the network. The use of the network must be in support of education and research and must be consistent with academic actions of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown School System and will be under the supervision of Diocesan Staff. Use of other organizations' networks or computing resources must comply with the rules appropriate for that network. Use of the network for any illegal or commercial activities is prohibited.

- ❖ A responsible network user will:
- ❖ Use language that is considered appropriate.
- ❖ Be polite.
- ❖ Send information that other users will not find offensive.
- ❖ Conform with copyright laws and always give credit to the author of the material used.
- ❖ Never reveal personal information about any user such as address, telephone number, credit card numbers, social security number, etc.
- ❖ Neither tamper with the system nor alter, delete or destroy any files or data that are not yours.

A responsible network user must be aware that:

- ❖ Use of the network and e-mail is a PRIVILEGE, not a RIGHT.
- ❖ The DAJ network is to be used only for educational purposes.
- ❖ E-mail is not guaranteed to be private.
- ❖ Identifying photos of students with their first and last names may not be used on a web site.
- ❖ It is important to log off the computer at the end of every session, so another user cannot use your password.
- ❖ Violation of this policy will result in the possible loss of Internet privileges and/or disciplinary action pursuant to the Code of Ethics for Catholic Schools and/or prosecution under state and federal law.
- ❖ Persons issued an account are responsible for its use at all times.

Acceptable Use Policy for Networks, Including the Internet
Student and Parent/Guardian Signature Page

It is the policy of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown School System that students and staff will use all technology to access electronic (“computer”) networks, including the Internet and email, in a responsible, legal, and ethical manner. Failure to do so may result in the loss of network privileges for the user, disciplinary action under the Code of Ethics for Catholic Schools, or prosecution under federal or state law.

I have read and understand the Acceptable Use Policy for Diocesan Schools Internet use (Attachment 1). I understand that use of the Internet and e-mail in school is a privilege, not a right. Use of the Internet in school is designed strictly for educational purposes. I also understand that the DAJ is taking measures so that my child does not have access to any material deemed inappropriate, but because no filtering system is perfect, my child might gain access to an inappropriate site. I agree that I will not hold the DAJ responsible for any access by my child of any inappropriate materials acquired on the Internet.

By signing below, I give my child permission to work on the Internet and use e-mail for educational purposes.

By not signing, I understand that my child will not be permitted to work on the Internet and use e-mail in school.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name (print): _____

STUDENTS MUST SIGN THE STATEMENT BELOW REGARDING INTERNET USE:

I understand and agree to adhere to the behaviors outlined in the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown Acceptable Use Policy. I understand that any violation of this policy may result in the loss of Internet and e-mail privileges, disciplinary action, or prosecution under federal or state law.

I understand that if I do not sign this agreement, I will not be permitted to use the Internet and e-mail in school.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name (print): _____

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The Secretary of Education, pursuant to Section 9-923-A of the Public School Code, is authorized to purchase textbooks, instructional materials, and equipment, which may be loaned to all children residing in the Commonwealth who are enrolled in kindergarten through grade 12 in nonpublic and private schools. Our school is now in the process of requesting specific textbooks, materials and equipment to be loaned to your child(ren).

In order to participate in the program, a parent/guardian of each child attending the nonpublic or private school must individually request a loan of textbooks, instructional materials and equipment. The enclosed individual request form fulfills that requirement. Please sign the form, date it, and return it to the school immediately.

Thank you for your continued assistance and cooperation. Sincerely

yours,

Principal

Certificate of Individual Request

For Loan of Textbooks, Instructional Materials and Equipment

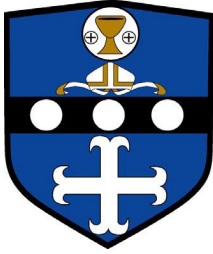
I hereby request the loan of textbooks, instructional materials and equipment in accordance with the Pennsylvania Public School Code of 1949 for my child(ren) attending

_____ School.

Date Signed: _____

Signature of Parent or Guardian: _____

This program is available only to Pennsylvania residents.



Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown

Guidelines for Use of Photographic

Images of Children and Youth

The following guidelines will be adhered to and authorization form obtained when required, for use of photographic images of children and youth by diocesan Departments, Parishes, Schools, and Agencies.

For children/youth under 13 years of age:

Parent permission (release form) **Must** be obtained for any photographic images of children **under 13 years of age** that are used for publicity, brochures, newsletter, web sites, etc.

For children/youth between 13 and 18 years of age

If photographic imagers being used are covering “news” or a specific event, the use of identifiable photographic images is allowed. Examples of this would include sports games/championships, Boy or Girl Scout Jamborees, award services, Youth Ministry Rallies/events, etc.

If identifiable photographic images are being used as a marketing or development item, permission (release form) must be obtained from the parents to use an identifiable picture. Examples of this would be flyers, brochures, web sites, etc., that would be advertising services, schools, programs, etc. In other words, if the project is “planned,” the youth are being used as “models” and the Photographic images are identifiable, then permission (release form) is needed.

If photographic images on a web site are merely to enhance it and are not being used to report news or specific events, then permission (release form) is needed to use identifiable photographic images.

Parental permission (release form) is needed to include any type of video (VHS or streaming) which shows children in a classroom doing “work” or answering questions – this video is considered an “educational record” and cannot be included without permission of parents.

The safest photographic images to use of youth over 13 for enhancement/marketing are “unidentifiable” photographic images – photographic images taken at a distance, from the side, from the “top”, large group activities, etc.

NOTE: Duplicate this letter on Parish, Diocesan Office Department, or School Letterhead

Authorization Form

For Use of Child/Youth Name, Likeness, and/or Photographic Image

This authorization form shall serve as parental permission for the use of name, likeness, and/or photographic image of a child/youth where such permission is required.

I grant permission to

(Diocesan Office, Department, Parish, School)

to use my child's/youth's name, likeness, and/or photographic image in the production of following:

(Above portion must be completed – DO NOT sign if blank.)

I understand that if, for whatever reason, at any point in time, I decide to revoke this agreement, and I so notify the Diocesan Office, Department, Parish, or School in writing, all references to my child/youth (i.e., name, likeness, and/to photographic image) will no longer be used. I understand that web page references and web page photographic images will be removed within thirty (30) days of the written notification. [I understand that the Diocesan Office, Department, Parish, or School is not responsible for access to the internet information or downloads made by users using the web prior to this removal of web references (i.e., name, likeness, and/or photographic image).] I further understand that my child's/youth's name, likeness, and/or photographic image may continue to be used in any publication already printed or published prior to my revocation of the consent provided herein.

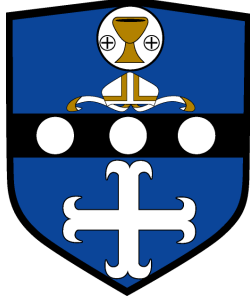
Name of Child (Please Print)

Date of Birth

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian

Date

This Authorization Form to be kept on file until the student graduates from High School.



Diocese of Altoona- Johnstown *Education Office*

2713 W Chestnut Avenue
Altoona, PA 16601
Phone: 814-695-5579
www.dioceseaj.org

I give my consent for my child's Diocesan Elementary School to share the following information with a Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown Catholic High Schools:

- student name,
- parent/guardian name(s),
- address, telephone number(s),
- email address(es), and
- grade level

This information will be shared for the purposes of enhancing programming. I understand that this information will be treated as confidential and not be released to any other parties except those stated. I understand that participation in sharing this information is voluntary.

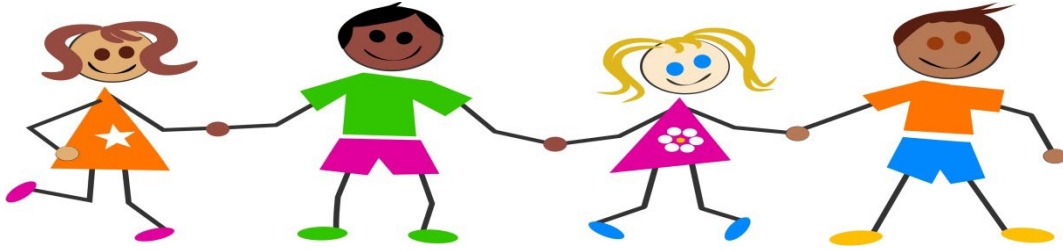
I am the parent or legal guardian of the student named and hereby fully release and discharge all Diocesan Schools, and their administrators, employees, and agents, from all liabilities arising out of or in connection with the above described demographic data sharing relative to the above stated organizations. I reserve the right to withdraw my consent at any time by submitting written notification to school administration.

Child's Name Printed

Parent's Name Printed

Parent's Signature

Date



**Holy Name School Preschool and
Extended School Day**

**Parent Handbook
2024-2025**

**Holy Name Preschool
215 W. Horner Street
Ebensburg, PA 15931**

**Mrs. Robin McMullen
Principal**

**Co-Directors
Mrs. Mary Ellen Sloan
Miss. Grace Bertram**

Welcome

Each school year is always new and exciting. It is full of anticipation and questions. Hopefully, this book will help answer some of the questions you may have and be of assistance as the school year progresses.

Thank you for taking the time to read these notes concerning the program. If you have any questions or concerns during the course of the year, please do not hesitate to get in touch with your child's teacher or the teacher's aide.

Holy Name Preschool and Extended School Day Programs

HNS preschool provides an educational, developmentally appropriate faith-based environment for children three through four years of age. Several programs options are available.

We are excited to offer to your preschool child an Extended Day Program that will operate Monday through Friday from 7:00 AM to 3:00 PM for those children who need additional instruction on the scheduled day of your preschool class. **Because of a new state law your child can only be in a preschool setting for no more than six hours. Please plan your schedules accordingly. We cannot permit any child to attend more than six hours of Preschool/ESD according to the Pennsylvania Department of Education.** Three-year preschool would be eligible for Tuesday and Thursday Extended Day. Four-Year 5-day would be eligible Monday thru Friday and Four-year 3-day would be eligible for Extended Day Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The additional instruction will include academic enrichment and field trips. A calendar will be sent home for scheduling on a monthly basis. **Students may only preschedule prior to the beginning of the month, (25th of the previous month) and will be charged the hourly rate of \$5.00 an hour. We will not be able to take any students that are not prescheduled because of staffing. ESD will be calculated at the end of the month and a bill will be sent home and must be paid by the fifth of the following month so that your child may continue to use the service of ESD.**

Preschool Tuition and ESD Payments

Preschool tuition is a flat monthly rate based on a nine month (September – May) pay period. No adjustments are made due to a child's absence from school. Tuition payments are due by the fifteenth school day of the month. To ensure that all payments received are correctly recorded; we ask that you include your child's name on the envelope or check payment. All payments must be sent to the school office no later than the fifteenth of each month. Each child is also required to pay the \$25.00 Material fee by the end of September.

- Four-year old Monday-Friday cost is \$200.00 a month

- Four-year old Monday, Wednesday and Friday is \$160.00 a month
- Three-year old Tuesday and Thursday is \$140.00 a month

Preschool tuition refunds cannot be given unless a two week notice of intent to withdraw is given in writing to the school office. At that point the remainder of your unused tuition will be refunded.

Admissions

All children must adhere to the following birth date requirements for each program:

Three-year old- Children must turn three years old on or before August 31 of the school year for which they are enrolling.

Four-year old- Children must turn four years old on or before August 31 of the school year for which they are enrolling. All children are expected to be potty trained prior to enrollment. This includes the use of both diapers and “pull-ups”. Children are expected to communicate the need to use the toilet and to have the understanding of the basic functioning of how to use and maneuver within the bathroom setting.

Registration Procedures

At a specified date in January or February (during Catholic Schools Week) all interested families will be provided the opportunity to submit a registration form for the following school year. Those forms are placed in a priority status as follows:

- Students currently enrolled in Holy Name Preschool
- A sibling of a Holy Name Preschool or Holy Name student
- A member of Holy Name Parish
- A member of another Catholic Parish

All classes will be filled on a first-come basis. In the event the class is full, children will be put on a waiting list.

School Information File

So that we can provide the best and safest care we ask that you help by completing the following forms. This information is kept confidential.

- Registration
- Power School Alert System Information
- Social Security Number
- Birth Certificate (Baptismal Certificate, if applicable)
- Immunization Records
- Preschool Information Sheet
- Emergency Contact Form
- Media Permission Form
- Allergy Management Plan (if needed)
- Physician Permission for Medication (if needed)
- Physical Form

It is critical that our records are kept up-to date should any information change during the school year, especially information regarding emergency contacts, work, home addresses and phone numbers. Please notify your child's teacher immediately of any changes.

Staffing

All teachers are certified in Early Childhood Education. All teachers, and teachers' aides have completed Virtus, the Child Abuse History Clearance and Criminal Check Record and Fingerprinting as required by the State of Pennsylvania. They are also required to be mandated reporters of any evidence of child abuse/neglect. We are therefore, obligated to report to the State any suspected cases of child neglect or abuse.

Curriculum

The Holy Name Preschool Curriculum is formulated to meet the PA State Department of Education Early Learning Standards for the following areas of development.

- Religion-the students will learn that God loves everyone and that God made the world and everything in it. Bible heroes, Saints, Christmas and Easter will be introduced.
- Language and Literacy-the ability to listen, understand and to be understood: to communicate and eventually read and write.
- Logical Mathematics-the ability to recognize and utilize numbers, shapes and patterns.

- Science-the ability to explore, demonstrate inquire and understand the world around them.
- Social Studies-the ability to understand the workings of the world around them and their role within the community.
- Spanish-the students will be introduced to colors, numbers and shapes.
- Computer-the students will promote digital citizenship by responsible use of technology and equipment. Learn correct use of simple input technologies. Use software and application for intended purpose.
- Creative Arts-the demonstration and appreciation of creative thinking and expression through music, art and dramatic play.
- Physical Development and Health-self-sufficiency and understanding of health and hygiene practices, self-help needs and safe practices. Use of large muscles for activities such as running and throwing; use of small motor muscles for activities such as drawing, cutting and placement of objects.
- Personal and Social Development-ability to function within a group setting, ability to solve problems, willingness to explore and adapt to new and different situations.

Since we believe that all children learn at different rates and within different situations the staff utilizes a wide variety of materials and learning activities.

In addition, the facility and equipment (both indoors and outdoors) are arranged and utilized to act as an integral part of the learning experience.

Behavior Management

At times it may be necessary to direct a child to appropriate actions and behaviors. Social skills are very important at this age since they are valuable tools in growing and in the learning process. We feel that it is the responsibility of the adults in the children's lives to help guide them to make appropriate choices in this area but also give them time and space to learn and discover self-discipline and conflict management skills on their own.

Our philosophy therefore is to work with and guide your child through modeling positive behaviors, giving clear directions and encouraging and reinforcing positive behaviors.

Snacks and Lunch

Please Note: HNS is a peanut free environment. We ask that all families carefully check all ingredients before bringing any food items into the facility.

Each family that attends the ESD program is asked to provide a snack for their child's class throughout the school year. A snack list will be sent home. Each child will be assigned a date to provide snacks. Those students who do not attend ESD are not asked to bring a snack. The students do not have snacks during the regular class period.

Lunch for students staying for ESD will begin at 11:00 AM. They must pack their lunch. **Preschoolers may not stay for lunch if it is not their scheduled day for class.**

Field Trips and School Visitors

In order to encourage outside learning experiences, classes will take field trips and have speakers come in the school. If you or someone you know has a special hobby, skill or occupation and would like to share it with the children, please contact your child's teacher.

Library

As part of our Preschool curriculum your child will visit the HNS library located in the HNS building. Personnel will assist our staff. As part of the library visit children will be permitted to sign out a book from the school library. We ask your help in seeing these books are returned with your child to the Preschool by the due date. We also have books in the classroom for SSR (silent sustained reading).

Butterfly Garden

To give our children the opportunity for hands-on Science activities we utilize the butterfly garden located on school property. During the school year each class will take on the responsibility of one or more aspects and activities involving these two areas. Some of these activities include seed sprouting, planting and exploration of natural materials.

Holidays and Special Events

Throughout the school year we celebrate both secular and religious holidays and events. A note will be sent home in your child's "home to school" folder and /or sign- up sheet posted outside the classroom that will notify you of these events.

In addition, some of the activities may take place outside the school facility. They may involve special projects as well as guest speakers or visitors. Projects may be sent home for family "at home" involvement.

Generally speaking, the following are observed and recognized during the school year:

Halloween	Martin Luther King Day
Fire Safety Week	President's day
Thanksgiving	Valentine's Day
Advent	Lent
St. Nicholas Day	Easter
Christmas	Earth Week
Epiphany	

Parental Involvement

We encourage all parents to become involved with their child's year in school. If you have anything that you would like to share, please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher. Some of the best projects are those initiated by the parents. All adults wishing to volunteer at HNS must complete the Diocesan mandated Virtus on the Altoona Johnstown website, on-line training session and comply with the following:

- Child Abuse History Clearance
- Criminal Check Record

Copies need to be turned into the school office to be compliant, before a parent is able to volunteer.

Fundraising

We do not require our students to fundraise, but we will be sending home information on Scrip order forms, Power House Subs, Marianna's Subs and Pizzas, and Mid's candy order forms for Easter to name a few. We appreciate any help your family may be able to give to these fundraisers. They have been very successful, by not making them mandatory, and this helps the bottom line of the school.

Attendance

Continuity and routine are important aspects in anyone's life. Since most our activities are "building blocks" which interlock with each other, it is important that your child come to school on a regular basis. If your child is absent from Preschool for any reason, we will send home their missed activities the day they return.

Daily ESD attendance scheduling will be based on the monthly calendar submitted to the office by the parents. The ESD staff will be responsible for signing a child in or out of the program thru documenting the time a child arrives and departs daily. Sign-in/Sign-out lists will remain with the ESD staff at all times for easy accessibility and accurate accountability. Parents are free to check any sign-in/sign-out logs to verify times.

Arrival and Dismissal

Parents will enter the classroom at the back entrance of Holy Name School which is adjacent to the Ebensburg Borough playground. Stay in your car to follow the arrows on the parking lot for drop-off and pick-up. There will be a line of cars waiting so be prepared to move in a timely manner. The preschool staff and school security guard will be there to welcome your child.

If you need to pick up your child early, please let your teacher know and she will make sure your child is in the office for pick up. If you would like another person to pick up your child that is not on the pick-up list, please send a note with your child so we can make sure to avoid calling parents during the day for questions concerning pick up.

At no time will we release a child to another adult without permission to do so from the child's legal parent or guardian. If a child is being picked up by a person not known to the staff, we reserve the right to request identifying information including a photo ID.

We ask parents respect our opening and dismissal times by arriving promptly to drop off and pick up their child. Should you be running late for dismissal time, **PLEASE** call the school office to alert us. Any child not picked up within fifteen minutes of dismissal time will be brought to the school office until your arrival. **NOTE you will be charged a late fee of \$5.00 for any time your child spends beyond the dismissal time for your child's individual time.**

Bus Conflict

Because of bus drop offs and pickups we ask all preschool parents not to park on Julian Street. We want to maintain the safety of all children.

Rest time (ESD only)

A resting time is scheduled daily between Noon and 12:30 PM. A special blanket or toy with your child's name marked on these items may be brought to school and kept in their book bags.

Illness and Medication

Should your child become ill while at school, we will call the parents/guardians on your list. If we are unable to reach the parents/guardians, we will continue to call the names and numbers on the emergency list. Please keep these numbers on the list current.

Staff members are not permitted to dispense medication. Please do not send cough drops, cough syrup, Tylenol etc. to school.

Dressing for School

While we have smocks and we use washable creative materials, sometimes accidents happen. Please keep this in mind when dressing your child for school. Sturdy shoes and play clothes are most appropriate. Sandals or other slip-on type shoes are not recommended for wear while at school.

We also recommend that an extra set of clothes be sent to school should a change be necessary. Please change the set of clothing in relation to the season. This is especially important to those children who utilize the ESD program.

Sneakers are required for gym class during ESD. No regular shoes are permitted on the gym floor.

Children are not permitted to wear “pull ups” or diapers. If your child has an accident the parents will be called to pick up their child.

Up-to-date and Informed

Each month the Preschool staff will send home a classroom calendar and newsletter which will include important dates, events and any specific announcements and /or requests for each individual classroom teacher.

All written correspondence will be sent home to you via your child’s “school to home” folder. Please check your child’s folder each day he or she comes home from school. In addition, any communication you wish to send to either your child’s teacher and/or to the office can be included in your child’s folder when they come to school. We ask that the folder be returned to school each day.

To help transport your child’s folder and any other important items, children should bring a backpack or tote bag to school with them each day.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Once a year, parents will have the opportunity to schedule a time to meet with your child’s teacher. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss with parents how their child is acclimating to school routines, adjusting socially to staff and other children as well as observing each child’s emotional, cognitive, small motor and gross motor and self-help skills. In addition, both the parents and the teacher will have the opportunity to ask any questions or concerns regarding any aspect of the school program or the child’s behavior.

To document the meeting, teachers will have examples of the child’s preschool work and an individualized sheet with each child’s progress as observed by their teacher and preschool staff.

Should the need arise to meet on an individual basis at any time throughout the school year, please feel free to make such arrangements as necessary by contacting your child’s teacher.

Emergency and Safety Procedures and Drills

School Messenger is utilized by HNS. This automated telephone contact system is used to notify parents of events such as delayed openings, early closings or emergency situations. We ask that parents monitor any or all such communications. **Please listen to the messages before calling the school office to ask why a call was made.** This will eliminate unnecessary calls made to the school office. Our priority is the children and communication is important for both children and parents to feel safe. For this reason, we ask that parents alert the staff if any changes need to be made to any phone numbers that you listed on your emergency paper filled out at the beginning of the school year.

In the event of school cancellation, delayed opening or early dismissal, announcements will also be made on WJAC-TV. Holy Name School follows Central Cambria school cancellations and delays or early dismissals.

Our policy for delayed openings:

ESD-9:30 AM-Opening time

AM Preschool class time -10:00 AM-Noon

PM Preschool class time-12:30 PM-2:30 PM

If an early dismissal occurs for afternoon preschool we will run Extended Day Preschool until 3:00 PM.

(all preschool children must be picked up by 3:00 PM)