

Catholic Academy of Niagara Falls

School Handbook

2024-2025

MISSION STATEMENT

Catholic Academy of Niagara Falls is a faith-building community of staff and families dedicated to providing a faith-based education, while fostering spirituality and academic excellence in a Christian community.

PHILOSOPHY

We offer a solid foundation of academics and Christian values. We strive to educate our students in an atmosphere of love and respect. Outside of the home and family, the greatest positive influence on children is their school. Our school provides a unique and special environment for children during their formative and impressionable years. The educational environment emphasizes moral values and growth, both spiritually and intellectually. Students are guided in their development as individuals, encouraged to attain confidence to make decisions, assisted in acquiring a sense of responsibility for their society and helped to develop pride in their physical well being. The Catholic school is part of a larger faith community - all of who have the mission to assist the Church in proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ through excellence in educational programs and service to society. We believe that making a difference through Catholic education means working for the greater glory of God.

We believe it is our responsibility to assist families in the education and growth of their children academically, spiritually, emotionally, socially, and physically. Our approach to education is to empower each child to make responsible and appropriate decisions, perform to the best of their ability in all endeavors, and gain the confidence and knowledge for success in the next stage of their education.

OUR HISTORY

Catholic Academy of Niagara Falls is the only Catholic school in the City of Niagara Falls. Our school was created in 2009 from a merger of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Prince of Peace Schools. Sixth grade was added in September 2012 and Seventh & Eighth grades in 2018. In the tradition of Holy Trinity, Our Lady of Lebanon, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Our Lady of the Rosary, Prince of Peace, Sacred Heart, St. John de LaSalle, St. Joseph, St. Mary of the Cataract, St. Stanislaus and St. Teresa, we continue to give students an excellent academic education as well as enhance that education with moral and religious development. We prepare our students to take their place in society as leaders who will demonstrate openness and respect for each person's uniqueness.

POLICY OF ADMISSION AND REMOVAL

The mission of Catholic Academy is an extension of the overall evangelical mission of the Catholic Church. All parishioner families and non-parishioner families are welcomed. While we respect the religious views of others, full participation in the religious education of the school, including Catholic prayer and religious services, is required of all students regardless of faith.

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Buffalo shall not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, national or ethnic origin, age (in accordance with the law), and physical or learning disability if, with reasonable effort on the part of the school, the accommodations can be met.

Proper school records, all completed enrollment papers, and fees are necessary for admittance into our school. New students and students transferring from another school will be placed at the instructional level that allows them to experience success. A meeting with the principal, parents, and student will take place before a student is accepted. New and transfer students are on probation for a period of 10 weeks, after which it will be determined by the administration if Catholic Academy is a good fit for the transfer student.

With respect to our Pre-K program, all children who are 3 and 4 years old by December 1st are entitled to enter the Pre-K program. All children who are 5 years old by December 1st are entitled to enter Kindergarten. All children must be fully potty trained.

Inability or unwillingness to meet the following academic and discipline standards is grounds for dismissal from Catholic Academy of Niagara Falls: attendance policies, behavior, rules outlined in the school handbook, payment of fees and tuition according to the tuition agreement signed at the beginning of each school year.

ENROLLMENT AND TUITION INFORMATION

Enrollment for Catholic Academy of Niagara Falls students is done each year. The process begins at the beginning of January for current school families. In February registration opens to the public for new students. A non-refundable enrollment fee is due at the time of registration. All tuition must be current for registration to be valid.

Tuition is based on the recommendations of the Catholic Academy School Board. An enrollment information packet will be given each year with tuition and fundraising fees. In order to maintain a financially sound School, parents and guardians are required to honor the commitment to pay the tuition and fees that they agreed to with the enrollment of the child (ren).

ABSENCES/ATTENDANCE

When a student is unable to attend school, parents should call the school between 7:30 and 8:30 a.m. Parents should give the student's name, grade, and reason for the absence. Arrangements can be made with individual teachers to have work picked up or provided to the student upon his/her return. Students are responsible to have all work completed when they return to school following an absence.

Regular attendance is essential to a student's success in school. Most subjects are taught in sequence, requiring the understanding of each concept in the order of its presentation. Persistent absenteeism creates hardship for a student and is regarded as a very serious problem.

Schools within the Diocese of Buffalo Catholic Education System believe that student attendance in school increases student success. In order for each student to develop his or her personal talents, pursue academic quality, and foster responsibility and leadership, we encourage parental support in the educational success of children. Regular attendance at school is essential for student success. Subjects are taught in sequence and require the understanding of each concept in the order of its presentation. Therefore, students who miss 20 days of school and have not met periodically with school administration are in jeopardy of retention. Any student accumulating forty (40) or more unexcused absences within a full school year shall not be promoted. In the event of an extended, excused absence of four (4) weeks or more for medical reasons, the principal must inform the parents/guardians that specific arrangements must be made for the child's instruction at home or in the hospital, to the extent allowed by the child's health. At a conference with the school administration and team of teachers, alternative educational plans will be determined. It is the parent's responsibility to notify school administration of an attendance concern and to request such a conference.

AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

A variety of after school activities are provided. Parents are responsible for students' transportation. Students must be in good academic standing to qualify for participation as determined by the principal and team of teachers.

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

The possession, sale, or use of alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, or any other controlled substance in the school or on school property is strictly forbidden. If these items are found in the student's possession, it will indicate intent to use. The following procedures will be pursued in any incident related to drug and alcohol:

- Any student who is selling or providing drugs or alcohol to other students, is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, is detected using drugs or alcohol, or in possession of drugs or alcohol in school or at a school-sponsored event is liable for dismissal. Suspension will occur immediately. A conference with the student, parents or guardians, and principal will be arranged. The student will be placed on probation if not dismissed. In addition to recommending counseling, the principal will invoke suitable penalties and procedures to insure the terms of the probation.
- Any student who is in possession of drugs or alcohol paraphernalia in school or at a school sponsored event will be assigned suitable punishment by the principal. The parents or guardians will be notified of the incident and of the disciplinary action.

ANTI-BULLYING/HARASSMENT POLICY

Children learn best in a climate of acceptance, tolerance, and respect where bullying and harassment are not tolerated. Therefore, our school strives to create and maintain an atmosphere absent of threat in interactions with peers or adults.

Bullying behaviors may include words, actions, and/or body language that happen repeatedly or present a threat to physical or emotional safety due to an imbalance of strength, power, or numbers. It may take several forms: verbal, nonverbal, and/or physical. It refers to behavior that is usually or often repetitive, frequent, ordinarily not considered of a social nature, unwelcome, offensive, or fails to respect the rights and dignity of others.

Incidents of bullying/harassment will be addressed by the principal, or designee and a response initiated in a timely manner. The following steps of investigation will be taken:

- Individual discussions with the parents/guardians of the target(s) and the student(s) responsible for the behavior.
- Individual discussions with the target(s) and the student(s) responsible for the behavior.
- Discussions with direct witnesses or bystanders.
- Discussion with the supervising adult.
- Completion of an Incident Report. If required by diocesan policy, report the incident to the Department of Catholic Education. If required by law, report the incident to law enforcement.
- Follow up with the target within 48 hours of the report.
- The Incident Report, complete with plan of action and follow up summary, will be filed in each student's records.

If the investigation reveals that the complaint is valid, prompt attention and disciplinary action will be taken immediately. In the event the investigation reveals that a student has not engaged in any wrongful behavior, the principal will inform both parties of such. Reasonable measures will be taken to protect the confidentiality of the student who files a complaint and to protect the reputation of any student wrongfully charged in a complaint.

A plan of action will be age and incident-appropriate. Consequences of the behavior will be in accordance with the school's Discipline Policy and Acceptable Technology Use Policy (if technology was used in the incident).

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

At the beginning of the school year, parents are asked to inform the school of how children will be traveling to and from school (bus, car, walk). Any changes to this plan that may occur during the school year must be sent to the school office in writing. This includes daily circumstances as well as long-term arrangements.

ASSEMBLIES

Assemblies are planned periodically as special events on the school calendar. Some typical assembly themes include athletics, cultural presentations, and professional speakers. There is often a significant investment of time and money in preparation for an assembly program. Student attendance is a requirement and a privilege, not an option. Special attention to etiquette and good citizenship is expected of all students or visitors to our assemblies.

ATHLETIC COMPETITION

Athletic Competition is promoted as an extension of the school's physical education program. The intention is to teach and develop physical skills, mental discipline, sportsmanship, and the striving spirit necessary for successful living. Students are encouraged to participate regardless of their skill level or experience. Yearly medical clearance is necessary for a student to participate in any sports activity.

ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY

There are several areas of student activity which are considered in determining athletic eligibility. The basic academic requirements are: Students must be in good academic standing (receive a passing grade in each class during the preceding trimester or be working to potential), as determined by the administration and teachers. While a student is involved in competition, failing grades, which occur during mid-trimester grade report periods, will result in a temporary suspension of eligibility. Conduct will also be considered for athletic eligibility, as determined by the administration and teachers.

Players' promise:

You are expected to be LEADERS on and off the court. Coaches will be in constant communication with guardians and teachers to ensure players maintain this agreement.

- We promise to listen to and respect the coaches at all times. Ex. calling them Coach
- We promise to listen to and respect the referees at all times. Ex. calling them Ref, sir or ma'am
- We promise to always maintain sportsmanship as our #1 priority (practices and games).
- We promise to work hard in school. Guardians will be informed of your progress in School and can limit your participation if they feel it's needed.
- We promise to respect the opposing team (players, coaches and fans).
- We promise to not use profanity. Abusive language and/or cursing will NOT be tolerated.
- We promise to contact our coach beforehand if unable to attend a game or practice.
- We promise to encourage our teammates in a positive way, regardless of the circumstances.
- We understand if we have an unsportsmanlike event (including because of an interaction with an official) it will result in the immediate removal from the game/practice and may result in loss of playing time.
- We understand that repeated/severe unsportsmanlike events (this includes cursing) will result in the expulsion from the team.

Other responsibilities include:

- proper and respectful behavior in and out of school
- attendance at all practices unless previously excused by the coach
- maintenance and return of all uniforms, equipment, etc. at the end of the season
- completion of parent permission and medical forms
- adherence to all rules and regulations as stated by the coach
- payment of athletic fee

AWARDS

Students receive special recognition at the school through a variety of awards programs. These awards are intended to promote and recognize academic skills, athletic achievement, and various aspects of good citizenship. Teachers and parents are expected to promote these awards as an encouragement and an incentive towards special effort and achievement by the students. Recognition is given in areas of academics, sports, clubs, attendance, character development, and cultural achievements, etc.

BATHROOM BEHAVIOR

Bathroom visits will be made according to the policy of individual teachers. If a medical condition exists that requires a student to have extended bathroom privileges, parents must submit a written request to that effect, stating the condition and the frequency of lavatory visits needed.

The bathroom is not a gathering place. Misbehavior will not be tolerated. Students should use the lavatory quickly and quietly. Proper hygiene requires that students flush the toilet and wash their hands before exiting. Defacement or destruction of property will be dealt with severely.

BUS POLICIES

Students requiring transportation on a school bus must register with their respective public school district. The public school district determines all bus stops and routes. A student who moves mid-year may request bus transportation from the new district at the time of the move. Bus transportation is provided by individual school districts. As such, all students must abide by the rules and regulations of their respective school district. Infractions of bus rules will be brought to the attention of the parent. The school and/or the school district may impose consequences for poor bus conduct. Such consequences may include suspension and/or loss of privilege.

If you need to make changes or have questions please contact:

- Niagara Falls - (716) 286-4211
- Niagara Wheatfield - (716) 215-3300
- Grand Island - (716) 773-8890
- North Tonawanda - (716) 807-3568

CAFETERIA BEHAVIOR

The same general rules for behavior apply in the cafeteria as in the classroom. Students are to remain in line quietly and to keep hands to themselves. Students may leave their table only when excused. Good table manners are expected at all times. Lunch monitors are to be obeyed and treated with respect. A reasonable tone of voice is expected from all students. There is to be no running in the cafeteria.

CANCELLATION OF SCHOOL

Cancellation of school takes place only during circumstances such as extreme weather, equipment failure, or public crisis. The administrators are aware of the hardship which can be caused by an abrupt cancellation. Therefore, school will not be canceled unless a significant safety risk has been created by unusual circumstances. Catholic Academy of Niagara Falls follows the Niagara Falls Public Schools for school closings. You will receive a message, Robocall, and/or email for specifics on school closings. You can also check Facebook.

Every practical means is used to notify parents of a cancellation. In the unusual circumstance where school must be canceled during the school day, the administration will determine that all students have satisfactory transportation and supervision at their homes before releasing them from school. Parents are required to designate an alternate destination for their child in the event no one would be home. These persons could be the same as those designated for emergencies.

CELL PHONES

All cell phones will be collected by homeroom teachers in the morning as students arrive in their classrooms. They will be locked in a locker outside each respective homeroom or in the teacher's desk

inside the classroom. They are to be turned off and will be returned to the student at the end of the day. Any student who is found using a cell phone during the school day will have the phone taken, and a parent will be called to come and pick it up.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS/PHONE NUMBER/EMAIL

It is very important that every student maintain an up-to-date address, telephone number, and email address record at the school office. Any changes should be reported to the school immediately during the school year.

CHEATING

Cheating is a serious compromise of a student's integrity and will not be tolerated. If cheating is discovered, the student's work will be confiscated. A failing grade will be automatically recorded for the work, and parents will be notified.

CHILD ABUSE

All school personnel are MANDATED REPORTERS. Child Protective Services will be called when personnel deem necessary.

CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND THE CONTROL OF THE SCHOOL

In times of events beyond the school's control, i.e. pandemics, flooding, fires, tornadoes, etc. where a school's normal operations are impeded, temporarily or fully stopped during the school year, the school will continue to provide an instructional program using alternative methods that may include online learning or alternative school settings. In such events, it is understood that the school must continue to employ its staff to ensure instruction continues. Accordingly, tuition payments to the school must also continue to be paid throughout the year as per contractual agreement between the school and those who have made the financial commitment for those tuition payments.

CLASSROOM PARTIES

Classroom parties may be held to celebrate holidays such as Halloween, Christmas, and Valentine's Day.

CLASS SIZE

All classes will be closed at 20 students. When the cut-off number has been reached, a waiting list will begin. Certain circumstances may result in classes of more than 20 students. Parents will be notified when space is available.

CLIMATE

Catholic Academy of Niagara Falls is a community in which all are working together in a Christian endeavor and the environment reflects this endeavor through mutual respect. This environment is fostered in an atmosphere of openness, where the dignity and worth of the child and the sacredness of his/her personality is recognized. Discipline, tempered with gentleness, firmness, and fairness, is a vital element in the Catholic school. Self-discipline is inseparable from the art of living in a free society. It is important for students to develop good Christian formation and good decision-making skills. Students must be held responsible for the choices they make.

CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences occur for the first trimester report card. These conference times are very valuable to the overall education program. Some parents are hesitant about participating in conferences,

but teachers can do a much better job with students if they can share their understanding of the student directly with the parent. It is not necessary to wait for the regular conference time if a parent has a special concern. Parent conferences are encouraged and can be arranged at any time during the school year by appointment through the school office. **When a problem occurs, parents are asked to follow the following steps of communication: contact the teacher directly through email or a phone call to try to resolve the situation. If no resolution is reached, then contact the principal.** In addition to the report card, progress reports inform parents of teacher concerns. These reports are sent home with the students in Grades K-5 and mailed to the homes of students in Middle School.

CURRICULUM

At Catholic Academy of Niagara Falls, our instruction provides learning experiences which will develop the values, attitudes, knowledge, and skills necessary for the complete development of the student's personality. We follow the curriculum guidelines for the Diocese of Buffalo and New York State. High priority is given throughout the entire school program to the religious development of the students. The Diocesan Religion Curriculum is used in Religion classes.

Sacramental Directives: The Second Grade Class is involved in preparation for the reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The Third Grade Class is involved in preparation for the Sacrament of Eucharist. Parents/Guardians are required to attend the parent meeting and students are to attend the retreat. All preparation is done through Sister Joanne.

DISCIPLINE

Teachers have the authority and responsibility to maintain discipline in the classroom. School discipline policies will be established and consistently enforced. When a student is having a problem, the teacher may conference with the student, use classroom disciplinary procedures, notify the parent, conference with the parent, or refer the situation directly to the principal.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Discipline at Catholic Academy of Niagara Falls is designed to help students learn from their mistakes, give them room to grow and change, and ultimately become self-disciplined persons. The classroom teacher first handles discipline and depending on the issue/event may involve the Elementary or Middle School Discipline Coordinators along with the Principal. If a student displays uncooperative or disruptive behavior, additional steps will be taken. This is done on a case by case basis. Such steps may include an email home, phone call home, in school or at home suspension, or student being sent home.

DOCTOR AND DENTIST APPOINTMENTS

Parents are expected to make every effort to schedule doctor and dentist appointments for their children outside of school hours. If an appointment must occur during school hours, the student should bring a note stating the time and date of the appointment. The parent or appointed guardian must report to the office to sign for the release of the student. Students are expected to remain at school before and/or return after their appointment, not missing a whole day of school.

DRESS CODE

Wearing a uniform is part of the Catholic tradition and is an integral part of focusing the students' attention on education. Coming to school in uniform is an expectation. While CANF students are in uniform, they are representatives of our school. Because our students take pride in themselves and their school, we expect our students to represent themselves and their school in a positive manner.

CANF DRESS CODE 2024-2025

WHERE TO BUY: All uniforms must be purchased from Flynn and O'Hara - www.flynnohara.com.

BOYS - KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 8

SHORTS: Black Flynn & O'Hara walking shorts with a red polo shirt can be worn September-October and April-June. A black/brown belt must be worn with shorts. Sneakers are to be worn with this uniform only.

PANTS: Black twill pleated dress pants. A black/brown belt must be worn with pants.

SHIRTS: Red short/long sleeve polo with a CANF logo.

SWEATERS & FLEECE: Black V-neck monogrammed pull-over sweaters and the school crewneck red sweatshirt may be worn over a polo. Red fleece pullover with a school emblem may also be worn. **Other sweaters, hoodies, or jackets are not allowed.**

SOCKS: Black or white socks only.

SHOES: Dress shoes (black) are required. No Crocs, flip flops, sandals, open back shoes, or boots.

GIRLS

Kindergarten-Grade 3

SKORTS: Black Flynn & O'Hara twill skorts with a monogrammed red polo shirt can be worn September-October and April-June. Sneakers may be worn with this uniform only.

JUMPERS: Flynn & O'Hara knee length plaid jumper. Jumper should be no more than 2 inches above the knee.

PANTS: Black twill pants. **Black leggings or knit pants are NOT allowed.**

SHIRTS: Short/long sleeve white Peter Pan collar blouse with jumper or pants. Short/long sleeve monogrammed red polo shirt with pants.

SWEATERS/SWEATSHIRT/FLEECE: Black V-neck monogrammed pull-over sweaters, button down monogram sweaters, the school crewneck red sweatshirts, or the red fleece pullover with a school emblem may be worn over a jumper. **Other sweaters, hoodies, or jackets are not allowed.**

SOCKS: Black or white socks, knee socks, or tights only.

SHOES: Dress shoes (black) are required. No Crocs, sandals, flip flops, open back shoes, boots, or shoes with a heel over 2 inches are permitted.

GRADES 4-8

SKORTS: Black Flynn & O'Hara twill skorts with a monogrammed red polo shirt can be worn September-October and April-June. Sneakers may be worn with this uniform only.

SKIRTS: Flynn & O'Hara appropriate length plaid skirt. Skirt must be no more than 2 inches above the knee.

PANTS: Black twill pants. **Black legging or knit pants are NOT allowed.**

SHIRTS: White long/short sleeve oxford blouse with button down collar with skirt. Short/long sleeve white Peter Pan collar blouse or monogrammed red polo with pants.

SWEATERS/SWEATSHIRT/FLEECE: Black V-neck monogrammed pull-over sweaters, button down monogram sweaters, the school crewneck red sweatshirts, or the red fleece pullover with a school emblem may be worn. **Other sweaters, hoodies, or jackets are not allowed.**

SOCKS: Black or white socks, knee socks, or tights only.

SHOES: Dress shoes (black or brown) are required. No Crocs, sandals, flip flops, open back shoes, boots, or shoes with a heel over 2 inches are permitted.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION UNIFORM (K - 8)

SHIRTS: All PE red uniform shirts must have the school logo. Red sweatshirt with a school logo may also be worn over a gym shirt.

SHORTS: Solid black athletic shorts. Spandex shorts are not allowed.

PANTS: Plain black sweatpants or athletic pants may be worn. **Leggings are not allowed.**

SNEAKERS: Sneakers need to be worn.

PLEASE NOTE: Students may wear school sport-related sweatshirts/hoodies and sport uniform shirts on game days only.

OTHER UNIFORM POLICIES

HAIRSTYLES: All students' hair should be worn neatly. **"Unnatural colored" and any extreme haircuts are not allowed.**

MAKEUP/BODY TATTOOS: No tattoos are allowed. K-5: Makeup may not be worn. 6-8: Natural make up is allowed.

DRESS DOWN GUIDELINES:

Students *may not* wear:

- Strapless or bare shoulder tops/dresses
- T-shirts with inappropriate writing/pictures
- Pajama pants/tops
- Skin tight dresses/skirts
- Crop tops or shirts with midriff showing

BIRTHDAY OBSERVATIONS

Students in Grades K through 8 may come to school dressed out-of-uniform on their birthday (if birthday falls on a weekend or holiday, the student may dress down the day before).

A student not following the dress code will be sent to the office. His/her parents will be called and notified to bring appropriate uniform attire.

****All uniform regulations and guidelines are subject to the discretion of the Principal.****

ELECTRONICS

Students are discouraged from bringing electronic devices to school.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

In case of an emergency, each student is required to have an updated registration packet on file at the school office that has the following current information:

- Names of parent(s) or guardian(s)
- Complete and up-to-date address
- Cell phone and parent(s) work phone
- Emergency phone number of friend or relative
- Medical alert information

EMERGENCY DRILLS

NYS Law requires a minimum of 8 fire drills and 4 lockdown drills each year. Detailed escape plans are posted inside each classroom. For fire drills, each class has an escape route to an outside area a safe distance from the building. Students are moved to these designated areas as quickly as possible. Safe, quiet, and orderly behavior is expected.

The following procedures are to be followed for all drills:

Drills will be held without warning. Drills will occur in a variety of situations (lunchtime, specials, etc) and weather. The building will be emptied of ALL PERSONS as quickly as possible and in an orderly manner.

In the case of severe trauma (death of a student, faculty member, etc), our School Counselor, the Buffalo Diocese (Catholic Charities) and/or the services of the Niagara Falls City School District (Counseling Department) will be sought for expert assistance.

In the event of an emergency which requires the building to be evacuated, the students will be relocated to the church or Grace Lutheran Church, depending on the severity of the reason.

EQUIPMENT USAGE

The school utilizes a variety of educational, safety, and maintenance equipment. Students should not use or handle equipment unless they have been specifically authorized to do so. When school equipment is damaged through negligence or unauthorized use, the party at fault is held financially responsible.

FAMILY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

The FSA is highly involved in improving the school. All parents are welcomed to become members of this association and are asked to participate actively. Meetings are scheduled in advance. Each year the FSA sponsors family events and fundraising projects. With the help of all parents, these events and projects can be very successful. Fundraisers allow the FSA to fund our programs and many other important activities at the school.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are scheduled by various classroom teachers and/or the administration of the school throughout the school year. The purpose of the trips should be educational and are designed to supplement the classroom curriculum and to introduce students to the resources of the community. Attendance on a field trip is considered a privilege and not a right. The school has the duty and right to impose conditions on students' participation. To be eligible for a field trip, students must adhere to all academic and behavior policies and any other behavior deemed unacceptable by the principal. Parents will receive notices of field trips well in advance of the scheduled date and will be asked to sign permission forms. Students will not be able to participate if these forms are not signed and returned. A fee will usually be requested from each student to help defray transportation or facility use costs. Parents may be asked to volunteer as chaperones for these occasions. The number of chaperones will be determined by the number of students, the age/development of the students, and guidelines for the Field Trip location. Attendance at a field trip is considered a school activity, which the students are expected to attend. All field trips begin and end at school.

FOOD SERVICES

Catholic Academy of Niagara Falls is committed to the nutritional welfare of children. Meals are analyzed for nutritional value in cooperation with the New York State Child Nutrition Program. Applications for free and reduced price meals are available year round. This year free breakfast and lunch are served daily. A basic meal is prepared each day along with optional menu choices. The cafeteria manager works in cooperation with New York State guidelines to determine the daily menu and prices for the school lunch program. The menu is sent home monthly. Students are encouraged to take advantage of this service. Milk and snacks can be purchased through the cafeteria. Forgotten lunches are not delivered to the cafeteria. These should be marked with the student's name and grade and left in the office. No glass containers are permitted in the cafeteria. In accordance with the New York State Non-Nutritional Food Bill, soda pop and food from fast food restaurants are not allowed.

If you have any questions, please contact Joanne Warmus through email cafeteria@catholicacademynf.org or by calling the school.

FUNDRAISING

The school and the Family School Association plan fundraisers. Fundraising families must participate in the mandatory fundraisers to complete their obligations and meet fundraising deadlines and goals. We strongly encourage all other families to participate in these fundraisers when possible.

GRADING POLICY

Catholic Academy of Niagara Falls uses the Diocesan guidelines for grading as stated on the report card. Each teacher will share their grading policy with the students and parents/guardians at Parent Orientation.

GUM

There is no gum chewing allowed in school.

HEALTH SERVICES

The nurse is responsible for the maintenance of health records, routine health checks (hearing, height, weight, vision and scoliosis screening), parental contact concerning health problems, care of minor injuries, and assistance in health teaching and vision screening. If a student has any health problems, the nurse should be contacted. Please call the school if your child is absent from school due to a communicable disease so precautions may be taken to protect other students.

HOMEWORK

Homework is an integral part of learning and will be assigned at the teacher's discretion. It is an extension of the learning that takes place in school. Homework can provide practice and drill that reinforces classroom learning and can provide opportunities for independent study, research, and creative thinking. Grades 3-8 should receive homework.

HONOR ROLL

The Honor Roll is a special recognition for academic achievement. It is based on the total average for the preceding trimester. High Honors consists of a 94-100% average while Honors includes averages of 90-93.9%. Merit is 88-89.9%. There will be 3 Honor Assemblies held throughout the year.

HOURS

Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.

School Hours: 8 a.m. - 2:20 p.m.

Summer Hours: Posted at the end of June (Tues., Weds., & Thurs. 9am - 1pm)

The Before School program is available beginning at 6:45 a.m. The After School Program is available until 5:30 p.m. Registration forms and fee schedules are available in the school office.

ILLNESS OR INJURY

In case of illness or injury, the school nurse or a member of the school staff will care for a student temporarily. If emergency medical treatment is necessary, parents will be contacted. If parents are not available, the persons designated on the emergency card will be contacted. If neither party can be reached, the student will be taken to the emergency room at the hospital.

IMMUNIZATIONS

New York State Public Health Law, Section 2164, mandates that schools not permit a child to be admitted unless the parent provides the school with a certification of immunization or proof from a physician that the child is in the process of receiving the required immunizations.

The Vaccines required for Pre-K and school attendance are:

- DTap or Tdap
- Hepatitis B vaccine
- Measles, Mumps and Rubella Vaccine (MMR)
- Polio vaccine
- Varicella (Chickenpox) vaccine

Additional vaccines required for Middle School:

- Tdap vaccine Gr. 6-12
- Meningococcal conjugate vaccine for grades 7-12

Your child will not be permitted to attend school without the necessary verification or immunizations. Proof of mandated immunizations must be presented to the school within 14 calendar days of the first day of school attendance or 14 calendar days of registration. Failure to comply with these regulations will result in exclusion of the child from school.

INSURANCE

School insurance is provided at the beginning of each school year. Parents will be given forms to complete if an injury should occur during school hours or during a school-related activity.

LEARNING OBSERVATIONS & EVALUATIONS

Students are evaluated in a variety of ways. Class participation, homework, class work, quizzes, unit tests, projects, June assessments, etc. are some of these ways.

The school uses STAR testing as an assessment tool 3 times a year.

New York State tests are also given in Grades 3-8 to show student achievement in various subject areas.

LEAVING SCHOOL

Students are not allowed to leave the school during school hours for any reason without the knowledge and consent of their teacher and the principal. Students will be released only to designated adults who must sign for the release of the student. These designated adults may be the people whose names are listed on the emergency form. Students who attend activities after school hours must report immediately to the supervisor of the activity. Students may not leave the building unsupervised between dismissal time and the beginning of an after school activity.

LOITERING

Students should leave the school and the school grounds promptly after classes or activities are dismissed. There is to be no unnecessary hanging around before school or after school. Non-students are not permitted in school or on school property at any time unless they have been registered as official guests in the main office.

LOST AND FOUND

The school is not responsible for lost articles or money. All lost clothing, money, jewelry, or any other articles, regardless of value, will be kept in the main office. Unclaimed items will be discarded periodically and at the end of the school year.

MEDICATIONS

If your child needs to take prescribed & Over-the-counter medications during the school day, the school must have the following:

- A written healthcare provider order (attestation is also required for independent students)
- Written parent/guardian consent
- The medication must be brought to the school by the adult. The medications must be in their original labeled prescription or over the counter bottles/packaging. Any special supplies or equipment for the nurse to administer the medication must also be provided to the school.
- Refrigeration is available.
- Medication will be given by the school nurse or school personnel and will be recorded as to date and time.

THESE MEDICATION REQUESTS MUST BE RENEWED EACH SCHOOL YEAR.

Students are not allowed to carry or to have medication (including aspirin, Tylenol, nasal sprays, inhalers, throat lozenges, eye/ear medication, cough drops, etc) in their possession at any time, unless they are self-directed/carry children. For the protection of the students and the school, verbal and/or telephone requests to administer medication are not acceptable. Occasionally a student may need an inhaler/medication available immediately. Your child's doctor must order and specify this in writing in order for your child to carry the inhaler/medication on his/her person.

NEWSLETTER

Families are informed about school events through our electronic newsletter that is sent weekly on Wednesdays. The Wednesday Folder will also be distributed weekly to the students and will contain any flyers or papers that need to be completed. It will also include monthly menus, calendars, and timely information.

PERSONAL POSSESSIONS

Common sense and consideration are the best guides in determining whether or not to bring personal possessions to school. The school administrators and staff cannot be responsible for valuables which students bring to school.

PETS

No pets of any kind are allowed at school without permission from the administration. Teachers may give special permission for pets to be brought to school as part of a special display or activity. However, under no circumstances is a potentially dangerous pet to be brought to school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The staff of Catholic Academy of Niagara Falls believes that physical education is an important part of the educational experience. The development and maintenance of a healthy body is essential for physical well-being and good mental health. The staff also believes that attitude development is an important part of education. An atmosphere for the development of leadership, sportsmanship, and congeniality is created through our physical education program. No student will be excused from class without a written request of the parent. **A doctor's excuse is required for long-term exemption from physical education classes.**

PHYSICALS

NYS Law requires a health and dental examination for all new entrants and students in grades Pre-K or K, 1, 3, 5 and 7.

PRAYER

Prayer is a part of the daily experience of the students, especially to begin the school day and before lunch. Daily prayer helps provide opportunities for the expression of love for God. Talking in a familiar fashion with God and listening to God is encouraged. Through prayer, students are made aware of God's presence within themselves and in their surroundings.

PROMOTIONS AND RETENTIONS

Promotions and retention are based on an evaluation of academic, physical, social and emotional growth. The primary reasons for considering retention are: a) failure to achieve academic competence, b) indifference or lack of effort on the part of a capable student, c) physical or social immaturity, and d) frequent or long absences.

RELEASE OF RECORDS

The school maintains records on all students. Information included in these records may not be released without written parental consent. A transcript of student records will be forwarded to another school when a student transfers.

RELEASE OF STUDENT INFORMATION

Information regarding a student (e.g. report cards, behavior reports, progress reports, etc) will be given only to a parent or legal guardian. A legal guardian is determined by official court documentation that must be on file in the school office in September. If a parent wishes to authorize another person to receive this information, a written letter is required.

REPORT CARDS

Report cards are issued 3 times a year. Parents should carefully review their child's progress and contact the teacher if they have any questions regarding grades.

RULES FOR GENERAL BEHAVIOR

The behavior expected from students at school is a combination of common courtesy, respect, and safety considerations. Students will conduct themselves in a manner conducive to an atmosphere of learning.

The following types of conduct are never permissible and can result in suspension or dismissal:

- fighting/assault/battery/threat of force or violence
- defiance of school personnel/chronic or incorrigible behavior
- the use of profanity/pornography
- refusal to prepare assignments or to participate in class
- possession of weapons or other dangerous objects such as firearms, firecrackers, matches, etc.
- possession or use of tobacco, drugs or alcohol
- possession or use of any controlled substance or paraphernalia
- gambling
- vandalism

- stealing
- sexual harassment/immorality

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Individual teachers will provide guidance for school supplies. Lists will also be posted on the website.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY FOR STUDENTS

It is the policy of Catholic schools in the Diocese of Buffalo that all students have the right to be free from all forms of discrimination, including sexual harassment, in the school environment. Sexual harassment may take different forms. The following acts, although not automatically sexual harassment, may constitute sexual harassment under certain circumstances:

1. Verbal - sexual innuendos, jokes of a sexual nature, and sexually degrading language to describe an individual;
2. Nonverbal - displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures, leering, and making obscene gestures;
3. Physical - unwanted physical contact or touching, brushing up against the body and any other type of coerced sexual activity.
4. Internet - transmission of lewd pictures, text, obscene material that would constitute unwelcome communication.

Sexual harassment does not refer to behavior or occasional compliments of a social nature. It refers to behavior which is not welcome, that is personally offensive, that fails to respect the rights and dignity of others.

Any student who believes he/she has been the subject of sexual harassment should report the alleged act immediately to the principal. All claims of sexual harassment will be thoroughly and immediately investigated by the administrator.

If the investigation reveals that the complaint is valid, prompt attention and disciplinary action to stop the harassment and to prevent its recurrence will be taken. The disciplinary action taken with respect to each violation of this policy will be determined in accordance with the seriousness of the particular offense and may range from written warnings, parent conferences, mandatory counseling, suspensions, dismissal or a combination of actions. The school administrator will advise the complaining party that corrective action has been taken.

In the event that a thorough investigation of an alleged incident of sexual harassment reveals that a student has not engaged in any actions or conduct constituting sexual harassment, the school administrator will inform both the student and the complaining party that a thorough investigation has been conducted and that there exists no grounds or basis to substantiate the alleged sexual harassment.

All schools will take reasonable measures to protect the confidentiality of the student who files a complaint, to encourage the reporting of any incidents of sexual harassment, and to protect the reputation of any student wrongfully charged with sexual harassment.

SMOKING/VAPING

Smoking or vaping is strictly forbidden in school, on school grounds, or at any school sponsored event or activity off campus. Students are neither to carry nor use tobacco products of any kind. Violation of

this rule will cause immediate suspension/dismissal. Adult smoking is not allowed any time in school or on school grounds (in the parking lot or on the sidewalk adjacent to the school) when school is in session or at any school sponsored event or activity by order of New York State.

SOLICITATION

Students may not solicit for money unless the principal has approved the project.

STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships among students depend upon respect for oneself and others. They are expected to act as part of a team, supporting the unique talents of one another and accepting the differences of individual personalities. Although it is desired that students develop strong friendships, certain behavior is unacceptable. Behavior such as hand holding, sitting on laps, kissing, touching or handling of another individual, etc. will not be tolerated in the school, at school activities, or on the school grounds at any time. If such behavior is seen, parents will be notified immediately.

STUDY SKILLS

Specific skills and techniques can make learning easier and more enjoyable. The following are student guidelines for achieving good study habits:

- Come to class prepared with pencil, pen, paper, and other necessary materials.
- Be an active participant in class. Listen and participate in class.
- Ask questions to clarify problems.
- Plan your day and schedule time for homework.
- Use what is learned and apply it to new situations.
- Strive to do the very best work possible. Just "getting by" is not a worthwhile goal.
- Have homework assignments picked up when a student is absent.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

Periodically, a substitute teacher may teach students. The most common reason for using substitute teachers occurs when the regular teacher is ill. However, substitutes are also used when regular teachers are on leave for personal business, professional training, or family emergencies. Students are expected to be extra courteous to substitute teachers. Any misconduct in the classroom will be dealt with seriously.

SUSPENSION

Suspensions from school are given by the administration dependent upon the infraction of school rules and policies. It usually signifies that the student's behavior has been so disruptive or has put others at risk that the only reasonable way to deal with the situation is to remove the student from the school environment or the classroom setting. Reinstatement will not be granted until the principal and the student's teacher(s) are satisfied that the reason for misconduct has been effectively eliminated.

Teachers cannot give suspensions. Suspensions will be "in school" unless circumstances warrant an out of school suspension.

TARDINESS

Prompt arrival at school is expected of all students. Late arrival disrupts class and causes loss of instruction time. **Any student who arrives at school after 8:00 a.m. is considered tardy and must report to the school office.** Personnel keep the administration aware of persistent attendance

problems or patterns. The school notifies the parents of the problem and pattern.

TECHNOLOGY

Catholic Academy of Niagara Falls has an interactive panel in every classroom. Every child in grades K-8 has a device. These technology resources support learning and enhance instruction. We encourage students to use the laptops and technology available at school. With this use comes RESPONSIBILITY. Violations of the following guidelines may result in a loss of access as well as other disciplinary or legal action in accordance with applicable laws and/or due process procedures. Users are expected to:

- Respect the privacy of others.
 - ◆ Users will not attempt to learn the passwords of others.
 - ◆ Users will not attempt to gain unauthorized access to networked or stand alone systems.
 - ◆ Users will not modify or read files of other individuals. However, it should be noted that system administrators have access to all files. Privacy shall not be assumed in this case.
- Respect the legal protection provided by copyright and license to programs and data.
 - ◆ Users will not make copies of licensed programs in violation of copyright laws.
 - ◆ Users will not install their own software on computers without authorization.
- Respect the integrity of every computer and of the Internet and other networks to which the school is or will be connected.
 - ◆ Users will not intentionally develop or use programs to harass others or infiltrate a computing system or damage or alter the software components or network.
 - ◆ Users will not intentionally send or receive inappropriate, obscene, or hateful messages or e-mail to others.
 - ◆ Users will not copy or modify server, network or system files.
 - ◆ Users will not abuse computer or network hardware, (ex. mice, keyboards, etc).
 - ◆ Users will not violate copyright laws.
 - ◆ Users will not use telecommunications for anything other than educational purposes.
 - ◆ Users will not employ the network for commercial purposes.
 - ◆ Users will properly utilize computer time and not waste limited resources/supplies to the expense of Catholic Academy of Niagara Falls.
- Respect the legal protection provided by copyright and license to programs and data.
 - ◆ Users will not make copies of licensed programs in violation of copyright laws.
 - ◆ Users will not install their own software on computers without authorization.
- Respect the materials and resources of Catholic Academy of Niagara Falls.
 - ◆ Users are limited to using approved educational games only.
 - ◆ Users will work in ways that will not disturb others.

All violations or suspected violations of acceptable use will be communicated to the principal. Users found to be in violation of acceptable use will be denied access to computers and related technological resources.

Possible actions include the following:

- Users may be banned from access to specific technological equipment, local or Internet facilities for a period of time.

- Users may be required to make full financial restitution.
- Suspension or detention is a possible outcome of a severe violation.
- User could face prosecution if criminal activity is involved.

TEXTBOOKS

Respective public school districts furnish textbooks and workbooks. The school also purchases some books. If a book is lost, misused, or damaged beyond reasonable wear, the student shall pay for the book. The damaged book remains the property of the school. Graffiti of any kind on any textbook, workbook, or notebook is not allowed.

VACATIONS

Missing school for family vacations is considered an illegal absence. The student is responsible for all class work, assignments, and tests missed during the absence. You should notify the school if your child will be out on vacation. The teacher is not expected to give homework ahead of time, but may choose to.

VANDALISM

The school, with its equipment, is private property. Willfully damaging or destroying this property is cause for immediate suspension and possible dismissal. The school requires that vandal damage be paid for before a student is allowed to return to class. If a student accidentally causes damage, he/she should report it to the teacher immediately so that the damage is not misconstrued as vandalism.

VISITORS

All visitors are required to report to the school office to sign in. This policy safeguards and protects ALL children in our school. Visiting a teacher before classes begin in the morning, during lunch, or during the school day is not permitted unless approval has been given from the office and teacher.

WALKING STUDENTS

The school must be informed and given written consent for a child to walk to or from school. Students who walk to school should come straight to school. They are to remain on sidewalks at all times and to cross the street only at designated crosswalks.

**Updated August 2024

Don't need since not providing a copy. Should be in the newsletter.

September 2023

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Catholic Academy of Niagara Falls wants to provide your child with the best educational experience possible. Students, parents, and faculty working together can make this happen. It is only through love, understanding, and discipline that your child will grow into a responsible Christian adult.

We ask you to share the commitment with us by signing the following contract. Signing this contract will indicate acceptance of the school policies at Catholic Academy of Niagara Falls. **Each student must return a signed contract form at the beginning of the school year.**

Each year the handbook is revised. If you haven't done so already, we ask that you read through the updated handbook online.

*The principal retains the right to amend this handbook for just cause. Parents will be given prompt notification if changes are made.

(Cut, fill out, and return ONE CONTRACT PER STUDENT to school. Pre-K families can sign for their child.)

HANDBOOK CONTRACT

2023-2024

I, _____, in Grade _____, and my parent/guardian have read and discussed the information in the Parent/Student handbook. I fully understand that I am responsible for following the rules of Catholic Academy of Niagara Falls.

Signature of Student

Signature of Parent

Date