
Notre Dame Student/Family Handbook



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General Contact Information

- **School Website:** www.notredameutica.org
- **Main Office:**
 - **Phone:** 315-724-5118
 - **Mail:** 2 Notre Dame Ln. Utica, NY 13502

- **Principal:**
 - Mr. Richard J. Hensel
 - **Phone:** 315-724-5118, Ex. 12
 - **Email:** rhensel@syrdiocese.org
- **Assistant Principal:**
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 - **Phone:** 315-724-5118, Ex. 22
 - **Email:**
- **Nurse's Office:**
 - Ms. Cristol Peppenelli (T-R); Mrs. Lynn Crowley (M & F)
 - **Phone:** 315-724-5118, Ex. 24
 - **Email:** cpeppenelli@syrdiocese.org ; lcrowley@syrdiocese.org
- **School Counseling Office:**
 - Ms. Carla Zupancic
 - **Phone:** 315-724-5118, Ex. 28
 - **Email:** czupancic@syrdiocese.org
- **Athletic Director:**
 - Mr. David Gardinier
 - **Phone:** 315-724-5118, Ex. 18
 - **Email:** d.gardinier@syrdiocese.org

Family Portal

Our **Family Portal** is your go-to resource for important information. To access it:

1. Go to www.factsmgt.com.
2. Select **Parent Log In** from the menu bar and then **FACTS Family Portal** from the drop-down menu.
3. Enter the district code **NDU-NY**.
4. Type in your username and password. If you've forgotten them, please click the provided link.

Diocesan Mission Statement

Inspired by the evangelizing mission of Jesus Christ, the Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Syracuse partner with families, communities, and parishes to nurture academic excellence rooted in Gospel values. We empower students to develop a strong moral conscience informed by the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, and to live their faith with compassion, integrity, and respect for all life. Preparing

them for a diverse world, we cultivate lifelong learners who are witnesses to Christ's love through service to others.

Most Rev. Douglas J. Lucia
Bishop of Syracuse
August 14, 2024

Diocesan Belief Statements

Spiritual

We believe that...

- Jesus is the Master Teacher, serving as the role model for all educators, parents, and students.
- Parents are the primary educators of their children, and Catholic schools partner with them to pass on our Catholic faith and values.
- Teachers in our schools are evangelizers, bringing the Good News of God's love and salvation to all within our communities.
- Catholic schools share in the educational and evangelical mission of the Roman Catholic Church and seek to develop and nurture relationships with parishes.
- Schools within the system embrace the common mission of Catholic schools in our diocese; our Catholic Identity is the foundation of a Catholic school education.

Academic

We believe that...

- Christ-centered environments support the healthy growth of the whole person: physically, emotionally, spiritually, and academically.
- Students learn at different rates and in different ways; each is unique, made in the image and likeness of God.
- Academic excellence is an essential and achievable goal.
- Quality athletic, fine arts, and extracurricular programs are essential components of a comprehensive educational program.
- Our teachers are educators called to be lifelong learners who are active in collaborative professional learning communities. They seek out professional development that fosters their spiritual and professional growth.
- Our school cultures should promote the continuous development of individual programs.
- Schools within the system should be aligned with educational programs while

adhering to national, state, and diocesan standards.

Stewardship

We believe that...

- Our students develop leadership skills that enable them to be responsible and educated citizens who serve others, especially those in need.
- Our Catholic schools teach students to be stewards of the gifts and talents God has given them.
- Students have a sense of responsibility for caring for the environment and all of God's creation.
- Our schools practice sound fiscal and responsible stewardship.

Social

We believe that...

- Our schools are called to follow the example of Jesus Christ by teaching students to actively care for the world and serve their communities, especially those in need.
- Our students are taught to view all people as members of the family of God; we value and respect diversity within our schools.
- School communities, in partnership with parents, foster the growth of caring, compassionate individuals with strong moral consciences who follow God's command to love one another.

Diocesan Profile of a Graduate

Graduates of the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Syracuse will:

- **Live their faith by:**
 - Knowing, understanding, and promoting the principles of the Catholic faith.
 - Protecting and nurturing human life at all stages.
 - Exhibiting behavior and making decisions that reflect high moral character and values of our faith: integrity, honesty, self-control, and concern for others.
 - Serving God through service to others in society and the Church.
 - Respecting the dignity of others, including people of other cultures and traditions, as modeled by Jesus by extending acceptance, empathy, compassion, and love toward others.
 - Being responsible stewards of all of God's gifts.
 - Continuing to devote attention to their own ongoing faith formation and evangelization.

- Providing leadership enhanced by moral considerations to the Church, local communities, their families, and future generations.
 - **Use their educational experiences by:**
 - Mastering a rigorous academic program with conscientious work habits and study skills.
 - Continuing to build on a strong academic foundation provided in Catholic schools as principled lifelong learners dedicated to academic excellence.
 - Being effective communicators orally, in written form, and in the use of technology.
 - Using technology in an ethical manner to create, access, and share information.
 - Demonstrating the acquisition of life skills that promote collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, self-reflection, and problem-solving in a variety of settings.
 - Taking active roles as responsible community leaders in order to make significant positive contributions.
 - Demonstrating an understanding and appreciation for the development of the whole person — spiritually, academically, physically, emotionally, and socially.
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Notre Dame Catholic Schools Mission Statement

Notre Dame Schools provide a Catholic co-educational program in a diverse and nurturing environment where critical thinking and academic excellence are cultivated. Welcoming families of all faiths, Notre Dame is dedicated to developing each student's individual academic, spiritual, and personal gifts so they may become responsible church and community leaders whose lives are rooted in Christian values.

Notre Dame Belief Statements

Spiritual

We believe that....

- Jesus is the Master Teacher and role model for educators.
- Students, as children of God, formed in the image and likeness of God, should be treated with love and respect.
- Teachers in our schools are prophets; they bring the Good News of God's love and salvation as well as creating an atmosphere that will foster a student's positive relationship with Jesus Christ.

- Parents are the primary educators of their children; Catholic schools work in partnership with parents to transmit our faith and values.
- All members of the Catholic school community should move beyond service to oneself to the service of others. Especially, to those at the margins of society.
- Catholic schools carry out the educational mission of the Church and maintain healthy relationships with parishes.
- Schools within the system are aware of and focused on the common mission of Catholic schools in our diocese; the Catholic Identity of our schools provides the added dimension of a Catholic school education.
- As a faith community, all members are called upon to support, nurture, and mentor each other as well as assisting in the enhancement of one's unique talents.
- As a faith community, all members are called upon to support acceptance of diverse faiths with primary focus on the mission of the Catholic Church.

Academic

We believe that....

- Christ-centered environments support the healthy growth of the whole person: physically, emotionally, spiritually, and academically.
- An effective educational experience must involve the collaboration of faculty, parents, and students. Highlighting the strengths and experience of each.
- Children learn at different rates and in different ways; each is a unique child of God.
- Peer tutoring allows the strengths of our students to be shared with other students in achieving their greatest potential.
- Academic excellence is a worthwhile and attainable goal.
- Quality athletic and extracurricular programs are important components of a comprehensive educational program.
- Our teachers are immersed in collaborative professional learning communities that foster growth in all areas of responsibility.
- Our school culture promotes continuous improvement of individuals and programs.
- Schools within the diocese are aligned with regard to curriculum and educational programs while adhering to National, State, and Diocesan standards.

Stewardship

We believe that....

- Our schools practice sound fiscal and responsible stewardship practices.

- Our students develop leadership skills that enable them to be responsible citizens who serve others.
- Catholic schools teach students to be stewards of the gifts and talents God has given them.
- Our students have a sense of responsibility for the environment and all of God's gifts.

Social

We believe that....

- Our students are taught to view all people as the family of God; appreciation and respect for diversity is necessary for Christian behavior.
- Our school communities foster the growth of caring, compassionate, and morally sound individuals who follow God's command to love one another.

Summary Statement of Relationship Parents, Students and Catholic Schools of the Diocese's Syracuse, New York

The following sets forth the nature, dynamics and character of the relationship between the School and its students and their parents. It will allow both students and parents to clearly understand their rights and obligations while attending the School and minimize the potential for misunderstanding in this regard. It is understood that by seeking enrollment in and attend the School, the applicant- student and his/her parents/guardians understand and agree to the following statements regarding the rights and obligations of students and parents, and this statement is an integral part of the School's enrollment contract.

To ensure a safe and appropriate educational environment, the student and his/her parents understand that students must obey the School's Code of Conduct, observe its rules and regulations, and perform the required academic work to result in appropriate academic progress while attending the School. It is also understood and agreed that the School's students attend the School at the School's invitation, and not pursuant to any right possessed by a student or the student's parent(s). Admission and continued enrollment at the School require students to behave consistent with the Code of Conduct, all of the School's other rules and regulations, and in a manner befitting a student of a Catholic institution. These responsibilities exist both inside and outside of the classroom and during all school functions, and relative to any off-campus behavior that negatively effects the School's operations or educational environment.

To protect its standards of academics, discipline and character, the School reserves the right to require a student's withdrawal at any time, for any reason deemed

sufficient in the sole discretion of the School's administrators. Through their application to and enrollment in the School, all students and their parents/guardians acknowledge, agree, and concede that the School has this right. Moreover, by a student's enrollment in the School, he/she and his/her parents acknowledge the important obligations and restrictions contained in the School's Parent-Student Handbook and agree to be bound by its terms.

Students attending the School and their parents understand and agree that they do not possess the same rights they might possess if attending a public school. For example, a student's freedom of speech is limited in many important respects at the School. Any speech, written or oral, that is contrary to the Roman Catholic faith, the teachings of the Church, the directives of the Bishop or Ordinary of the Diocese of Syracuse or contrary to the School's Code of Conduct are prohibited. Likewise, speech that is contrary or disruptive to the philosophy and purpose of the School is prohibited. Participating in prohibited speech at the School may be the basis for disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or expulsion.

Students also acknowledge and agree that School officials have the right to search their person or property if they reasonably believe that the student may have violated a School rule, the School's Code of Conduct, or the law and the search may . The School's students and their parents understand and agree that it is within the sole discretion of the School's administrators to determine whether such a reasonable belief exists. They further understand and agree that the School has the unfettered right to examine, search or inventory a student's desk, locker, or other space provided to the student for use at School. It is further understood and agreed that these areas may be searched by the School at any time and for any reason. Moreover, if the School permits on-campus parking, students and their parents understand and agree that the School has the unfettered right to search any automobile parked upon its premises. Students have no reasonable expectation of privacy relative to any of these areas (e.g., desks, hallway lockers, locker room lockers, automobiles parked on School grounds, etc.)

Additionally, it is understood and agreed by students, and/or their parents or guardians, that they waive and relinquish any right they may have to sue the School, any parish, the Diocese of Syracuse, and/or any individual acting on the half of the School, a parish or the Diocese, such as administrators, teachers, staff, volunteers or any of their agents relative to any matter directly or indirectly concerning academic or disciplinary decisions or matters covered within the Student Handbook.

Each student and his or her parents or guardian, by their acceptance of enrollment at the School, agree they may not bring any civil action in any local state or federal court or in any administrative agency or body to challenge any school decision relative to academics or disciplinary matters, including any decision relating to the rules, regulations, procedures or programs covered within this handbook. Students and their parents or guardians agree that any challenge to any school academic or disciplinary

action, any enrollment decision, any suspension or expulsion, or any decision relating to the rules, regulations, procedures or programs covered in the Student Handbook may only be challenged or appealed within the hierarchy of the School and/or Diocese, subject to the limitations and processes contained within the Student handbook.

While any students or parent or guardian of a student may consult with legal counsel relative to any decision made by the School or Diocese concerning the student, the School emphasizes and reiterates that students and parents or guardians are not permitted to have legal counsel present during any meetings or hearing or to otherwise participate in any disciplinary process or any other proceeding or process administered by the School or Diocese. It is understood and agreed that school administrators are not obligated to meet with attorneys or advocates of any sort, at any time.

The Student Handbook contains the School's Code of Conduct and the parameters of student discipline. However, it should be noted that any listing of prohibited conduct in the Handbook is only by way of illustration and example, and it is not intended or expected to be an exhaustive or exclusive list of prohibited conduct or conduct that may result in disciplinary action.

The School is pleased to welcome you to the School community and looks forward to your participation in its academics and activities.

Family Covenant

The philosophy of the **Notre Dame Catholic School** community is to proclaim the Gospel message of Jesus, educate the total child, guide students in the love and service of God and others, fit the uniqueness of each student so that they grow in a nurturing and loving environment, and integrate Catholic virtues (love, faith, hope, courage, reconciliation, and justice) into the curriculum.

By registering your child(ren) at Notre Dame, parents/guardians become members of a school community — students, faculty, and staff — that recognizes its mission to build a Christ-like presence in our neighborhoods by instilling Christian values in our young men and women who will shape our future.

This membership obligates all of us to share in the responsibilities for the education of Notre Dame students by agreeing to the following:

- I (We) fully understand the importance of guiding my (our) children's faith development, acting as a good Christian role model, actively participating in church membership, and attending weekly Mass or church services.

- I (We) fully understand the importance of attending Parent Teacher Conferences at the teacher's request, cooperating with school staff, and being present at other school events to support my child(ren).
- I (We) understand the importance of reviewing my child(ren)'s homework daily.
- I (We) support and work with the staff to ensure a good learning environment.
- I (We) agree to consider volunteering for a specific event(s)/project(s) within the school year.

This covenant is designed to implement the blessings of the Church-Family-School relationship. A successful Catholic school relies on a partnership between parents and the school. There is an expectation that parents are active participants in the education of Notre Dame students. The Catholic school fosters a faithful atmosphere through the interaction of students, parents, teachers, and support staff.

Superintendent's Message

Dear Students & Families,

It is with great pride and joy that we welcome you to our school community! The Diocese of Syracuse has a long and proud history of faith-centered, academically excellent education that truly forms the entire child. We are proud to partner with you, the primary educators of your child, in working together to foster growth and learning. Please do not hesitate to reach out to the leadership of this school, or our office, if you need support at any time.

In the words of Pope Benedict XVI in his 2008 address to Catholic teachers, "Education is integral to the mission of the Church to proclaim the Good News. First and foremost

every Catholic educational institution is a place to encounter the living God who in Jesus Christ reveals his transforming love and truth" (cf. *Spe Salvi*, 4).

Amy Sansone, EdD
Superintendent of Schools

Principal's Message

Dear Students and Families,

Welcome to Notre Dame Catholic Schools. It is our privilege to partner with you in

your spiritual, academic, and social development. Notre Dame has a long standing tradition in the Mohawk Valley of academic excellence rooted in strong Catholic values. This tradition exists because of the efforts of our students and their families, along with a knowledgeable, caring staff and supportive community, all working together to achieve success.

Guided by Our Blessed Mother, Mary, our patroness, Notre Dame continues to make a difference in the greater Utica community. Like the Juggler of Notre Dame, our mascot, each student is called to use their God-given gifts and talents to the best of their ability.

You're receiving this Student/Family Handbook because students are most successful when they and their families know what to expect, understand school policies and procedures, and are involved members of the school community.

I hope this school year is one of the most rewarding for you and your family. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

God Bless,

Mr. Richard Hensel
Principal

The policies and procedures included in this Notre Dame handbook are intended to create a safe school environment that promotes spirituality, academic success, respect for others, and order. By registering at Notre Dame, students and their families agree to abide by this handbook, and parents agree to assist their children in following the school's policies and procedures.

This handbook is available on the school website, and parents can obtain a print copy in the Main Office. The Principal reserves the right to make changes to this handbook. Any changes will be communicated through the Principal's Newsletter, the school website, and subsequent editions of the handbook.

School History

Learn more about our history by visiting us online: [Our History](#).

Admissions Policy

Application Process

Parents and legal guardians of prospective students must complete our online application through the **FACTS Family Portal**. Once your application is submitted, our admissions department will contact your student's current school to request their academic records, attendance history, and disciplinary records.

The guidance office will then review these records and may contact the current school for clarification. If your student has an IEP or a 504 plan, our Director of Special Education Services will review it to ensure that our school can provide the necessary level of support for your student to be successful.

After the records are reviewed, an admissions committee will make a final decision. You may call the admissions office to schedule a campus tour at any time during this process at 315-724-5118, Ex. 26.

Additional Requirements and Information

- **Placement Testing:** All prospective students must schedule a placement test after their application has been reviewed.
- **International Students:** International students are required to provide documentation of their mastery on the TOEFL exam or an equivalent test.
- **Senior Year Admissions:** Prospective students entering their senior year must apply and be accepted before the school year begins. **No new students will be admitted for their senior year once the school year has started.**
- **Senior Tuition Payments:** Prospective seniors must pay their first semester's tuition in full before the start of the school year. The second semester's tuition must be paid before the start of the second semester.
- **Enrollment:** A student is not considered officially enrolled until a tuition payment plan has been set up in FACTS and the first payment has been made.
- **Student-Athletes:** Student-athletes transferring to our school are subject to **section transfer rules**. It is the family's responsibility to check with our athletic director to confirm their student's eligibility status.
- **Enrollment Deadline:** We do not admit students for the current academic year after the start of the second semester.
- **Provisional Admission:** In some cases, a student may be admitted on a probationary period or with a student contract. The contract will outline specific conditions for enrollment, and the student's progress may be reviewed

periodically to determine if they can continue their enrollment.

For more information or to apply, follow this [link](#) to the application page on our website.

Student Privacy

A request form for parents and legal guardians to examine their child's education records is available at the Main Office. The school requires at least 24 hours' notice for this request. Such records are kept confidential and may not be released or made available to persons other than parents/guardians or students (over 18 years old) without their written consent in certain circumstances. In this regard, the School generally follows the prescriptions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 USC § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) ("FERPA"). The Principal or another authorized person must be present when records are viewed to provide necessary interpretation.

The school generally and voluntarily abides by the provisions of FERPA regarding the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of an order from a court or other authorized agency to the contrary, Notre Dame will provide the non-custodial parent with access to academic records and other school-related information about the child. If there is a court order specifying that no information should be given, it is the custodial parent's responsibility to provide the School with an official copy of that order.

Divorced or separated parents must file a court-certified copy of the custody section of their divorce or separation decree with the Principal's office. The school is not responsible to enforce or interpret custody and visitation orders, but will make reasonable efforts to help facilitate such orders, assuming it receives timely notice of such an order and its requirements.

Personnel Access to Student Records

The following personnel have access to student records without the previously noted consent:

- Professional personnel employed by the School, including independent contractors and their employees who provide services to the School
- School officials at an educational institution to which the student is transferring or seeking admission
- Authorized personnel of Diocesan or State Education Departments

- Those possessing a court order or subpoena, or in other circumstances in which distribution is permitted by FERPA without parental authorization.
- Individuals or entities to which a parent or guardian has authorized the School to release student education records.

School Calendar / Hours

- **School Annual Calendar:** [NDHS 1-Page Calendar](#)
- **School Events Calendar:** [FACTS Family Portal Calendar](#)
- **School Hours:** School is in session from 7:50 a.m. - 2:43 p.m. After school tutorials are offered every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 2:45 p.m. - 3:15 p.m. After school study hall is available daily in the cafeteria from 2:45 p.m. - 4:45 p.m. The main office is open daily from 7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
- **Regular Bell Schedule:**

First Bell - 7:50

Period	Time	Notes	Minutes
1	7:55 – 8:38	Includes extra time for prayer, pledge, announcements, cell phone collection.	43 minutes
2	8:40 – 9:18		38 minutes
3	9:20 – 9:58		38 minutes
4	10:00 – 10:38		38 minutes
5	10:40 – 11:18		38 minutes
6	11:20 – 11:58	Lunch Grades 6-8	38 minutes
7	12:00 – 12:38	Lunch Grades 9-12	38 minutes
8	12:40 – 1:18		38 minutes
9	1:20 – 1:58		38 minutes
10	2:00 – 2:38		38 minutes
1	2:40 – 2:43	Prayer and cell phone pick up.	3 minutes
Tutorial	2:45 – 3:15	Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday	30 minutes

- **Before School and Drop-off Procedures:**

- The school opens each day by 7:20 a.m. Students should not arrive to school before 7:20 a.m. unless they have a specific purpose to do so (i.e. NJROTC drill practice). We cannot guarantee that the main entrance will be open nor that staff will be available to supervise students, before 7:20 a.m.
- The single point of entry for students is the main entrance (Burrstone Road).
- All personal vehicles and buses will enter the main driveway at farthest opening, near the Msgr. Willenburg Center entrance (the last one closest to Burrstone Inn) to alleviate congestion on Burrstone Rd.
- The middle driveway opening is for staff use only.
- Student drivers must park in the student parking lot adjacent to the school building, across from the faculty parking lot on Notre Dame Lane.
- Students should plan to arrive each day by 7:50 a.m. to allow time to visit their locker, use the restroom if needed, and get to first period before the bell rings. **Students entering the building after 7:50 a.m. are considered late and will need to obtain a pass from the main office before they will be admitted to class.**
- Students must be seated in their first period class (homeroom) when the bell rings at 7:55 a.m.

- **After School and Pick-up Procedures:**

- Bus pick-up is along the front sidewalk (Burrstone Road). Parent pick up is along the Notre Dame Lane side of the building. Drivers may not park on the opposite side of Notre Dame Lane. Parking is reserved to one side of the road (closest to the building). Violators may be ticketed. Drivers are not permitted to stop in the middle of the road. Drivers must pull to the appropriate side of the road. Caution should be exercised for students crossing the street.
- Students who are waiting for a ride or for athletic practice must do so in tutorial (Tuesdays-Thursdays) or in the after school study hall in the cafeteria. No students are permitted to be in the building after 4:45 p.m. with the exception of an approved school athletic practice, competition, rehearsal, or event.
- Students being picked up for an appointment must present a note to the main office from a parent or guardian at the beginning of the school day unless being dismissed from the school nurse's office.

Visitors Policy

All parents and visitors must enter the School through its front doors, report to the Main Office, identify themselves, sign in, and wear a visitor's badge while in the building.

Any forgotten items should be dropped off at the Main Office. Please do not deliver them directly to your child's classroom. Parents are welcome to visit a class in session after making an appointment through the Main Office and with the Principal's approval. Teachers are unable to speak with parents during school hours when they have classroom responsibilities, as their primary obligation is to the children in their classroom and their safety. If you wish to speak with a teacher(s) or the Principal about your child, please send an email/note or call to schedule an appointment. Teachers will return your email/call within 24 hours.

Visits by parents, potential students, and tours are arranged through the Principal or designee. Please contact the Main Office to make an appointment.

General Parent Information

Tuition Non-Payment Policy

Families with a single payment delinquency will be notified by FACTS as being past due. The Pastor/Pastoral Administrator, Business Manager/Finance Director, and Principal are also notified of this past due status. Families with balances more than 90 days past due will not be permitted to return to school until the outstanding balance is resolved. When necessary, the school will pursue every avenue to obtain tuition and before/after-school care payments, including collection agencies and legal options. We encourage you to talk to the Tuition Management Office and/or School Administration at any time if you're experiencing difficulties paying your tuition bill. Your situation will be reviewed with confidentiality and compassion, and a mutually agreeable settlement should be possible.

Continuing Enrollment for the Following School Year

Students with past due balances will not be allowed to begin the next school year until the outstanding balance is paid.

Transfers to Another Catholic School

Students with past due balances will not be accepted at any other Catholic school

within the Diocese of Syracuse until the past due amount is resolved.

To view the Notre Dame Catholic Schools tuition policy, click [here](#).

Athletics

Notre Dame offers the following sports programs:

Fall: Cheerleading, Cross Country (Boys and Girls), Football, Soccer (Boys and Girls - combined with UAS), Tennis (Girls)

Winter: Basketball (Boys and Girls), Bowling, Volleyball (Girls), Indoor Track (Boys and Girls)

Spring: Baseball, Softball, Track and Field (Boys and Girls)

Notre Dame also offers eSports.

You can find the schedule for all athletic competitions linked [here](#).

Participation Guidelines

Participation in athletics is a privilege for students. They in turn have a responsibility to themselves, their team, school, family, and community to maintain high standards of physical and mental fitness and citizenship thereby allowing the educational benefits of competition to accrue.

In order to try-out, practice or participate in any sport, students must have an up-to-date physical (within 12 months of the sport season) on file in the school office.

Student athletes will:

1. Conduct themselves in and out of school as responsible young adults, exercising courtesy, cooperation, and honesty.
2. Not withdraw from such a team without the approval of the head coach and Athletic Director. Withdrawing from a team prior to the end of the season will result in the student-athlete being ineligible to participate in athletics the following season.
3. Report to every practice and competition unless absent from school or unless excused in advance by the head coach.
4. Report to all home and away contests in dress code.

5. Ride to and from away events on a school vehicle when provided.
6. Abstain from the use of tobacco and any chemical substances (illegal drugs, alcohol, etc.).
7. Have a physical examination within the required time period.

The failure to abide by these rules as well as any training rules communicated to a student, either orally or in writing by a head coach or athletic director may result in probation, suspension, or dismissal from the team at the discretion of school officials.

The parent(s)/guardian(s) of any athlete who is dismissed or suspended from a team will be notified of the reasons for the dismissal and will be permitted to meet with the Athletic Director and appropriate coaches to discuss the facts surrounding the student's dismissal or suspension.

Serious or continued violations may result in probation, suspension, or dismissal from the school's entire athletic program and/or the school in general. More specific detail is provided in the [Student-Athlete Handbook](#).

Scheduling

As a Catholic School, Notre Dame recognizes the sanctity of Sunday worship and makes every effort to provide our families the opportunity to preserve the day for the family and for worship. Practices, games, and all other school-sponsored events are prohibited from being scheduled on Sunday mornings prior to 12 Noon, on or off campus. During Holy Week, Notre Dame Schools will be closed for the duration of the Easter Triduum, including Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, as well as Easter Sunday. Practices and competitions are prohibited from being scheduled on these most sacred days of the liturgical year.

Practices and competitions are not scheduled on exam days.

Clubs and Activities

Clubs and activities are offered based on student interest. If you do not see a club or activity included below that interests you, you may form a club with permission of the principal. A faculty or staff member must serve as an advisor for every student club/activity. Current club/group offerings include: Art Club, Campus Ministry, Cheer Club, Concert Band, Crafting in Service, Drama Club, Environmental Club, Mock Trial, Morning Show, National Honor Society, NJROTC, Philosophy Club, Pro Life Club, Robotics Club, Our Lady's Singers, Spanish Club, Student Leadership Council, Yearbook

School Closings

Our school follows the Utica City School District closing decisions. We will send a text message to our families announcing school closings, delays, and cancellation notices. However, this should not be your sole source of information, as access to our computers may be delayed or disrupted due to weather. We also announce school closings and delays on social media and local TV stations.

Students attending our school often travel several miles, and weather conditions can vary dramatically from location to location. The decision to close or dismiss school early is made with the safety of our students and staff in mind. If school is scheduled to be open and you feel this decision puts your child at risk, you may choose to bring your child to school yourself or keep them home for the day. This will be recorded as an **unexcused absence**. If your child is unable to attend due to your home district being closed and not providing bus transportation, an **excused absence** will be recorded. You will still need to send in an excuse with your child as normal whenever they are absent from school.

Field Trips

Field trips are an integral part of the learning process and a privilege afforded to students. A student may be denied participation in a field trip if they fail to meet academic or behavior requirements. Permission forms must be submitted for authorization. Parents reserve the right to refuse to allow their child to participate in a field trip.

Lunch Procedures

Free Lunch Program

All students in the school will receive meals at no charge regardless of household income or completion of the free and reduced lunch application. However, families are strongly encouraged to complete and submit the Free and Reduced-Price application as this form is used to determine eligibility benefits for State and federal funding/programs.

In order to receive a free lunch, students must take a full meal, which includes the main entree, side dish, fruit/vegetable, and milk. If the student does not take a full meal, they will be charged for individual a la carte items.

A snack bar is also available in the cafeteria. Snack items are not included in the free

lunch program. Students will not be allowed to purchase items if they have a balance on their account.

Lunch Accounts

Student lunch accounts are hosted in the FACTS family portal. You can add funds to your student's account by logging into the family portal. Select "Financial" from the side menu. From there, you can add funds to prepay accounts or to pay balances. Students may bill snacks to their lunch account so long as there are sufficient funds available. Charging accounts with insufficient funds is prohibited.

Cafeteria Expectations

- As students enter the cafeteria, they will be seated in preparation for grace. A student or staff member will lead the prayer each period.
- All students are required to eat lunch in the cafeteria.
- Students are not allowed to go to other school areas of the building or visit a teacher during the lunch period without the expressed permission of an administrator.
- Students may not move chairs to other tables. This can disrupt other students and make it difficult for them to find a seat.
- Students should talk at a reasonable volume. The cafeteria is a shared space, so please be mindful of the noise level and keep your voices down.
- Students must respect other's space when standing in the serving line. Do not push or shove, and be patient as you wait your turn. This is a demonstration of your developing maturity.
- After students finish their lunch and the area is clean, they may feel free to walk over to another table to socialize. If using a chair, return it to its proper place. This assures there are no accidents or injuries.
- Students may not leave the cafeteria unless going to the restroom or the nurse. Only 1 student will be allowed out at a time to use the restroom.
- Students are to deposit trash and recyclables into the appropriate containers. This helps to keep the cafeteria clean and free of litter.
- Students should wipe down their table after they are finished eating. This helps to keep the cafeteria sanitary and ready for the next student group to use.
- Students should sweep up any debris on the floor. This helps to keep the cafeteria clean and free of slip and fall hazards.
- When the bell rings, students are to push their chair back in and leave in an orderly manner. This helps to keep the cafeteria organized, free of clutter and ready for the next use.

Transportation

Each public school district is required to transport children within local transportation

guidelines, typically within a 15-mile radius (as the crow flies). Bus transportation must be requested by parents from their public school district of residence prior to April 1 for the following school year. Bus schedules are published by each school district during August. Parents should contact their public school bus transportation department for any questions concerning bus scheduling. All students riding buses are expected to adhere to the rules of conduct pertaining to buses as published by their home district. Since we are concerned with the safety of all bus children, it's important that students maintain orderly conduct and follow the directions of the bus monitor or driver. Failure to comply may result in removal from the bus and/or termination of service for the disruptive child. Bus disciplinary decisions are made by local school districts. If a bus suspension occurs, parents are responsible for student transportation. Parents should encourage their children to obey the bus driver and rules.

A student **MUST PRESENT a WRITTEN, DATED note** if they are **NOT** to take the bus home on a certain day, with directions as to how they will get home. The main office will call to confirm these notes.

Student Driving and Parking Policy

By applying for permission to park on campus and doing so, the student and his/her parent(s) agree that School officials have the right to search the car at any time while it is on school grounds.

DRIVING / PARKING

- All cars must be registered with the school security office. A fee is assessed for parking registration which must be turned in with the registration form before a permit will be granted. Registration forms are available in the main office. If multiple vehicles are to be used by a student-driver, all applicable vehicles must be registered. A copy of the student's license and insurance must be kept on file with the registration form.
- Students may park their cars only in the student parking lot. A student is NOT to be in his/her automobile or an automobile of another student during the school day without the expressed permission of the administration.
- It is highly recommended that student-drivers do not transport other students to/from school with the exception of siblings.
- Common courtesy as well as the exercise of safety and caution will be the rule while operating a motor vehicle on school grounds.
- Failure to comply with these regulations as well as any and all New York State

vehicle and/or traffic laws may result in the loss of the privilege of driving and parking in the student parking area.

- Tardiness to school may result in temporary loss of driving privileges. If the student's attendance rate, academic standing and/or disciplinary record continues to be of concern, the driving/ parking privilege may be revoked. .

General Policies

Attendance

There is a direct correlation between a student's attendance and academic performance.

Pupils are expected to be in attendance every school day. We believe any absence from school is detrimental to a student and strongly discourage it. Students are **tardy** if they enter their first period class after **7:55 a.m.** Instances of tardiness and excused absence are part of your child's attendance record.

Absences

When your child is absent for any reason, please contact the **main office at 315-724-5118 or email attendance@notredameutica.org**, providing the date, student's name, grade, and reason for absence. The Main Office will contact parents/guardians who fail to notify the school.

Students must bring a written excuse for any period of absence on the day they return to school. This written excuse should be dated, give the reason for and dates of absence, and be signed by the parent/guardian. Any absence without a written excuse is considered an unexcused absence.

Excused Absences:

- Sickness
- Medical or Dental appointment
- Serious family illness
- Court
- Death of a family member or close friend
- Approved school-related program
- Religious
- Participation in a school-sponsored event

Unexcused Absences:

- Oversleeping
- Missing the school bus
- Weather-related (if school is open)
- Late ride
- Family vacation (not aligned with school calendar)
- Traffic
- Non-school trips

The student and/or parent is responsible for contacting teachers (upon return to school) to arrange to make up missed work.

Vacations

Please refrain from scheduling family vacations while school is in session. An interruption in a student's instructional schedule can make it difficult for them to catch up. All vacations that do not follow the school calendar are considered **unexcused absences**. Your student will be expected to make up any work and tests assigned by the teacher during their absence. If your family will be out of town, necessitating an extended absence, please notify the school at least two weeks prior to the vacation, particularly if you wish assignments to be prepared before your departure.

Participation in After-School Activities

A student who is absent or goes home sick from school is not eligible to participate in after-school activities such as practices, special events, concerts, etc., on that day.

Attendance Interventions

The Principal will schedule meetings with the student and parent when attendance interferes with academic progress. Together, the group will formulate an attendance improvement plan. Consequences for unexcused absence/tardiness may result in additional disciplinary sanctions including suspension, probation, dismissal, and exclusion from co-curricular activities. The Principal may request a physician's note for cases of excessive absence.

Tardy Policy

We believe that arriving on time creates a respectful learning environment, builds a strong community, and ensures uninterrupted learning for everyone.

When students experience late arrival due to home district bus transportation, we understand the impact on their learning and will work collaboratively with them to ensure they have the necessary support to catch up.

We value every student's learning time. If a student arrives after the start of the school day, a note from a parent or guardian is required upon arrival. This helps us partner together to address any challenges that may be impacting their timely arrival. Also, late-arriving students must stop by the office to receive a pass.

Students who are tardy without a legal excuse more than 3 times per semester will receive detention for each subsequent tardy.

Truancy

We value every student's presence in class. When a student is frequently late or absent without communication, it suggests they might need additional support. To better understand their needs and collaborate on solutions, we'll facilitate a conversation involving the student, their family, and school staff.

Academic Programs and Policies

How grades are communicated to families:

- The FACTS Family Portal is where you can access the live gradebooks for each class. Teachers will update grades at least bi-weekly. It is the responsibility of the student and their family to monitor progress.
- Progress reports will be emailed through FACTS every 5 weeks to whomever is listed as having correspondence rights for the family in FACTS.
- Official student transcripts will be maintained by the Guidance Department which will provide a comprehensive report of student academic performance in grades 9-12, including any/all graduation and Regent requirements.

Grading/Course weighting/GPA processes

Each of the 4 marking periods are worth 20% of the final course average and each examination (midterm and final) are worth 10% of the final course average. For semester courses, each marking period is worth 45% and the final examination is worth 10%.

A student's GPA is calculated by multiplying the course grade with the weight of the

course, and then dividing by the total frequency of all courses. Grade weighting treats all courses equitably according to frequency of meeting and intensity of coursework.

Grade weighting is determined as follows:

Regular coursework: 1.00

College Prep/Regents: 1.02

Honors/Naval Science: 1.03

Dual Credit: 1.05

Advanced Placement: 1.10

These results yield a “rank” average. The “rank” averages will be put in order from highest to lowest, thus establishing a student’s rank in his or her class. Students will be ranked at the beginning of their senior year, with the final rank being computed after the first semester of the senior year.

The determination of Salutatorian, Valedictorian, and Top 10 is based on the class ranking system. **Only students who have attended Notre Dame Schools from Grades 9-12 and are graduating with an Advanced Regents Diploma are eligible for these honors.**

Homework policies

Homework is an integral part of a student’s education. Homework refers to any assignment that a student is required to do outside of regular class time. Teachers will typically provide students and parents with a course syllabus and grading policy, which will outline the teacher's homework expectations. Parents and students can refer to their FACTS and Google Classroom accounts for assignments. Homework times may vary according to subject, but students are expected to be fully prepared for their classes each day. Homework is not only confined to written work. A significant part of a student's assignments should include the re-reading, studying, and reviewing of the material taught in class.

Homework is to serve one or more of the following purposes:

- To provide drill and additional practice to strengthen new skills introduced in the classroom.
- To complete unfinished classroom assignments.
- To complete work on short-term or long-term projects.
- To participate in research activities in locating facts and data.
- To extend reading for pleasure and enjoyment.

- To foster good study habits.
- To encourage parent participation and cooperation through home supervision and guidance, and to become aware of what their children are learning.
- To develop a sense of responsibility toward one's work.
- To develop time-budgeting/management skills.
- To reinforce a sense of responsibility towards one's work.

Homework will be graded based on accuracy, completeness, and timeliness.

Assessment

A variety of formative and summative assessments will be used to calculate the quarterly average. Summative assessments will account for at least 75% of the quarterly average and formative assessments will account for no more than 25% of the final average. Examples of formative assessments include homework, classwork, participation, etc. Examples of summative assessments include quizzes, tests, essays, projects, etc.

All students enrolled in a Regents or AP class will be required to sit for the associated exam.

Notre Dame uses iReady diagnostic testing for students in grades 6-8. Students are required to take these assessments.

Academic Honor Roll

Students are placed on the Honor Roll based on their final marking period grades. Averages are NOT rounded up to obtain Honor Roll status.

Honors, Average of 85-89.99

High Honors, Average of 90 – 94.99

Principal's List, Average of 95+

Athletics Eligibility

Academic eligibility is checked every five weeks. If a student is failing a class, they become ineligible to participate in any extracurricular activities, including sports, clubs, and events.

Students have the right to appeal their ineligibility by submitting a letter to the Associate Principal and Athletic Director. This letter should explain the issue, the steps the student has taken, and their plan for improvement. The Associate Principal may convene an Appeal Board, which will meet within two business days. The board's decision is final, and a student remains ineligible until the Associate Principal clears

them.

Students failing more than one class will not be permitted the opportunity to appeal.

Ineligible students have a 10-day period to raise their grades. During this time, students failing one class may be allowed to practice, but not compete. Students failing two or more classes cannot participate in any activities.

After 10 days, students who have improved their grades may request reinstatement from the Associate Principal. Additionally, students can try out for activities regardless of their eligibility status. However, once the tryout is complete, an ineligible student returns to their ineligible status. Students must also be in school for the entire day to participate in activities that day.

Graduation Requirements

Graduation requirements can be found in our [course catalog](#).

How to request, add, or drop courses:

Courses are requested in the Spring for the Fall semester. Course requests are completed in FACTS. Students will have the opportunity to meet with the guidance office to determine course requirements and appropriate requests.

Parent/Guardian, counselor, and teacher consultation must take place before a student can drop a course. Courses may not be added/dropped after the 10 week marking period for full-year courses, and five week marking period for semester courses. If a course is dropped after the deadline, the student will receive a withdrawal fail/withdrawal pass (WF or WP) on the report card, as appropriate. Course changes will not begin without written notification from the Counseling Office to the appropriate teacher. Students enrolled in dual-credit courses who drop after the rosters have been submitted to the college will receive a WF.

Level changes are a serious decision and should reflect sincere consideration of student ability. Level changes are not made for behavioral or motivational reasons. (Example: Spanish II to Spanish I). Please contact the Counseling Office if you have any questions. All level changes MUST occur by the midpoint of the course.

1. Such changes should be teacher initiated. (In the event of a student or parent requesting a level change, it MUST be discussed with the teacher first).
2. The Counselor will discuss with the administration the plan of action to be

considered before providing the final decision to the parent(s) and student.

Report Cards

Our school uses a quarterly grade marking system. Report cards are one important vehicle of communication between teachers and parents. Please refer to the school calendar and school communications for specific dates.

Report cards will be distributed in the following months:

- November
- February
- April
- June

Promotion/Retention Policy

Promotion from one grade to the next is dependent upon satisfaction of requirements in all courses resulting in a passing grade. Promotion will also depend on satisfaction of required credit hours. Any student failing a core course (English, Math, Science, Social Studies, Theology, or World Language) is required to attend summer school, if it is provided by the home district. Students may take a maximum of two courses over the summer. All Regents requirements must be made up in summer school as well. Failure of two or more core courses may result in academic dismissal.

General Grading Policies

- The practice of dropping the lowest grade is prohibited.
- The practice of “excusing” assignments must have the approval of an administrator and should only be employed on rare occasions for extenuating circumstances.
- The practice of providing extra credit opportunities for an individual student is prohibited as is the practice of awarding grades in excess of 100%.
- The practice of presenting bonus questions to augment summative assessments must be approached with caution as to not lend itself to grade inflation and the dilution of the mastery process.
- Incomplete grades may only be issued with the approval of the school administration and will be reserved for extenuating circumstances of prolonged legal absence from school. Assigning an incomplete (“I”) in place of a failing grade will allow the student time to make up the work missed. Once the work has been completed, the actual grade will be updated on the next report card.

Student Transfer to Other Schools

Occasionally, parents/guardians decide to transfer a child to another school for a variety of reasons. When a change of school is anticipated, the following steps should be taken:

- The parent/guardian should contact the school administrator regarding the impending change to ensure proper placement in a new setting.
- Arrangements to transfer school records should be made with the principal.
- All student instructional material should be returned.
- Payment of any outstanding financial obligations should be made.

Transfer of Records

Notre Dame maintains confidential, accurate, and current records of the academic achievement, health, and attendance of each enrolled student. Upon leaving **Notre Dame**, a student's academic records are transferred to the new school upon written request from the parent.

Requesting Transcripts and the College Application Process

To request a copy of a student's transcript, follow this [link](#).

For information on the college application process, contact the guidance office at guidance@notredameutica.org or click [here](#).

Communication/Grievance Process

As a Catholic school community, we recognize parents as the primary educators of their children. Therefore, we value communication as a key to the success of all children entrusted to our care.

Parents/guardians who have questions about their child's education should begin with individual classroom or specialized teachers. Parents/guardians wishing to schedule a conference should write a note to the appropriate teacher or call the Main Office during school hours. Spontaneous classroom visits are not allowed.

This communication table serves as a guideline to assist parents and school community members in contacting the appropriate school staff members with questions or concerns. We encourage you to contact the staff member most

immediately involved with your question or concern as the first contact. If the issue is not resolved, please progress through the table below.

Questions/Concerns	First Contact	Second Contact	Third Contact
Academics	Teacher	Principal	Board President
Athletics/CYO	Coach	Athletic Director / Program Coordinator	Board President
Student Behavior	Teacher	Principal & Counselor (if applicable)	Board President
Extra-Curricular Activities	Club Advisor	Principal	Board President
Financial Aid	Tuition Office	Principal	Board President
Medical	School Nurse	Guidance Office	Principal
Religion	Teacher	Principal	Pastor or Board President
Safety	School Resource Officer	Principal	Board President/ Superintendent
Special Education	Teacher	AIS Teacher / Special Ed Teacher or Principal	Utica City School District
Transportation/Bus Behavior	Driver	School Resource Officer or Principal	Transportation Department of District of Residence
Technology	Teacher	School Technology Coordinator	Principal
Tuition Payment	Tuition Management Company	Tuition Office or Finance Office	Principal / Board President

Use of Facilities	Finance Office or Athletic Director	Principal	Board President
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If an issue or dispute cannot be resolved after the third contact, a conference will be scheduled with the parent, teacher, Principal, and possibly the student. Parents should contact the Principal to schedule this conference. An additional conference with the Principal can occur after this meeting should further discussion be necessary. Secondly, if after the second conference with the Principal further discussion is still requested, a conference with the parents, Board President, and the Principal will occur. Parents should contact the Board President to schedule this meeting.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Formal Parent/Teacher Conferences will be held at the end of the first marking period. These conferences will be held at appointed times on publicized dates, providing an opportunity for discussion regarding individual students' academic, social, and religious development. Informal parent/teacher conferences are arranged as individual needs arise. Parents may not confer with a teacher during class hours without an appointment.

Due to the confidential nature of a parent/teacher conference, only the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) may attend. Please try to schedule only **one** conference rather than separate conferences in situations that apply. The child may also be included in a parent/teacher conference at the discretion of both the parents and the teacher(s).

In fairness to all involved, conference appointment times should be strictly adhered to so that all parents may be accommodated.

Expectations for Student Success

We believe that all children are a blessing from God and their dignity should be held in the highest regard, as each person is created in the image of God. Therefore, all students have a right to be an active part of a safe and orderly learning environment.

As a Catholic school, **Notre Dame** emphasizes whole child development. Spiritual, intellectual, social, and physical growth are fostered. The school staff aims to see all children develop an ever-increasing awareness of their own self-worth and the worth of others, and a reverence for each person. The school environment attempts to emphasize the need for an increasing sense of responsibility and self-discipline,

rather than imposed control, on the part of students. Justice and charity are the two guiding virtues. Discipline is the key to good conduct and proper consideration for other people. Good discipline is maintained by recognizing and praising good behavior and taking corrective action when necessary.

All students of Notre Dame are expected to:

I. Conduct and Respect (Behavioral Expectations)

- **General Respect and Courtesy:**

- Treat everyone with courtesy and respect.
- Greet and respond to everyone in a polite manner.
- Be considerate of the needs of others.
- Demonstrate respect for teachers, staff, and peers.
- Treat self and others with respect and kindness.
- Celebrate the unique gifts and talents of each person, recognizing them as made in God's image.

- **School Environment:**

- Demonstrate Catholic values in speech and action.
- Conduct themselves in a manner that does not interfere with the learning environment.
- Participate and contribute in a positive manner in the classroom and the school environment throughout the school day.
- Comply with all policies, rules, and regulations as specified or implied in this handbook, including the uniform policy.
- Accept responsibility for their own actions.

II. Academic Integrity and Responsibility (Learning Expectations)

- **Academic Honesty:**

- Complete all work honestly and ethically.
- Avoid cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty.
- Respect intellectual property.

- **Responsibility and Engagement:**

- Take responsibility for their own learning and behavior.
- Take responsibility for the completion of assigned work both inside and outside of class.
- Maintain good attendance and arrive at school and classes on time.
- Engage actively in class discussions and activities.
- Ask thoughtful questions and seek clarification.
- Engage in respectful and productive discussions.

- Listen actively and attentively to others.
- Collaborate effectively with peers.

III. Intellectual Growth and Learning Habits (Personal Development)

- **Curiosity and Growth Mindset:**

- Demonstrate a desire to learn and explore new ideas.
- Show a willingness to take on intellectual challenges.
- Embrace challenges and view mistakes as learning opportunities.
- Persevere through difficulties and maintain a positive attitude.

IV. Technology and Digital Citizenship (Digital Expectations)

- **Responsible Technology Use:**

- Use technology effectively and ethically.
- Practice safe and responsible online behavior.
- Understand and respect digital privacy.

Statement on the School's Philosophy about Safe and Ethical Generative AI Use

Notre Dame believes in embracing the powerful capabilities of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools in a manner that is ethical, safe, and aligned with our educational values. Students are expected to recognize that generative AI has the potential to augment human intelligence and creativity in remarkable ways. However, students will learn to understand the risks of misuse, including the potential for generating misinformation, violating intellectual property rights, and amplifying societal biases and harms. Students will learn to recognize that generative AI tools like language models and image generators can be powerful aids for learning across all disciplines.

However, it's important to use these tools ethically and safely. When using AI, it's important to be mindful that outputs can contain inaccurate information, biases, or inappropriate content. As a result, when using AI all students are responsible to:

- Defer to their classroom teacher's directions about appropriate use of AI.
- Double-check important facts from authoritative sources.
- Never use AI tools to produce hate speech, misinformation, or to violate others' intellectual property rights or privacy.
- Attribute any material (text, images, etc.) derived from AI appropriately.
- Use critical thinking when interacting with AI, and do not blindly trust all information AI generates.
- Not humanize AI by attributing human behaviors or characteristics to it.
- Follow the "Ground Rules for Using AI" document.

Ultimately, students are responsible for the ethical use of these tools and the integrity of your work. Students who violate the acceptable use policy or rules specific to

plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary consequences. If you have any concerns, consult a teacher or trusted adult for guidance.

Ground Rules for Using AI

1. Understand AI's Role: AI is a tool to assist in learning, not a replacement for critical thinking or personal effort. Students should use AI to enhance their learning process and not rely on it to do their work for them.
2. Respect Academic Integrity: AI should not be used to cheat, plagiarize, or produce work that students pass off as their own. Students must always give credit when AI assists in generating content or ideas.
3. Be Transparent: If students use AI in any part of their schoolwork, they should disclose how they used it. This includes specifying if AI was used for brainstorming, writing, problem-solving, or any other assistance.
4. Maintain Privacy: Avoid sharing personal, sensitive, or identifiable information with AI tools, as these tools may not guarantee data privacy.
5. Verify Information: AI-generated content should be fact-checked and verified against reliable sources. Students should develop the habit of questioning and validating the information AI provides.
6. Use Age-Appropriate Tools: Ensure that the AI tools used are suitable for educational purposes and appropriate for the students' age group. Always follow age restrictions and link your @mtlstudents.net account to AI tools for official school work.
7. Use AI Ethically: Know that there are many ethical implications of AI, including biases, limitations, and the overall impact of AI on society. Any issues that you encounter while interacting with an AI tool should be brought to the attention of your teacher, counselor, or unit principal.
8. Follow School Policies: Adhere to the Acceptable Use Policy regarding the use of technology and AI in the classroom.
9. Follow Classroom Policies: Each teacher has the freedom to set rules around the use of AI in their classroom. These rules will vary from assignment to assignment and from teacher to teacher. If students are uncertain about how to use AI appropriately or if its use is acceptable, they should ask their teacher for clarification.
10. Do Not Humanize: Remember, AI and Chatbots are not humans; they do not have feelings, consciousness, or desires. Do not attribute human characteristics to AI systems. In addition, avoid emotional attribution and be mindful of the relationships formed with them.

Diocese of Syracuse Catholic Schools Student Technology Use Policy

Introduction

Grounded in the Catholic Church's view of technology as a gift (*Aetatis Novae*, #2), the Diocese of Syracuse Catholic Schools embraces technology to enhance learning in alignment with Church teachings, safety, and legal requirements. This policy governs all student use of devices (school-owned and personal), internet access, and related services within school settings and at school events. Violations may result in disciplinary action.

Definitions

1. **Acceptable Use Policy (AUP):** This policy governing the use of internet services and devices on school premises and at school events.
2. **Catholic School Office (CSO):** The administrative office of the Diocese of Syracuse Catholic Schools.
3. **Code of Conduct:** Each local school's established behavioral guidelines.
4. **Digital Devices:** Any hardware or software used for electronic data creation, receipt, storage, transmission, or manipulation. This includes computers, laptops, tablets, smartphones, wearables, network systems, and related peripherals and applications.
5. **Diocese:** The Roman Catholic Diocese of Syracuse, New York.
6. **Diocesan/School Resources:** Any technology-related property or service owned or provided by the Diocese or local schools, including devices, networks, internet access, email, cloud storage, and software platforms.
7. **Educational Purpose:** Technology use directly related to the school's curriculum, extracurricular activities, or administration.
8. **Electronic Communication:** Any digital transmission of information, including email, messaging apps, online forums, social media, file sharing, and web content.
9. **Internet/Network:** The global network of interconnected computer networks, including school-based (intranet/Wi-Fi) and external access.
10. **Local School:** Any Catholic school affiliated with the Diocese.
11. **School Policy:** Any official rule or guideline issued by the CSO or a local school, including the Code of Conduct.
12. **School Event:** Any school-sponsored or endorsed activity, regardless of location or supervision.

13. **School Property:** Any physical or digital asset belonging to the Diocese or its schools.
14. **Harassment (including Sexual Harassment):** Any offensive behavior (verbal, written, visual, physical, or digital) that creates a hostile environment, consistent with the Diocese of Syracuse Catholic Schools Office's Harassment Policy.
15. **Student:** Any individual enrolled in a Diocesan school.

Acceptable Use Terms

Student use of all technology resources is contingent upon adherence to this AUP, school policies, and all applicable laws.

Specific Terms:

1. Students are responsible for all activity associated with their assigned accounts and must protect their login credentials.
2. School-provided technology is to be used solely for educational purposes.
3. Technology use on school property or at school events, regardless of ownership, must be aligned with the Expectations for Student Success.
4. Technology access is a privilege that may be revoked at any time by the school principal without prior notice or process.
5. Students are prohibited from using another individual's accounts, creating fake accounts or attempting unauthorized access to any system.
6. Students shall not alter system configurations or assigned passwords without explicit permission.
7. Use of personally owned digital devices during the school day, on school property is prohibited unless specifically authorized in writing by the principal.
8. Technology shall not be used in any way that is inconsistent with Church teachings or school policies, including but not limited to:
 - Accessing, viewing, transmitting, or storing inappropriate, offensive, or illegal content (e.g., sexually explicit material, hate speech, illegal activities).
 - Using disrespectful, abusive, or objectionable language in any communication.
 - Engaging in harassment, sexual harassment, cyberbullying, or attacks on others.
 - Unauthorized access, use, or damage to any technology resources or accounts.
 - Wasting limited resources (e.g., excessive bandwidth, printing).

- Commercial or political activities unrelated to schoolwork, or any activity violating laws.
 - Creating or using fake accounts of any kind.
9. All school-provided technology remains the property of the school and/or Diocese. Students have no expectation of privacy regarding its use.
 10. The Diocese, CSO, or local school reserves the right to access, monitor, review, download, print, copy, and delete any material on or transmitted through their technology resources at any time, without cause or notice. This information may be shared with law enforcement or other authorities as deemed appropriate.
 11. By acknowledging receipt of the Student Handbook, parents/guardians and students acknowledge that there is no right to privacy, exclusive possession, or access to school technology resources and waive any such rights.
 12. Upon suspension or termination of technology privileges, students must immediately return any school-provided equipment and access information.
 13. Students must grant immediate access to any school-provided technology upon request.

Consequences and Penalties for Violation of AUP

Consequences for violating this AUP will be determined by the principal, consistent with this policy and the school's Code of Conduct. Examples include, but are not limited to:

1. Parental notification and conference.
2. Penalties outlined in the school's Code of Conduct (e.g., loss of privileges, detention, suspension, expulsion).
3. Requirement to reimburse for damages to technology or property.
4. Legal action to recover damages.
5. Loss of technology access and use privileges (with potential for supervised reinstatement).
6. Notification of law enforcement agencies when criminal activity is suspected, in consultation with the CSO.

The Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Syracuse Student Technology use Agreement

1. I have read and understand the "DIOCESE OF SYRACUSE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS STUDENT TECHNOLOGY USE POLICY (2025)."

2. I agree to abide by the terms of this policy and understand that I will be held accountable for any violations.
3. I understand that all technology access provided by the school is for educational purposes only.
4. As a user of the school network, I agree to comply with all school rules, policies, and applicable laws and to use the network responsibly.

Parent/Guardian Agreement

As the parent/guardian of the student, I grant permission for my child to access school technology resources, including internet and network services. I understand that my child may be held liable for violations of the Technology Use Policy and/or applicable laws. I also understand that while the school takes precautions, some online content may be inappropriate, and I accept responsibility for guiding my child's technology use and setting expectations for selecting, sharing, and exploring information and media. I agree to discuss this policy with my child and ensure they understand its terms. I understand and accept that my child's technology access may be revoked for any breach of this policy.

Cell Phone Policy

Cellphones, smart watches, and similar devices may not be used by students during the instructional day (7:55 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.). This includes lunch periods, study hall, and after school tutorial sessions.

Cell phones must be turned off and will be stored in a locked cabinet in the student's first period class for the duration of the school day. Students entering school late (after first period has begun) will leave their cell phones in a locked cabinet in the main office. Students will return to their first period class at the end of the school day to retrieve their device. Students who must leave early for an appointment must bring a note to the main office in the morning (prior to first period) and must turn in their cell phone at the main office as well. Students will not be permitted to pick up a cell phone from their first period class until after 2:43 p.m.

Failure to comply with this policy will result in confiscation of the device by school personnel. Once a device has been confiscated, it will only be returned to a parent/guardian. The minimum consequence will be an after school detention. Receipt

of this handbook and back to school communications over the summer serve as blanket warnings for all students. Repeated violations will be subject to further disciplinary action.

Any student that is in possession of a cell phone, smart watch, or similar device during an assessment (exam, test, quiz, etc.) may not receive credit.

Dress Code Policy

The primary mission of Notre Dame Schools is to educate the whole student in a Catholic environment that instills such values as modesty, self-discipline, professionalism, and pride. Notre Dame students, therefore, are to “dress for success”. We believe that a dress code in which modesty and non-competitive dress are the norm is conducive to an attitude and atmosphere of cooperation and ultimately, unites our students and makes them career ready. Self-confidence and self-esteem are part of this and directly relate to appearance. A student’s attire reflects upon the student as well as the school. We want our young women and men to take pride in their appearance.

All students are expected to present a modest, neat, and clean appearance at all times while being in the approved school uniform. All clothing must be clean, pressed, modestly styled, in good material condition, and properly fitted. The uniform is to be worn every school day unless an individual or the entire student body has been excused from this requirement. Additionally, the uniform must be properly worn whenever the student is on school grounds and/or representing Notre Dame High School at an officially approved activity or event.

Parents/Guardians must be aware of the dress code, ensure the approved items are purchased, and insist that their student(s) be in the dress code when leaving the house each morning. Students not in compliance with the dress code policy will be provided one opportunity to become compliant. Failure to comply will result in disciplinary action. Administration reserves the right to determine what is and what is not acceptable, this includes the determination of the appropriateness of student dress on dress-down days.

UNIFORM VENDOR

For the sake of uniformity and consistency, Tommy Hilfiger is the sole dress code clothing provider of Notre Dame Schools. A link to Notre Dame’s Tommy Hilfiger

Uniform page is available on our website and here:

<https://www.globalschoolwear.com/school/NOTR14>. With the exception of items that have been phased out, items purchased previously through Lands' End are still acceptable.

***Please note: White polo and oxford shirts have officially been phased out effective June 2024. Khaki/tan skorts have officially been phased out effective June 2025.*

YOUNG WOMEN'S DRESS CODE

- Short- or long-sleeved, polo shirts, Navy Blue or light blue, with the embroidered ND logo, purchased from Tommy Hilfiger Uniforms. Students may choose to wear a solid white, short-sleeved t-shirt under the polo shirt. Polo shirts must be tucked in so the belt line can be seen and long enough to stay tucked while seated.
- Navy blue quarter zips with the embroidered ND logo may be worn with a solid white or navy blue undershirt. The undershirt must be visible underneath when unzipped. Quarter zips may NOT be worn with shorts/skorts/skirts, nor over an oxford shirt/blouse on professional dress days.
- Khaki or navy blue chino pants from Tommy Hilfiger Uniforms are to be worn at all times. The waistline will be located above the hip, buckled/snapped, and NOT ROLLED/CUFFED/RIPPED. The pant legs must be hemmed.
- Navy blue or khaki chino-shorts and blue plaid skorts purchased from Tommy Hilfiger Uniforms may ONLY be worn in September, October, May, and June. Shorts/skorts must fall at the knee. Skorts/skirts may not be rolled.
- Navy Blue pants/shorts may only be worn with light blue shirts! Khaki color pants/shorts may be worn with either color shirt.
- No undergarments are to be visible, including the bottoms of undershirts. All clothing is to be modestly and properly fitted, clean, neat and pressed.
- A leather belt, brown or black in color, must be worn at all times with dress code pants/shorts. The belt buckle must be standard in size (not to exceed 1 ½" x 2" in area, with no ornate designs, studs, sequins, or patterns, and must be situated on the centerline of the torso.

YOUNG MEN'S DRESS CODE

- Short- or long-sleeved, polo shirts, navy or light blue, with the embroidered ND logo, purchased from Tommy Hilfiger Uniforms. Students may choose to wear a solid white, short-sleeved t-shirt under the polo shirt. Polo shirts must be tucked in so the belt line can be seen and long enough to stay tucked while

seated.

- Navy blue quarter zips with the embroidered ND logo may be worn with a solid white or navy blue undershirt. The undershirt must be visible underneath. Quarter zips may NOT be worn with shorts, nor over an oxford shirt on professional dress days.
- Khaki or navy blue chino pants from Tommy Hilfiger Uniforms are to be worn at all times. The waistline will be located above the hip, buckled/snapped, and NOT ROLLED/CUFFED/RIPPED. The pant legs must be hemmed.
- Khaki or navy blue chino shorts purchased from Tommy Hilfiger Uniforms may ONLY be worn in September, October, May, and June. Shorts must fall at the knee.
- Navy Blue pants/shorts may not be worn with navy blue shirts!
- No undergarments are to be visible, including the bottoms of undershirts. All clothing is to be modestly and properly fitted, clean, neat, and pressed.
- A leather belt, brown or black in color, must be worn at all times with dress code pants/shorts. The belt buckle must be standard in size (not to exceed 1 ½" x 2", with no ornate designs, studs, sequins, or patterns, and must be situated on the centerline of the torso

DRESS UNIFORM

- *The "Professional Dress Uniform" is the mandatory form of dress on days when we attend Mass as a school, days of athletic competition, as well as at official events in which a student might be representing Notre Dame as directed by administration or coaching staff.*
- For young ladies: light blue Oxford-style blouse purchased from Tommy Hilfiger Uniforms. Blouses are to be buttoned (except for the top button), tucked in so the belt line/waistline can be seen, and long enough to stay tucked while seated. A student may choose to wear a solid white short-sleeved t-shirt under the blouse. Blue-plaid skirts may be worn in place of chino pants on professional dress days with navy blue or black tights.
- For young men: light blue oxford-style dress shirts purchased from Tommy Hilfiger Uniforms with a Notre Dame tie. Dress shirts are to be buttoned, tucked in so the belt line can be seen, and long enough to stay tucked while seated. A student may choose to wear a solid white short-sleeved t-shirt under the dress shirt. Ties must be properly tied and drawn firmly at the neck.
- Shorts/skorts may NOT be worn on professional dress days.
- Only dress shoes or boat shoes may be worn on professional dress days! No sneakers!

UNIFORM SWEATERS

- The only authorized sweaters approved for wear are the Notre Dame uniform sweaters purchased from Tommy Hilfiger and may be worn at any time. All sweaters including V-neck, Cardigan, Full-zip, or vests are to be Navy Blue in color and will bear the embroidered Notre Dame logo. The wearing of hooded sweatshirts, athletic/team sweaters, crew-neck sweaters, and/or jackets in school is strictly prohibited.

FOOTWEAR

- Footwear is to be an enclosed dress shoe, boat shoe, or sneaker. The footwear is to be solid black, brown, or gray (including any logos, such as the Nike “swoosh”). Heels must be less than 2”. Footwear is always to be worn with socks, tights, or stockings. Socks should be solid black, white, or other neutral tones.
- Sandals and other open-toed shoes, slippers and slipper-style Uggs, high-top sneakers, boots of any kind (including Timberlands and Uggs), “Crocs”, and clogs are NOT permitted for wear.

PERSONAL GROOMING

- Hair must be a natural color, neat, clean, and acceptably styled. Fads and trends are to be avoided.
- Hair should be combed or brushed, of acceptable length, and neat in appearance at all times. Hair should never be covering the eyes. For young men, hair is not to extend below the top of the collar, below the eyebrows, and not to extend below the bottom of the ear.
- Faces are to be clean-shaven at all times. Facial hair, including sideburns below the ears, is prohibited.
- Headbands may be worn, but not to exceed 1” in width, solid in color, no logos, and used only for the purpose of holding hair back from the face. Headbands extending below the top of the collar are prohibited.
- Hats, bandanas, and scarves are not permitted for wear inside the school building, including “dress-down” days, except for religious reasons.
- Earrings are to be worn in ears only and limited to one in each. Piercing jewelry on eyebrows, nose, tongue, or facial area other than the ear is prohibited. Only stud earrings are permitted. Hoops or chains are not permitted for purposes of ensuring student safety. Earlobe plugs are prohibited.
- Visible body markings and tattoos are not permitted or will be covered from

view at all times with a long-sleeved shirt, pants, or socks. Gauze pads and/or bandages are not a substitute for this requirement.

- Excessive jewelry, including chains, is not permitted.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Only the approved Notre Dame physical education uniform is permitted for wear in the physical education class. Failure to bring proper attire for physical education class will result in a grade of 0 for that class day.

"DRESS DOWN DAY"

- Students are expected to display modesty and good taste on dress-down days.
 - The following are always prohibited for wear, including on dress-down days:
 - Jeans/pants with rips or holes above the knee.
 - Hats of any kind.
 - Strapless and sleeveless tops.
 - Low-cut tops, crop tops, tube tops, tank tops, and any form of clothing that reveals the belly button or stomach area.
 - Sandals, flip flops, open-backed, beach shoes, or slipper-type shoes.
 - Clothing of any kind that advertises or promotes alcohol, tobacco, illegal substances, or drinking establishments as well as those that contain messages of violence, questionable moral activity, and/or vulgar language.
 - All shorts, skirts, skorts, and dresses must fall at the knee.
 - Spandex, Leggings, Yoga Pants, or similarly clinging material are prohibited unless worn under a dress or elongated top that extends to the tip of the fingers when standing straight.
-

Drug and Alcohol Policy

Notre Dame is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all students. Students may face **expulsion** if any of the following conditions exist during school hours or at any school-sponsored event:

- A student sells, gives, or deals drugs or alcohol to other students.
- A student is under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- A student is detected using drugs or alcohol.
- A student is in possession of drugs or alcohol.

Should any of these infractions occur, parents/guardians will be notified immediately.

A conference will be arranged with the student, parent/guardian, and administration. Disciplinary action will be taken, which may include probation, suspension, expulsion, or reporting the activity to the local police department. If necessary, counseling will also be arranged.

Parents or family members who come to school grounds or a school event in possession of, or attempt to sell, or are under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be reported to the local police. Such actions may also result in the revocation of the student(s)' enrollment at the school.

Gun-Free School Policy

Notre Dame, as a Catholic school within the Diocese of Syracuse, aligns its policy on firearms with the federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994. Any school pupil determined to have brought a weapon to school will be **expelled** and will not be permitted to attend any diocesan school.

Addressing Infractions: Our Approach

When expectations are not met, it is considered an infraction. The overall goal of working with students and their families when an infraction occurs is to help the student make better choices in the future.

Responses to Infractions

The school employs a range of responses to address infractions, including:

- Redirection by teacher/staff
- Verbal warning
- Written warning
- Communication with parents
- Behavior Plan
- Loss of Privileges (e.g., choice of seating, eating lunch with peers, recess choice, early dismissal, late arrival, student parking, honors pass, free periods, choice of where to move through hallways, cell phone on person)
- After-School Detention

- Suspension
- Written and/or verbal apology
- Redo of assigned work
- Expulsion
- Contacting Law Enforcement

Range of School Responses

The Principal has the right and authority to implement school responses for infractions if they conclude that the student's behavior is harmful to the good order and discipline of the school and its religious mission. The Principal is the final authority in all disciplinary situations.

General Disciplinary Guidelines

The classroom teacher is the primary in-school disciplinarian. They will work directly with the student to reinforce and support expected behaviors. Written communication and/or a telephone call to the home will facilitate communication between the teacher and parents. The teacher will consult with the Principal regarding matters that warrant further attention.

To maintain consistency across all classrooms at this level, the following procedures apply when a student continues to not meet expectations after the teacher has worked with the student and family to improve the situation. Further infractions will result in a referral to the Principal/Assistant Principal, and the following plan of action will be invoked:

- After the **third infraction** for not meeting the same expectation, a meeting will be scheduled with the Principal, teacher, parents, and student to create an action/behavior plan designed to guide the student toward better choices in the future.
- All subsequent infractions will be communicated to the Principal, who will address the situation with the parents and assign further responses to the infractions.

If a student is unable to transition from externally imposed discipline to self-discipline, the Principal will exercise authority in deciding what is best for all concerned: the

school, the student, and the family.

Suspension

When a student continuously disregards school expectations, short-term suspension may result. Parents/guardians will be notified of the charged offenses and given the opportunity to meet with the Principal or the Principal's designee regarding the suspension.

During a suspension, the student may be in school or out of school during regular hours. If in-school, academic studies will be pursued in a setting isolated from the classroom. All instructional work during the time of suspension must be completed, and all privileges will be lost.

Out-of-school suspension will be implemented only after other measures have proven ineffective and further parent/guardian communication has taken place or where the conduct in question is of such a nature that, in the Principal's sole discretion, it is deemed likely that the student's continued attendance constitutes a danger to other student, to others, to school property, or of a disruption of the educational process. In keeping with due process, suspended students will be granted a conference with the Principal, with reasonable notice, at which the student may present his/her response to the charged infractions and/or appropriate penalty.

If a marked improvement, specifically a positive behavioral change, fails to occur, expulsion may be imminent.

Expulsion

The expulsion of a child from a Catholic school is a serious matter decided by the Principal in consultation with the Catholic School Office. Parents/guardians will be informed of the events leading to the expulsion.

Search and Seizure

School authorities may conduct a search of a student's locker, backpacks, bags, or personal items only when there is sufficient cause to believe that drugs, alcohol, weapons, or other prohibited materials are hidden. Any search must be conducted in the presence of another staff member.

Safe Environment: Our Commitment to a Safe and Respectful School Community

At Notre Dame, the safety and well-being of our students are always our top priority. This means we have clear procedures in place to address any concerns about student safety and respectful interactions.

When there is a basis for a reasonable suspicion that a child has been the victim of child abuse or maltreatment, School personnel will contact the State Central Registry through the Child Abuse Hotline to report the matter and, where there is a basis to suspect that a child is in imminent danger of abuse or maltreatment, they will contact Child Protective Services or call 911 to seek immediate assistance.

When an issue, concern, or incident involves a sexual matter—such as sexual abuse, sexual assault, sexual harassment, or inappropriate sexual comments, texts, or pictures between students, students and staff, or students and visitors—schools are required to contact either the Diocesan Safe Environment Office (SE) or the Catholic Schools Office (CSO) to investigate. Representatives from the Catholic Schools Office and/or the Diocesan Safe Environment Office will visit the student’s school as a team of two. The team meets with individuals involved, as well as any witnesses. This is done prior to notifying families to ensure unbiased responses and because students are typically more forthcoming with information related to this topic with individuals outside their family. Upon completion of any investigation, the team makes recommendations to the school’s administration. These recommendations could range from calling 911 and/or CPS to being unfounded with no action recommended. Families of all students who have been interviewed will be notified by the school’s administration immediately following the conclusion of the investigation.

We believe that this process creates and maintains a safe environment where all students can learn and grow. We are committed to open communication and working together with families to ensure the well-being of every child in our care