



**PARENT - STUDENT HANDBOOK
2020-2021**



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Mother of Christ Catholic Learning Center

Introduction: An interesting and challenging experience awaits you as a student or parent of the learning center. To answer some of your questions concerning the learning center's policies, the learning center has prepared this Parent-Student Handbook. Please read it thoroughly and retain it for future reference. The policies stated in this handbook are only guidelines and are subject to change at the sole discretion of the learning center, as are all other policies, procedures, or programs of the learning center. From time to time, you may receive updated information concerning changes in policy. However, the learning center has the right to add, delete or revise any learning center policy or procedure with or without notice. This handbook is not a contract, express or implied, and none of the policies or provisions should be construed as such. If you have any questions about the learning center's policies, please ask the director for assistance.

Mission Statement: Mother of Christ Catholic Learning Center collaborates with our entire community as we strive to provide high-quality academic achievement in a faith-filled environment.

Philosophy: MOC believes that each child is a gift from God. Together with the parents, MOC will aid the children in the realization of the personal love God has for them. We help the children grasp this loving and personal relationship with the prayerful use of the Sacred Scriptures. We strive to instill the basic value of self-respect, respect for others and the appreciation of the beauty of the world by creative expression of their God-given talents.

Goals and Objectives

- 1. Spiritual:** To be a witness for Christ in family life and the parish community. To make children aware of their God-given capabilities. To provide children with the opportunity for personal and communal prayer, participation of the Sacraments and the opportunity to participate in class, school masses and prayer services.
- 2. Intellectual:** To encourage children to think independently and to make sound judgments based on Catholic Christian Principles. To provide children the acquisition of skills needed to recall, organize, synthesize data, and to evaluate this in accordance with their values. To provide children the opportunities to express themselves through creative writing, poetry, and dramatic speaking.
- 3. Academic:** To provide a strong academic curriculum. To give children the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to live in a changing world, changing society and a new century.
- 4. Social:** To create a community of Christians. To provide children the opportunity to accept and respect others as self, to develop the sense of team spirit, good sportsmanship, and positive peer-pressure. These sentiments stimulate the love of God, self and others.
- 5. Emotional:** To create an environment where children are accepted as unique individuals. To provide them the opportunity to develop self-esteem and respect for themselves and others.

Beginning of Year Orientation: At the beginning of every school year, parents are invited to an orientation meeting. The curriculum, classroom rules, regulations and teachers' expectations will be discussed at this time. We encourage parents and guardians to be present for this meeting.

Office Hours: The Learning Center Office is open 7:30AM to 5:30PM. Monday through Friday. For payments, and any other questions. When calling the office, we truly appreciate that you call between the office hours.

Open Admission Policy: The Learning Center has an open admission policy. No person, on the grounds of race, color, disability or national origin, is excluded or otherwise subjected to discrimination in the receiving of services. Nor does the Learning Center discriminate in hiring, promotion, discharge, pay, fringe benefits, job training, classification, referral and other aspects of employment on the basis of race, color, disability, age, gender, or national origin.

Undocumented Students: A student's enrollment and/or graduation from school does not confer a legal status nor does it serve to regularize an undocumented student. Although the Archdiocese of Miami may assist with the completion of an I-20 form, the school does not guarantee or confer any privileges or rights available to documented legal residents. Parents should consult with immigration legal counsel if they have any questions as to immigration status.

Parental Cooperation: The Learning Center views the education of a student as a partnership between the parents and the Learning Center. Parents and students are expected to comply with the Learning Center rules and policies, and to accept and support the authority of Learning Center officials. Just as a parent can withdraw a child from the Learning Center if desired, the Learning Center has the right to disenroll a student if it determines at its discretion that the parent or student partnership with the Learning Center is irretrievably broken.

Registration: To register at MOC all new students must present proof of:

1. Birth Certificate
2. Updated Original Health/Vaccine Certificate
3. Baptismal Certificate (Optional)
4. Copy of any evaluation psychological done by Early STEPS, FDLRS (Florida Diagnostic & Learning Resources System) or any another private consultant

To register the child must be four years of age by September 1st to enter into his age group. Otherwise the child will be held back one year. These are requirements of the State of Florida and can not be changed by the learning center. All new children will be given an adaptation period from three to four weeks to adjust to their class. If a child has not adjusted during this time period we will evaluate the situation and determine what measures need to be met. Each child must have both of their FDH certificates (Vaccines and Health Examination) in file before the beginning of the learning center year. The forms may be obtained from a private physician or from the Miami-Dade County Department of Public Health. No child will be allowed into the center without the required immunization. **If these forms become expired during the learning center year, your child will not be allowed to return until the original form has been brought to the office.** Make sure you keep up with your expiration dates to avoid your child from being kept from coming to class.

Re-Registration: Re-registration will occur in January. Siblings of students in good standing currently attending MOC will have priority in registering for school. Parents are asked to re-register by the due date, or waive their right to placement. Re-registration is contingent upon clearance of all financial obligations.

Security Measures: The Learning Center requires that you **sign your child in and out** on a daily basis. All authorized family member must print name. If your signature is not legible, you must provide the learning center office a copy of your driver's license.

Financial Obligations: The satisfaction of all financial obligations to the school, including tuition and fees, constitutes a material condition for continued enrollment in the school. The school may disallow students from taking quarterly, semester, or final examinations if the parents or legal guardians fail to meet any financial obligation to the school. In addition, the school may withhold the issuance of transcripts or any other student records and/or disallow participation in or access to school activities, and/or disenrollment the student if any financial obligations are not met.

In the event of a natural disaster, disease outbreak, or any other circumstances which in the judgment of the school administration make it unfeasible, unsafe, or otherwise imprudent to continue campus-based education, school educational programs shall resume as soon as practical by way of distance learning and/or other methods adopted by the school administration and faculty. Due to the school's continuing financial obligations related to its operations, there will be no refund of tuition in these circumstances.

Registration Fee: This fee is due when registration or re-registration is made, and it is non-refundable. Registration is contingent upon clearance of all financial obligations.

Tuition and Fees: The monthly tuition is paid in 10 monthly installments August - May on the 10th day of each month. If there are no funds available on the charge date, Delinquent tuition payments will carry a late payment fee of \$25.00 (monthly). For a better accounting system, send tuition payments to the learning center office. **DO NOT SEND CASH WITH STUDENTS** - The learning center is not responsible for cash sent to school with the students. Cash payments will only be accepted from an adult.

Returned Checks Check Policy: If the bank returns a check, it will not be re-deposited. The family will have to pay cash. No post-dated checks will be accepted. Families that consistently have NSF checks will be called to the pastor's office for a meeting. Future payments may be required to be cash. This applies to all checks received from the family through-out the year.

Withdrawal: The parent who wishes to transfer a child should contact the office. An exit interview will be scheduled and proper documentation prepared. All financial obligations must be fulfilled before records are sent to another school.

Change of Address/Telephone Number: It is the parent's responsibility to advise the learning center office of any change of address, telephone number or e-mail address. This must be done in writing. Please note that when contacting you for an emergency, we need to have updated information.

Emergency Contact Information: At registration, parents fill out an Emergency Contact Form. These forms are kept on file and will be used if/when the student experiences an emergency, illness, or accident while in school. It will include authorization for the school to act in an emergency when the parent or guardian cannot be reached. It is therefore, of vital importance that the emergency card is kept accurate, complete and up to date. Parents are required to inform the school of any changes. In an emergency, time is a critical matter.

Text Messaging/Telephone Calls: The school may use text messages and automated telephone calls to alert parents/guardians of important information related to the school's mission, operations, and activities. Parents/guardians acknowledge and consent to the receipt of these messages when providing their telephone numbers.

E-MAIL: All school faculty and staff have an e-mail address. You may access the directory on the school website <http://motherofchristcatholicschool.net>. The school sends memos via e-mail instead of hard copies, please keep your e-mail address up-to-date.

School Website: The school website is a vital source of information and resources. The yearly and monthly calendar will be posted on this site, as well as other important forms. You may download.

Visitors: to avoid possible spread of the COVID-19 virus there will be no visitor at the center until further notice.

Volunteers: to avoid possible spread of the COVID-19 virus there will be no visitor at the center until further notice.

Room Parents: Each class has a designated homeroom parent. In consultation, the teacher and the principal choose the Homeroom Parent. Parents need to be in good standing (as stated in the Volunteer requirements section of Page 4) to become a homeroom parent. The function of a Room Parent is to help the teacher; therefore, coordination and planning of activities is to be done in accordance with the teacher's plans. The teachers will authorize all Room Parents activities. Please note that room parents will not automatically attend all the field trips.

Home and School Association (HASA) of MOC is designed to assist the administration as the social and fundraising organization of MOC. The association dues are \$25 (annually) per family, paid to the association at the time of registration. All dues must be paid before the last day of school.

Attendance Policy

VPK and School Readiness Attendance Policies: Providers have its own attendance policy. If a child or a parent does not comply with the provider's attendance policy, the provider may dismiss the child from its program.

Procedure for Absence: Student absences will be excused for the following reasons:

- A. illness of student when a doctor's note is present
- B. family emergency (principal/parent conference necessary)

When a student is absent from school, a parent or guardian is requested to contact the school office, either by e-mail to ada.enriquez@motherofchirst.net or by phone (305-559-6047) and give the following name of person calling, student's name, grade & homeroom teacher's name, reason for absence, day the student is expected to return.

Students returning to school after an absence must present a note explaining his/her absence to the homeroom teacher. Students who are absent three consecutive days must present a doctor's note stating that the child is ready to go back to school. On the day of the 3rd absence the teacher will call the student's parent/guardian to be informed the reason of the absences; and of any danger of failure because of absences with ample time. All absences will be recorded. **The Principal has the right to refuse an excused absence in cases where the parents' reason for keeping the child out of school does not seem valid.**

Truancy: By law, students have the responsibility to attend school 180 days each school year. Teachers are responsible to inform the parents and the office of children's absences. Parents must ensure that students are present, unless illness or emergencies are of such severity as to prevent attendance. Parents need to call the school by 10:00AM to report child's absence. Teachers will call home after the 3rd continuous absence and the school office, may call after the 6th continuous absence.

Sickness: If your child visits the school office because he is not feeling well. Depending on the condition, we will contact you. If your child has a fever or has obvious signs of being sick, we will contact you immediately so that your child may be picked-up.

Medications: Students are not permitted to carry or distribute any prescription or non-prescription drugs or treatments, including aspirin, on the learning center grounds or at any learning center function. The administering of medicine to a student outside the doctor's office or a health institution is a parental responsibility and should not be delegated to learning center personnel except under unusual circumstances. Parents should ask their physicians if it is possible to prescribe medication so it can be administered at home. Only when necessary will the learning center allow the administration of medication on campus, and only under the following guidelines:

1. An "Authorization for Medication" form must be completed and submitted by a parent or legal guardian of the student. The name of the medication and dosage should be indicated on the form.
2. Medications to be taken by students must be personally brought by the parent or legal guardian to the Learning center Office. Medications to be dispensed at learning center must be labeled with the child's name and the exact dosage. The name and telephone number of the physician should also be on the label. Students may not bring the medication to learning center alone.
3. While the school will monitor a student taking the medication, the school will not remind students to come and take their medication.

****No aerosol, no injections, or any medicine used by any type of equipment are allowed. ****

Exceptions to this policy may also be made for the use, supply and administration of an epinephrine auto-injection (Epipen) and, as authorized by the Learning Center office. In particular circumstances, the school may agree to administer medication or otherwise provide health care interventions that go beyond a minor adjustment for a particular student. In those cases, Parents hereby release the school, the Diocese, and their corporate members, officers, employees, affiliates, and agents from any claims or liabilities that allegedly arise from or are related to the provisions of those health care interventions that are beyond minor adjustments.

Immunizations: The Archdiocese of Miami requires that prior to attendance in school, each student present or have on file with the school a certificate of immunization for the prevention of those communicable diseases for which immunization is required by the Department of Health. A completed Florida Certificate of Immunization (Form DH 680) is required to document the administration of prescribed immunization doses. An exemption from immunization requirements is permissible only with a physician's certification as to the need for either a temporary or permanent medical exemption. An exemption from immunization requirements is not permissible for religious, philosophical, personal, or other reasons.

Allergies & Special Medical or Dietary Needs: Please make sure you **inform the office and your child's teacher** of any allergies, medical condition, dietary needs or any areas of concern your child may have and also make sure you write it on the enrollment application so that we can take the necessary precautions to protect his or her health

*All snack provided for the Learning Center may contain eggs, wheat, soy, almonds, coconuts, peanuts, tree nuts, pecans and milk. Processed by equipment that also processes eggs, milk, almonds, coconuts, peanuts, tree nuts and pecans.

Communicable Diseases: Parents will be informed of any communicable disease discovered at school to which their child may have been exposed. Students, who are absent due to a communicable disease, must present a doctor's note and medical clearance before returning to school.

Accidents Parents/Guardians: Will be notified immediately in case of sudden illness or accident. In case of minor accidents (scratches and bruises), the school will inform the parents by sending a note home at the end of the school day. We report all known/self-reported accidents.

Biting: Although biting is a normal behavior that sometimes occurs with learning centers, it is always taken seriously. A child may bite when he gets angry, frustrated or lacks language skills the necessary to express him or herself. When biting occurs at the learning center, it is handled calmly but seriously. Age appropriate language is used to discuss what happened, how it felt and what else the child could have done. Children are encouraged to resolve the problem together. The underlying message when biting occurs is that **BITING HURTS! WE DO NOT BITE ANYONE! WE ONLY USE OUR MOUTH FOR TALKING AND EATING!** The child will be taken to the office and the offices personnel will talk to both children involved in the incident and reinforce the message about biting, “log” the incident, as well as complete the accident/incident report. The office will contact the parent if a child continues to bite, and parents will be asked to pick their child up immediately, keep their child home for a day, or possibly remove the child from the program. Every child’s safety must be considered. Please talk to your child at home and reinforce our message about biting.

Tardiness: **Pre-K-4 students must be in their desk by 8:00AM**, any child arriving in class after that time is considered tardy. **Students from 13 Months to Pre-K-3 must be in their class by 8:30AM at which time the classroom doors will be locked.** If the problem continues, parents will be contacted by the Assistant Director for a conference. Families with students who are consistently late for school will be called for a conference with the Director. **PLEASE GET YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL ON TIME!!!**

If for any reason you are running late and cannot pick up your child at our scheduled closing time please call the office immediately to inform us. **There will be a charge of \$15.00 if you pick up child after 6:00pm and an additional charge of \$1.00 per minute after the first minute.** The first time you pick up your child late the charge will be waived. After the first time there will be no exceptions. Families with children who are consistently late will be called for a conference.

Perfect Attendance: A student must be in attendance for a full day of school each day of the grading period in order to receive recognition for perfect attendance.

Cancellation of School or Class: In case of emergencies and natural disaster, the school will follow procedures devised by the Archdiocese of Miami/Miami-Dade County Public Schools. Parents are to listen to AM, FM & TV Emergency Broadcast Warning for special interactions.

Arrival & Dismissal Procedures: Our main concern is the safety of the children, and the expediency with which we carry out morning drop-off and afternoon dismissal. Safety is extremely important.

Students will be released only to those persons who are listed on the registration or emergency forms. This documentation must be kept current and any changes or special permissions must be made in writing by the parent or guardian. In the event that your child will be leaving with another parent, the office must receive written authorization in advance.

Any situations involving court orders and legal documentation requires an official copy to be placed in your child’s file.

The emergency dismissal of a child will be granted for valid reasons only. Parents are urged to set-up appointments for after school hours and to keep the emergency dismissal to a minimum. If there is a need to be dismissed during the school day, a note from the parents must be sent to the office. No child will be allowed to leave school without a written permission from a parent or guardian. This is for your child’s protection. The note should contain the date, time of expected early

dismissal, name of person picking up the child, reason the child is leaving and the signature of the parent/guardian.

No child will be allowed to go home with another family unless arrangements have been previously made.

Dismissal Schedule: VPK at 11:00 AM by the Learning Center Office
Half Day Program at 12:30 PM by the Learning Center Office
Full Day Program from 2:30 PM to 6:00 PM by the Learning Center Office

Lunch & Snacks: Students will be bringing Snacks and Lunch from home.

Fire Drills: In an emergency, all effort is directed toward getting the students out of the building safely. Teachers are instructed and routes will be posted in each classroom. Regular monthly fire drill practices will be done.

Lock Down Procedures: When potentially hazardous conditions exist in the vicinity of the learning center or on the learning center property, the learning center may go into lock down procedure. All doors will be locked and no one will be allowed in or out of the learning center. We may also follow lock down procedure when instituted and instructed by the Archdiocese of Miami/Miami-Dade County Public Learning center, whether the potential may or may not be directed towards our immediate learning center. We ask that everyone please follow the instructions being given at the moment, and keep in mind that these procedures are followed for the safety of your children.

Campus Ministry/Spiritual Program: A religious atmosphere is maintained and fostered throughout the school, and in accordance with the school philosophy, religion receives special attention. The foundation of our school is built on our personal relationship with Our Lord Jesus Christ. Emphasis is placed on instruction in the classroom, a prayer life, participation in Mass.

The program includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. At 8:30 AM each school day, there is a school-wide prayer and pledge of allegiance.
2. School Masses are held weekly and monthly students are required to wear their official uniform to Mass.
3. During the school year, various religious programs including class Mass, Stations of the Cross, Respect Life Presentations, and special guest speakers from the community may supplement the Theology Program.

All students will receive ashes on Ash Wednesday.

Retreats: All families are encouraged to attend one retreat per year. This is to help the spiritual growth of the parents. We are providing the opportunity for each child to develop a personal relationship with Christ at our learning Center. We pray each one of the parents also take the opportunity to establish a relationship with Christ or strengthen their existing one.

Parish Participation: A family in this category would be one who is practicing good stewardship at the parish. Since that involves the giving of one's time, talent, and treasure, benchmarks need to be established. Mass attendance will be monitored and students attending mass twice a month will receive a Good Steward Award. 13 Months & Pre-k 2 twice a year. Pre-K 3 & Pre-k 4 after each 4th grading period.

Sunday Parish Liturgies: Students and parent/guardians are expected to maintain a "regular" weekly attendance at Sunday Liturgies. Mass attendance is considered a pre-requisite to maintain an active in-parish status.

Academic Calendar: The 2020-2021 school year will begin August 19, 2020 and end on June 8th, 2021. All Holidays, Teacher-In-service days will be announced on the Yearly and Monthly Calendars.

Progress Report: are issued four times a year for Pre-K 3 and Pre-K 4. Pre-K 4 has three assessments throughout the school year. 13 Months and Pre-K 2 children will be given two progress reports during the school year. We will evaluate the child and if no progress is made during the first period parents will be asked to come in for a conference.

Grading Scale/Achievement Code: A five-point scale will be used to average letter grades.

Pre-K 3 & Pre-K 4	
4=Advanced	(Student exceeds expectation for understanding concepts and skills)
3=Proficient	(Student consistently demonstrates an understanding of concepts and skills)
2=Developing	(Student is developing an understanding of concepts and skills)
1=Developing	(Student does not demonstrate an understanding of concepts and skills)
N/A Not Assessed	(Not assessed this reporting period)

Note: The goal is for all students to reach a level 3 by the end of the year.

Home-learning: Is an essential part of a good school program. Teachers will assign home-learning that is relevant, and not simply busy work. It should reinforce the skills that were learned in class. Teachers will not ask children to complete assignments on material not taught, unless it is a reading/research in preparation for an upcoming class. It encourages a sense of responsibility and initiative for student's own progress. Home-learning also provides an opportunity for parents to participate in the child's scholastic growth.

Home-learning is assigned for PreK-3 & PreK-4 every day. At times, projects may have to be done on the weekend. If the child is not bringing home-learning assignments to do at home, parents are requested to check with the teacher. An important reminder to parents is to encourage the child to seek help when s/he needs it, however the home-learning assignments are the child's responsibility.

Section 504 – Policy Statement: Mother of Christ Catholic School complies with the mandate of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act which prohibits discrimination of the basis of disability in certain programs and activities. Pursuant to the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act, Mother of Christ Catholic School will make those minor adjustments that can accommodate students with disabilities to the school's educational programs and activities.

The school's designated 504 Coordinator and contact information are as follows: Marcey Ayers (305) 762-1019. Parents with questions regarding the school's disability accommodations or related items should contact the 504 Coordinator.

Parents may file a grievance as to any decisions related to a disability accommodation and request an internal hearing and review by sending a written notice addressed as follows:

Donald Edwards, Ed. D
Archdiocese of Miami
Associate Superintendent of Schools
9401 South Biscayne Boulevard
Miami Shores, Fl. 33138

The internal hearing and review will seek the prompt and equitable resolution of disability discrimination complaints

Academic Deficiency Policy/Progress Reports

Weekly Progress Report: If your child is having academic or behavior problems, your child may be placed on a weekly progress report.

Student Evaluation: Will be conducted by the teacher who will use objective tests, home-learning, and classroom participation. Each teacher will have available for the parents the requirements and standards for his/her class during Parent Orientation Night.

Parent Portal: This website-based program gives parents access to their child's grades and other vital information. Teachers may post their classroom policies, projects, news and upcoming events. Only for Pre-K 3 and Pre-K 4 students.

Academic Probation Policy

Private Tutoring, Coaching or Lessons Except as specifically noted in this Handbook, the school does not sponsor, oversee, or otherwise provide private tutoring, coaching, therapy or other similar private lessons or services. Parents who engage school staff members for the provision of these services do so at their own risk and expense and are hereby advised that such services are outside the scope of the staff member's employment with the school. **Parents, by executing the acknowledgment of receipt of this Handbook HEREBY RELEASE the school, the Archdiocese, and their corporate members, officers, employees, affiliates, and agents from any claims or liabilities that allegedly arise from or are related to the provision of private tutoring, coaching, therapy or other similar private lessons or services, regardless of where they may occur.**

Parent-Teacher Conferences: MOC strongly recommends and encourages open communication between teachers and parents. It is our belief that the job of educating a child can only be accomplished by parents and teachers working together.

Parent-Teacher conferences and good communication are a vital part of the educational process. Teachers share with parents the privilege and obligation of educating their children, therefore, every effort should be made for parents or guardians to keep informed about school programs, student progress, and special student activities.

Faculty members are always eager to discuss pupil progress with parents and guardians. Teachers, however, will be available for conferences at other times as well. MOC appreciates the interest parents show in their children's progress. It is, however, necessary that a conference be scheduled beforehand. Parents may do so by sending a request note, sending an email, or calling the school to schedule a conference. "**Instant Conferences**" are NOT permitted. Visitors are required to report to the office at all times.

Parents' phone calls and e-mails are to be responded promptly (within 24 hours). Teachers need to document all conferences with parents. This documentation should have the date, time, persons present, subjects discussed and outcome. If there are follow-ups to be done, documentation is required as well.

In keeping with the Church's principle of subsidiary policy, all problems should be solved at the lowest level whenever possible. It is then advised that persons having a problem with another individual go directly to that individual before going to that person's supervisor. The Principal will hear parents' complaints about teachers only after the problems have been voiced to the teachers and to the Assistant Director.

Conduct: Students and Parents are expected to behave consistent with the mission, philosophy and spirit of the school and the moral teachings of the Catholic faith as determined by the Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Miami. Because the school cannot anticipate all conduct that violates this policy, it reserves the right to take any form of (1) student disciplinary action, including expulsion, and/or (2) restrictions against any behavior that violates this policy, even if not specifically stated in this handbook.

School Discipline Procedure: Each teacher develops their classroom discipline. The parents (during parent orientation) and students (during the first week of class) are duly informed of the rules and consequences for undesirable behavior. In the teacher's disciplinary steps there will be recommendations for parent information.

The Principal retains the right to make exceptions to the above stated procedures. The Principal will be the final resource in all disciplinary situations and may waive or accelerate any disciplinary rule for just cause at her discretion.

Public Display of Affection: The Catholic school promotes friendship, charity, kindness, love and respect for self and others. However, inappropriate displays of affection, such as kissing or embracing which connote more than simple friendship, are not permitted in school, at school dances, or at any school event. Those who violate these rules may be subject to disciplinary measures, including detention, suspension or expulsion. The administration reserves the right to determine what is, or is not, appropriate behavior in a Catholic school.

Stealing/Vandalism: Students will respect the properties of self and others. Unauthorized possession of another's property without the owner's consent is stealing. Willful/malicious destruction and/or damage of another one's property are considered vandalism. It will not be tolerated and warrants a suspension.

Inappropriate Language: Students will respect and obey teachers and all school personnel at all times. Verbal disrespect or the use of vulgar, profane language will not be tolerated. School rules are to be followed for the protection of all.

Smoking/Vaping: It is a violation of Florida law for any minor to knowingly possess any tobacco product, nicotine product, or nicotine dispensing device. In addition, the use of tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, and vaping carry known health risks that can be very serious. The use of any tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, and/or vaping in any form is prohibited on school property and at any school events. Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary consequences which may include expulsion from school.

Harassment and Discrimination: The school is committed to providing an environment that is free of discrimination and harassment. In keeping with this commitment, the school will not tolerate harassment or discrimination on the basis of a person's protected status, such as gender, color, race, ancestry, national origin, age, physical disability, mental condition, marital status, veteran status, citizenship status. All employees, faculty members and students are protected under this policy. In addition, this policy applies to all conduct occurring on school grounds, at assignments outside the school, or at school-sponsored events. All students are responsible for helping to assure that any harassment or discrimination is reported. If a student witnesses or learns of any conduct that violates this policy, the student must immediately report the incident to his/her principal. If, however, the principal is the individual who is believed to have engaged in the inappropriate conduct, the student should notify the Superintendent of Schools of the Archdiocese of Miami. If an investigation reveals that inappropriate conduct has occurred, the school will take corrective action based on the circumstances.

Anti-Bullying Policy: The school is committed to promoting a safe, healthy, caring, and respectful learning environment for all of its students. As such, bullying is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Therefore, this policy prohibits any unwelcome verbal or written conduct or gestures directed at a student by another student that has the effect of:

- (1) physically, emotionally, or mentally harming a student;
- (2) damaging, extorting or taking a student's personal property;
- (3) placing a student in reasonable fear of emotional or mental harm;
- (4) placing a student in reasonable fear of damage to or loss of personal property; or
- (5) creating an intimidating or hostile environment that substantially interferes with a student's educational opportunities or the Catholic mission of the school.

1. Definition

- a. **Bullying** is the willful and repeated harm inflicted upon another individual which may involve but is not limited to: teasing, name-calling, slurs, rumors, jokes, false accusations, intimidation, stalking, innuendos, demeaning comments, pranks, social isolation, gestures, cyber-bullying or other verbal or written conduct. Cyber-bullying includes the following misuses of digital technology: teasing, intimidating, or making false accusations about another student by way of any technological tool, such as sending or posting inappropriate email messages, instant messages, text messages, digital images or website postings (including blogs and social network sites). Bullying reflects a pattern of behavior, not a single isolated incident.
- b. This definition includes students who either directly engage in an act of bullying or who, by their behavior, support another student's act of bullying.

2. Scope

- a. This policy prohibits bullying that occurs either:
 - i. on school premises before, during, or after school hours;
 - ii. on any bus or vehicle as part of any school activity; or
 - iii. during any school function, extracurricular activity or other school-sponsored event or activity.

3. Reporting Complaints

- a. Each student and parent has a duty to report any bullying to the school immediately. If a student experiences (or a parent witnesses or learns of) any incident of bullying, the incident must be promptly reported to the school principal. The principal will provide the student/parent with the Bullying Complaint Report Form which must be completed, dated and signed by the complaining party so that the school may initiate further inquiry, when appropriate.

4. Disciplinary Action

- a. Any student found to have violated this policy may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, which may include: temporary removal from the classroom, loss of privileges, detention, counseling, parent conference, suspension, expulsion, and/or notification to appropriate authorities. The disciplinary action may be unique to the

individual incident and may vary in method and severity based on the principal's discretion.

False reports or accusations of bullying also constitute a violation of this policy and may subject the offending party to appropriate remedial action which may include, but is not limited to, the assessment of costs incurred by the School in its investigation and review of any reports deemed to have been made in bad faith.

Bullying/Harassment Investigation Disclosures: While the School generally prohibits the nonconsensual disclosure of information contained in educational records, limited exceptions apply including for the disclosure to victims of bullying or harassment when disciplinary sanctions or other measures relate directly to the victim. Parents hereby consent and acknowledge that the School may, pursuant to this exception, disclose to the victims of harassment or bullying, and to their parents, any information related to disciplinary sanctions and/or other measures that relate to the harassment and/or bullying at issue regardless of whether the matters disclosed are part of an educational record.

Threats of Violence: The disciplinary consequences for a student whose verbal or written comments, including email messages, that threaten serious bodily harm to another student or member of the faculty or staff or destruction of property, may include, but not be limited to:

1. Immediate suspension from the school.
2. Treatment or consultation by a psychologist or psychiatrist at the parents' expense and/or by the school counselor, both of whom may be asked to submit a written evaluation. If it is determined that the child was serious about the threat and has the capacity to carry it out, the child may be expelled from the school. If it is determined that the child did not seriously intend to do harm to others, the child may be allowed to return to the school, at the discretion of the school principal.
3. If allowed to return to school, the child may be placed on probation with an indication that, should a similar threat occur, the child will be expelled from school.
4. The school should inform the Department of Schools of these cases. The school may submit an informational report to the police.

Weapons Policy: Weapons are not permitted anywhere on school grounds or at any school activity. Any student who brings a weapon to any school activity, who is in possession of a weapon, or who threatens others with a weapon may be expelled from the school. Any item used to threaten or cause bodily harm may be considered a weapon.

Drug and Alcohol Policy: The use or possession of illegal drugs or illegal mood-altering substances, alcoholic beverages, drug-related paraphernalia, or the abuse of prescription or over-the-counter drugs by any student on school property or while attending or participating in any school-sponsored activity or at any time the student is wearing a school uniform is forbidden. Transgression of this rule will result in disciplinary action, which may include expulsion from the school, even for a first offense.

Any student selling drugs on school property or at school functions may be immediately expelled.

The school is committed to a drug-free environment. This commitment may, under some circumstances, prompt a need for testing of students for evidence of substance abuse. It may also involve the use of drug dogs and other methods in the discretion of the school administration which seek to deter the use and/or distribution of illegal drugs or alcohol.

If a student exhibits the symptoms, or is suspected of substance abuse, the school may require that the student undergo substance abuse testing at the parents' expense. If the results of the test suggest abuse (and the substance was not used on or brought to campus or a school-related activity), the school will normally use this information to help the student seek assistance. Refusal to participate in such a test may result in expulsion from the school.

At times, the school may choose to conduct random drug testing of the student body at the parents' expense.

A school may conduct random searches as set forth in this handbook.

Search and Seizure Policy: The principal and his/her designee has access to any lockers, handbags, electronic devices, cell phones, book bags, desks, cars or any other object that is brought onto the campus of the school or any school-sponsored event, and may remove or confiscate any object which is illegal or contrary to school policy.

Use of Cell Phones or Electronic Devices: Cellular phones, cameras, personal listening devices (iPods), video games, and all other toys are to be left home. The school is not responsible for the loss or damage of such. **Students are not allowed to bring these items to school.** These types of items will be returned directly to the parent the first time they are confiscated, thereafter the item will remain at the school until the end of the current school year. Cell phones are not permitted in afterschool activities.

Computer Use: The school may provide its administrators, faculty and students with access to computers and various information technology resources including email and Internet access in order to enhance the teaching and learning environment of the school and to improve the school's operations. Students must use these resources in a responsible, ethical, and legal manner in accordance with the mission of the school and Catholic teachings. Therefore, students must abide by the following general rules of conduct:

1. Respect and protect the privacy of others:
 - a. Use only assigned accounts and passwords;
 - b. Do not share assigned accounts or passwords with others;
 - c. Do not view, use or copy passwords, data or networks to which you are not authorized;
 - d. Do not share or distribute private information about yourself or others.
2. Respect and protect the integrity, availability, and security of all electronic resources:
 - a. Observe all network security practices;
 - b. Report security risks or violations to the school principal;
 - c. Do not vandalize, destroy or damage data, networks, hardware, computer systems or other resources;
 - d. Do not disrupt the operation of the network or create or place a virus on the network;
 - e. Conserve and protect these resources for other students and Internet users.
3. Respect and protect the intellectual property of others:

- a. Do not infringe on copyright laws including downloading or copying music, games or movies;
 - b. Do not install unlicensed or unapproved software;
 - c. Do not plagiarize.
4. Respect the principles of the Catholic school:
- a. Use only in ways that are kind and respectful;
 - b. Report threatening or discomfoting materials to the school principal;
 - c. Do not access, transmit, copy or create materials that violate the school's code of conduct (such as indecent, threatening, rude, discriminatory or harassing materials or messages);
 - d. Do not access, transmit, copy or create materials that are illegal (such as obscene, stolen, or illegally copied materials or messages);
 - e. Do not use the resources to further any other acts that are criminal or violate the school's code of conduct;
 - f. Do not use the resources for non-educational purposes such as visiting chat rooms, social websites or networks like My Space or Facebook;
 - g. Do not send spam, chain letters or other mass unsolicited mailings;
 - h. Do not buy, sell, advertise, or otherwise conduct business or political campaigning without prior written approval from the school's principal.
 - i. Do not engage in any form of cyberbullying.

Supervision and Monitoring: The school and its authorized personnel may monitor the use of information technology resources to help ensure that users are secure and in conformity with this policy. The school reserves the right to examine, use, and disclose any data found on the school's information networks or on any technological devices used by students on campus in order to further any administrative concern. It may also use this information in disciplinary actions and may furnish evidence of a crime to law enforcement.

Unacceptable Use of Outside Technology: The school expects students to use information technology (including, but not limited to, the Internet, email, instant messaging and text messaging) in a responsible and ethical fashion in compliance with all applicable laws and with Christian moral principles, both in and out of the school setting. Accordingly, students may not post, place, upload, share, or communicate any images, photographs, statements or inferences relating to or including profanity, vulgarity, indecency, illegal use of drugs, illegal use of alcohol or other illegal or illicit activities. Additionally, students may not use information technology for the purpose of defaming, threatening, teasing or harassing any other student, staff member, parent, faculty member, or other person. This includes, but is not limited to, communications on social networks such as Instagram, Twitter and Facebook. In addition, this rule applies to communications both during the school year and while students are on vacation or summer breaks. Students are responsible for all materials and communications made on personal websites and social networks and the materials and communications should be consistent with Christian moral principles, including any materials or communications posted on their sites by other individuals. Moreover, any unauthorized use of the

school's name (or common names associated with the school) or any likeness or image of the school or its employees or agents is strictly prohibited.

Sexting: The electronic transmission or receipt from one minor to another of any photograph or video that depicts nudity may constitute illegal sexting. Students engaged in sexting will be subject to serious disciplinary consequences which may include expulsion from school. In addition, the school administration may report instances of sexting to the Florida Department of Children and Families or local law enforcement for appropriate investigation as to violations of law.

Consent: Many technological devices used at school have the capacity to generate audio recordings, video recordings, photographs, and other similar reproductions of images, likenesses, and/or sounds. The use of any such recordings and reproductions is governed by school policy. Parental/guardian execution of this Handbook constitutes an express consent and waiver as to any such recordings and reproductions incidental to the use of any technological devices on school property or at school events.

Consequences for Violations: A violation of these rules may result in disciplinary action, including the loss of a student's privilege to use the school's information technology resources and any additional consequences at the principal's discretion including expulsion.

Dress Code: In order to maintain a wholesome image, the school will require that children wear their complete uniform, and no substitutions are made. Information about uniforms is sent to parents at the end of each school year in preparation for the upcoming year, and may also be obtained from the uniform company.

- Only solid navy-blue jackets/sweaters (no logos or writing of any sort except the school logo) will be permitted.
- Sneakers and PE uniforms are to be worn on PE Days only. Sneakers can be blue, black, gray, or white. Student will not be allowed to wear bright-colored sneakers that include, but are not limited to, aqua, red, yellow, green, purple, or pink. 13 Months to Pre-K-4 students only are encouraged to purchase sneakers and shoes with Velcro.
- Only MOC socks available at AA Uniform store will be permitted.
- The wearing of jewelry is discouraged. Only the following items will be accepted: One small chain with a small cross or Christian medal. (No rings, no watches, no bracelets)

Boys: Must wear their hair short (hair may not be lower than their eyebrow, may not touch their ears, and cannot touch their collar in the back). **No fad hairstyles or coloring (dyeing) permitted.** Boys will not be allowed to wear earrings.

Girls: Students are not allowed to wear make up, nail polish or artificial nails. Girls who have pierced ears will be allowed to wear one small pair of earrings. Hoops are discouraged for safety.

No fad hairstyles or coloring (dyeing) or highlighting permitted

Dress Code Violations: Children will receive a Uniform Violation Warning when they do not come to school with their proper uniform. You will have 2 days to correct the problem. After the 2 days it has not been corrected, the parents will have a meeting with the Director.

Dress Procedures for Denim Days and Other Special Days: Children who have paid to wear jeans for denim days, must wear their Crusaders t-shirt with denim pants. On other special days (St. Patrick's, Say No To Drugs, Earth Days, etc.), we will announce the color of shirt and blue jeans (no capris or shorts). Shorts, capris, jeggings, ripped or colorful jeans are **NOT allowed.** Please ensure

that your child does not wear inappropriate attire, since you will be called by the office to bring appropriate clothing for your child.

Sleeping Bag: Children enrolled in our full-day program will be given the nap-time package which include pillow, bed cover, sheets and carry bag. These items must be taken home every Friday to be washed and returned clean on Monday.

Change of Clothe: Parents are encouraged to provide a change of clothing for their children to keep on the premises in case of an accident.

Class Parties: to avoid possible spread of the COVID-19 virus there will be no visitor at the center until further notice.

School does not sponsor any outside of school parties. Invitations may not be handed out at school unless the entire class is invited.

Insurance: The Archdiocese of Miami requires mandatory school accident coverage insurance. The cost of this insurance is included in the school fee. School insurance covers sports activities but not transportation.

Transportation Arrangements: Parents hereby acknowledge and agree that the school does not provide or arrange for student transportation to or from school, except as specifically set forth in writing by the school. Student transportation to and from school each day is a parental responsibility. The school does not authorize or endorse any private transportation arrangements. In limited and documented circumstances, a parent may engage a commercial transportation company to transport a student from school; however, any such engagement requires the written authorization of the school and the execution of school documents allowing for such an arrangement.

Learning Center Sponsored Events The school does not sponsor, oversee, or in any way control parties or social functions at private residences. School-sanctioned events, including all field trips, excursions, or parties, are specifically identified in this Handbook or are identified in the school calendar and/or written notices generated and distributed by the school.

Parents, by executing the acknowledgment of receipt of this Handbook, HEREBY RELEASE the school, the Archdiocese of Miami, and their corporate members, officers, employees, affiliates, and agents, from any claims or liabilities that allegedly arise from or are related to attendance at parties or social functions at private residences or from participation/attendance at events not identified in the school calendar or in written notices from the school, including field trips, excursions, or parties.

Students engaged in conduct that is contrary to the mission and philosophy of the school may be subject to disciplinary action regardless of whether the conduct occurred at a school-sponsored function.

Field Trips: to avoid possible spread of the COVID-19 virus there will be no visitor at the center until further notice.

Fundraising: No student may solicit funds in the school's name unless such solicitation has been authorized in writing by the principal.

Lost and Found: There will be a LOST AND FOUND area in the Reception Area, and parents are encouraged to check it once in a while. Found articles will be kept in the Lost and Found until the last Friday of each month, at which time the area will be completely cleaned and all articles will be donated to a charity. Misplaced books will be returned to the classroom teacher, when properly identified. Toys and jewelry should be left home. The school is not responsible for personal

valuables brought to school. Make sure to label all of your child's items, especially all of their clothing (uniform and outerwear), it facilitates return. Teachers will not be responsible for items left in their classrooms. Please do not call the office for an employee to search for an item in the lost and found, please visit the office personally.

Child Protective Investigations: Florida law provides that any person who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver or other person responsible for the child's welfare must report such knowledge to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). The school will cooperate with all child protective investigations by DCF or the local law enforcement agency. Reports should be made to Florida's Department of Children and Families by calling the Abuse Hotline at: 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873).

Child protective investigations by DCF or local law enforcement agencies sometimes include interviews of students at school and may occur without advance notice. When it is reasonably possible, the school will seek to notify the parents that their child has been asked to participate in a child protective investigation. The school may also request the presence of a school staff member during investigative interviews on school property. However, please note that, under Florida law, DCF and local law enforcement have the discretion to conduct unannounced interviews and to disallow school staff member's presence during these interviews.

Notification of Rights under FERPA: The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students should complete the Request for Release of Student Records and submit it to the School principal (or appropriate school official) identifying the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the School to amend a record should write the School principal (or appropriate school official), clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person or company with whom the School has contracted as its agent to provide a service instead of using its own employees or officials

(such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-5920

Student Official Records: Students' official records (academic transcripts; academic testing; health records, and court orders) are kept in the school office in a folder. Only contents of the official record folder will be forwarded to another school. The Principal and parents reserve the right to reverse this decision if other records are to benefit the child. Mutual consent is necessary

Release of Students Records: The school substantially follows the guidelines set forth in the Buckley Amendment pertaining to release of student's records.

Ethics in Education Policy: Every school that accepts scholarship students under the John McKay Scholarship for Students with disabilities (Fla. Stat 1002.39) or the Corporate Income Tax Credit Scholarship Program (Fla. Stat. 220.187) must comply with the terms of Florida's Ethics in Education Act. Among other requirements, every regulated school will adopt a Code of Ethics for Instructional Personnel and School Administrators and will ensure that all instructional personnel and school administrators receive training on the Code and its reporting requirements. In addition, every regulated school will promptly post its Code of Ethics on its campus and on its website.

School Counselor: The school has a Licensed Mental Health Counselor on staff. Please be advised that anything that your child discusses with the counselor may be shared with the Administration as deemed necessary by the Counselor, and will be kept private among the related parties. We welcome parents to discuss issues that may arise with the counselor, and invite your child to visit with her. You may recommend to your child to visit with the counselor, but please keep in mind that recommendations may also come from your child's teacher and/or the Administration. An authorization must be on file in order for your child to visit with the counselor. Please be aware that any incidents of suspected child abuse will be reported to the proper authorities.

The policy of the Archdiocese of Miami requires that MOC administration, faculty and staff report all cases of suspected child abuse. If the complaint received is not allegedly caused by the action of the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the child, the parent or guardian will be notified by the school administration.

Testifying in Divorce or Custody Proceedings: The Catholic Church recognizes marriage as a Sacrament. In the Union of Christian spouses, the sacrament of Matrimony celebrates the relationship of Christ to the Church. Therefore, the school strongly supports the sacrament of matrimony as the foundation of family life and of the domestic Church. In recognition of the importance of the matrimonial sacrament to the Catholic faith, parents agree not to compel the attendance, testimony, or deposition of any school or church employee in any divorce, custody, or other legal proceedings which may in any way involve the dissolution of marriage or the determination of parental/custody rights.

In the event that a parent or legal guardian breaches this policy, any school or church personnel who are required to attend legal proceedings may be represented by an attorney. In addition, any and all legal fees and costs incurred by the school will be charged and become the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian.

Non-Custodial Parent: MOC will substantially abide by the provision of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, the school will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the academic records and to other school-related information regarding the child. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order.

Use of Photos: The school reserves the right to use student or parent photos in any school or Archdiocesan publication including but not limited to print publications, videos, or websites including Facebook, Twitter and other social media websites. Any parent who does not want his or her child's picture or video to be used accordingly must notify the school's principal in writing prior to the beginning of the school year. **By executing this acknowledgement of receipt of this Handbook, Parents HEREBY CONSENT, authorize and grant permission to the school, the Archdiocese of Miami, and their agents, employees or duly authorized representatives to photograph or videotape students and parents and CONSENT to their publication for any purpose deemed proper by the school, including but not limited to, use on the internet.**

Additionally, Parents, by executing this acknowledgement of receipt of this Handbook, HEREBY RELEASE the school, the Archdiocese of Miami, and their corporate members, officers, employees, and agents, from any claims or liabilities that allegedly arise from or are related to the use of student or parent photos.

Electronic Acknowledgments: Periodically, the school may require that parents or guardians make electronic acknowledgments confirming the receipt and/or acceptance of various policies, procedures, notices, releases or updates. Any time a parent/guardian makes an electronic acknowledgment by clicking "submit" or "accept" on an electronic document, that individual is agreeing that he/she has read, understood, and agrees to be bound by the contents of the electronic document. Electronic acknowledgments and signatures are valid and binding and may serve as consent to the contents of any electronic communication. Parents and guardians are responsible for reviewing the contents of any electronic document prior to making any electronic acknowledgments. In addition, **Parents/Guardians, by executing the acknowledgement of receipt of this Handbook, HEREBY AGREE to receive and be bound by electronic acknowledgments.**

PRINCIPAL'S RIGHT TO AMEND THE HANDBOOK

The Principal has the right to amend this Handbook. Parents and teachers will be promptly notified if changes are made via memo or e-mail from principal.

Rita Marti, M.S.,
Principal 2019-2020



Mother of Christ Catholic School Parent-Student Handbook Acknowledgement Form

I, as Parent or Legal Guardian, acknowledge that I have read the entire contents of the Parent-Student Handbook and understand the consequences of any violations of the rules and policies of the school.

I agree to cooperate with the school in the interpretation and enforcement of the policies outlined in the Parent-Student Handbook. I also understand that the school has the ultimate authority over the administration of the school and the interpretation of the school's rules and policies. Moreover, I further understand that all of the school's policies whether written or verbal are only guidelines and are subject to change at the sole discretion of the school with or without notice.

I also hereby acknowledge that I have read and agree to the terms of the **RELEASES** outlined in the School-Sponsored Events Policy, the Participation in School Athletics or Organizations Policy, and the Use of Photos Policy.

Attendance at school and participation in school activities pose some risks including the transmission of COVID-19. Although the school has taken various measures to reduce the risks of transmission, the possibility of infection from COVID-19 or other communicable diseases is nonetheless present. Parents expressly assume such risks by allowing their children to attend school and to participate in school activities and/or by coming onto the school campus and attending school activities themselves.

***VPK Students: Students have the right to transfer from flexible innovative program to face to face delivery model when desired.**

VPK parents are able to withdraw and to transfer to another VPK program if they desire to do so.

(Print Parent/Legal Guardian Name)

(Date)

(Signature Parent/Legal Guardian)

(Print Student Name)

(Grade)

