



**OUR LADY OF MERCY  
A C A D E M Y**

## **Student Handbook**

**1001 Main Road Newfield, NJ**

**2025-2026**

**(Revised August 2025)**

# OLMA Student Handbook

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## PART I: ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

### EXPLANATION OF THE CREST AND SCHOOL COLORS

“Knowledge and Truth” is the school motto. The lamp represents knowledge; the globe symbolizes universal truth. The symbol of Christian education is the cross, and the open book is the book of life. The Blessed Mother is represented by the figure M.

GREEN represents HOPE, optimism, new growth, and the desire for new life, energy and enthusiasm in the pursuit of educational, social and spiritual development. GOLD stands for VICTORY, for success, for becoming the best possible person that one can be, through effort, perseverance and study.

### ALMA MATER

All hail to you; all hail to you,  
Oh Alma Mater fair.  
Knowledge and truth stand as our guide  
In the green and gold we bear.  
Green is for Hope in Christ our Lord,  
Gold for Victory.  
We are proud of you dear school,  
Our Lady of Mercy.

Your spirit will remain with us,  
Oh most beloved school.  
We shall always do our best  
To live the Golden Rule.  
We know that throughout our lives  
You'll guide us day by day.  
We're loyal to you, Oh Alma Mater,  
Dear O.L.M.A.

*Words and Music by  
Christina McCarthy '67*

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## **SAINT MARY JOSEPH ROSSELLO**

Saint Mary Joseph Rossello was born in Albisola, Italy on May 27, 1811 as Benedetta Rossello. She was always eager to do good for others and when Bishop DeMari asked for "a generous person who would care for the neglected children", Benedetta answered his call. On August 10, 1837 she and three companions who shared her vision began the Congregation of the Daughters of Our Lady of Mercy. Benedetta became Sister Mary Joseph. The Sisters dedicated themselves to the education of youth, the care of the sick and all the works of mercy.

The community flourished and today the Daughters of Our Lady of Mercy minister in more than 15 countries. In 1919 the Daughters of Mercy came to North America. In 1949 Sister Mary Joseph was canonized by Pope Pius XII.

## **SCHOOL HISTORY**

Founded and operated by the Daughters of Our Lady of Mercy, Our Lady of Mercy Academy (OLMA) opened in September 1962 to 52 young women, embodying the first freshman and sophomore classes. The school's first principal was Sister M. Dolores, and Sisters Gertrude, Dominica and Matthew Marie were the school's first teachers.

In the spring of 1965, 23 young women departed OLMA as its first graduates. In June 1967, ground was broken for the construction of a new field house. The building was named Carew Hall in honor of Mother Bridget Carew, a founder of Our Lady of Mercy Academy. The next year, Carew Hall was used in the graduation ceremony of the Class of 1968.

## **STUDENT SUCCESS**

Our Lady of Mercy Academy is a community of students, faculty and parents working together to create the best possible environment for the intellectual, social, physical and spiritual growth of its students. The academic expectations that we have established are challenging but realistic. Students are grounded in a solid foundation of skills with an emphasis on strong study skills which prepares them for higher education. Small classes encourage a close relationship between the students and faculty and foster an environment of nurture and support. OLMA offers a multi-faceted program which helps our students reach their fullest potential. The academic and co-curricular programs help students to develop self-esteem, confidence, responsibility and leadership. Enrollment is limited in numbers but diverse in character. The school welcomes students from all ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds reflecting a cross-section of South Jersey communities. Parental involvement is considered an essential element in the education process. It is highly valued and encouraged by the school. The resulting sense of community and cooperation among parents, students, and faculty provides strong support for the students as they encounter new ideas, skills, and challenges.

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## PART II: ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

### ACADEMIC HONESTY

Students should always put forth their best effort in all things, most especially in their academic performance. Claiming the work of others as one's own is dishonest and disrespectful not only to the other person, but also to oneself. To copy, cheat, and to plagiarize are all variations on the same theme. Each teacher will set the bounds for how he or she wishes to deal with academic dishonesty. At the least, the following rules will apply:

1. Homework that is copied will not be accepted and the student will receive a failing grade for that assignment.
2. A student who cheats on a test or plagiarizes a project/paper will receive a grade of zero for that test or project/paper and may be subject to disciplinary action.
3. Academic dishonesty in any form may result in a loss of any recognition or honors received and a student who has been found to be academically dishonest may become ineligible for National Honor Society.
4. Any use of Artificial Intelligence without explicit permission from your teacher is strictly prohibited and can result in a grade of zero for the assignment and/or may be subject to disciplinary action.
5. Repeated offenses may lead to dismissal from school.

### ACADEMIC STANDARD

A minimum of 125 total credits are required for graduation. In order for a student to graduate, she must also complete and pass the required course of study. The maximum number of credits students can earn in a given school year that count toward the student's GPA is 40. Students who fail one or more courses in any given year must complete the course(s) during the summer in order to re-enroll at Our Lady of Mercy Academy. Our Lady of Mercy Academy will not cover the cost of credit completion. Students with a cumulative GPA below a 2.0 may not be permitted to re-enroll at Our Lady of Mercy Academy.

#### **Requirements:**

Theology - 4 years

Math - 4 years

Literature - 4 years

Lab Science - 3 years

History - 3 years

World Language - 2 years

### COURSE OF STUDY

For the course of study, see Appendix A.

### COURSES

Our Lady of Mercy Academy is dedicated to preparing each student for college. In order to meet this objective, every course is designed to provide our students the foundation they need to succeed in college. There are three levels of courses offered at OLMA: college preparatory, honors, and advanced placement. For current course offerings at Our Lady of Mercy Academy, please see the Course of Study (Appendix A).

### GRADING SYSTEM

Grades are a means of evaluating a student's performance. All teachers are required to outline in their course syllabus how semester grades will be calculated. A student's final grade in a course will be calculated as follows: 45% Semester 1, 45% Semester 2, and 10% Final Exam/Project.

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## GRADE POINT AVERAGE

All academic courses (except Pass/Fail) are used in the calculation of a grade point average (GPA) and for the determination of honors. GPA is determined by multiplying the number of credits for each course by the respective number of grade points to arrive at a Quality Point Total. This total is divided by the number of credits to determine a weighted GPA.

## CLASS RANK

Class rank is only used internally to determine our top students. Class rank is never reported to a college nor is it printed on any report cards or transcripts. Final determination for Valedictorian and Salutatorian of the graduating class is determined after the mid-semester of senior year.

## REPORT CARDS

Students will receive official notice of their academic progress two times a year. Report cards will be issued at the end of each academic semester, as determined by the school calendar. Mid-Semester reports are run at the midpoint of the first and second semesters, as determined by the school calendar. A student's grade point average is calculated and updated at the end of the academic year; grades recorded on a student's transcript are final course grades only.

Semester grades are calculated based on what is outlined in each course syllabus. Current grades are available at all times in FACTS to Parents and Students unless there is a hold on your Family Portal account. A link to report cards is sent out after each academic semester and are available for download for two weeks. In the event that an outstanding balance on tuition or other account deficit exists (cafeteria, athletics, etc.), a report card or transcript may not be released.

## ACADEMIC HONORS

Recognition of exemplary student performance is made through the system of honors. There are three levels of honors:

1. Head of School Honors | 4.0 GPA; No Grades Below an A
2. First Honors | 4.0 GPA; No Grades Below a B
3. Second Honors | 3.5 GPA; No Grades Below a B-

## ACADEMIC / ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY

A point scale is used to determine a student's academic eligibility standing:

- For academic & athletic eligibility, points are accrued as follows: F grade = 2 points, D grade = 1 point
- A student will be ineligible if she has three points accrued at the end of a Mid-Semester or Semester.
- When a student is academically ineligible she will not be permitted to participate in athletic activities for a minimum of two cycles (10 school days).
- A student may become eligible after two cycles if the student has less than three points at the end of the two cycle review period.
- After the initial two cycles, a review will occur every cycle to see if the student is having academic difficulty.
- If a student is found academically ineligible at the end of the year, she will begin the following school year in academic warning and her progress will be monitored.
- The grading periods used for determining ineligibility are Mid-Semester 1, Semester 1, Mid-Semester 2, and Semester 2.

**Academic Watch (Warning):** 1 point after mid-semester or semester

Student progress will be monitored throughout the intervention process.

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## **Academic Intervention:** 2 points after mid-semester or semester | Agenda Monitored

Students are required to use an agenda book to monitor homework assignments. Teachers of courses where students are struggling will sign after each academic class confirming that homework is written correctly. Guidance will meet weekly with student. Parents will be notified accordingly. A parent conference may be requested.

## **Academic Probation:** 3 points after mid-semester or semester

### **Requirements:**

- 1) Parental Acknowledgement | Email/Letter sent to parent from Director of Curriculum & Instruction
- 2) Agenda book required
- 3) Weekly meeting with guidance and student
- 4) No athletic activity (practice or games) can take place while a student is on Academic Probation.
- 5) A parent conference may be requested.

## **GRADING SCALE**

LETTER GRADE	RANGE	COLLEGE PREP	HONORS	AP
A+	97-100	4.0	4.5	5.0
A	93-96	4.0	4.5	5.0
A-	90-92	3.7	4.2	4.7
B+	87-89	3.3	3.8	4.3
B	83-86	3.0	3.5	4.0
B-	80-82	2.7	3.2	3.7
C+	77-79	2.3	2.8	3.3
C	73-76	2.0	2.5	3.0
C-	70-72	1.7	2.2	2.7
D+	67-69	1.3	1.8	2.3
D	65-66	1.0	1.5	2.0
F	Below 65	0	0	0

*Grading Scale is subject to change; students will be notified if any changes occur.*

## **EXAMS & EXEMPTIONS**

Tests and exams are a means of evaluating the degree to which a student has accomplished the objectives of the course. No freshman, sophomore or junior will be exempt from exams. The exam exemption policy is as follows:

- Seniors may exempt final exams if they have a 90 or higher cumulative course average at the grade cutoff date in Semester 2. The Grade cutoff date will be posted in the Monthly Planning Calendar.
- Any honor code violation forfeits exemption opportunity in that school year

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## GUIDANCE

The school provides guidance services to support students and help prepare them for college. Guidance counselors provide several integral services for students and families, including support for academic endeavors and the socio-emotional well-being of students.

## HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION DUE TO ILLNESS

In the event a student is in need of extended homebound instruction due to illness, tutoring is made available by the Gloucester County Special Services School District. An application for services must be completed by the parents and the school. A doctor's note, explaining the illness and the expected length of time the student will be out of school must accompany the application. Any student who is homebound must pass the 1st and/or 2nd semester exams to receive credit for the courses taken while on homebound instruction.

## MINI-MESTERS

Mini-Mester courses are experiential learning opportunities typically held at the end of the school year. All freshmen, sophomores and juniors are required to enroll in a Mini-Mester course each year. Many Mini-Mester courses include a travel component; students are not required to choose Mini-Mesters with travel components. Students are required to choose one service-oriented Mini-Mester course (either freshman, sophomore or junior year). Students may choose to participate in a service-oriented Mini-Mester course more than once. Courses range in duration. Most take place over a four-day or five-day period.

A cost is associated with these courses; the cost is the responsibility of the student. OLMA does its best to keep the cost of each course as reasonable as possible. Students with outstanding financial obligations may not be permitted to travel and/or may be removed from a travel Mini-Mester should tuition accounts become delinquent. Students who receive financial aid and are in good financial standing may attend a travel Mini-Mester course.

All Mini-Mester courses are worth 1.5 credits. Students will earn a numerical grade for their participation, effort and any specific parameters set forth by the lead teacher of the individual Mini-Mester. The Mini-Mester courses conclude by creating a slideshow/video in which students share about their Mini-Mester experiences. The show will be presented at an all school assembly in September of the following school year. A student who is absent for any part of the Mini-Mester must arrange to make up missed hours with the lead teacher or the Head of School.

## NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY

Membership in National Honor Society Mother Patricia Gaynor Chapter of Our Lady of Mercy Academy is an honor awarded to any upperclassman who meets the NHS criteria. To qualify for NHS, students in the Classes of 2026, 2027, and 2028 must maintain a 3.70 weighted GPA for five semesters (2½ years). Students in the Class of 2029 and beyond must maintain a 3.80 weighted GPA for five semesters (2½ years). Students must exemplify the four (4) characteristics of which the NHS are founded upon: character, leadership, service, and scholarship. Students who meet the criteria must fill out a Candidate Form for NHS consideration. Filling out a Candidate Form for NHS consideration does not guarantee admission into the National Honor Society.

To be selected as a member, Junior applicants must demonstrate the completion of 60 hours of service undertaken at school or in the community since the start of ninth grade. Senior applicants must demonstrate the completion of 80 hours of service undertaken since the ninth grade. Each spring, the Faculty Council, appointed by the Head of School, meets to review student applications to NHS and award membership for that particular academic year. Specific NHS criteria, procedures and membership guidelines can be obtained through the Guidance Office. An induction ceremony is traditionally held in the Spring.



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## **EXTRA HELP**

Extra help is available from teachers before or after school or during a mutually agreeable time. Extra help should not replace classroom effort to learn within the classroom but rather support a student's classroom learning experience. Students are responsible for communicating with teachers regarding the need or desire for extra help.

## **CREDIT COMPLETION**

A student with a final failing grade in a core course will be required to complete the course during the summer under the direction of the Guidance Department and the Director of Curriculum. The course will be online through *Educere* (unless an alternative is approved by the Director of Curriculum) and the cost will be covered by the student (parent). Any student who does not complete the course with a passing grade may not re-enroll at OLMA the following academic year.

## **COURSE CHANGE POLICY**

All course change requests are made by meeting with a counselor to discuss the desired change. If a change will be made, it will be processed after approval is received from a parent/guardian via email, copying either their Guidance Counselor and/or the Director of Curriculum & Instruction. The drop/add time period will end on a date specified by the Head of School as per the published school calendar. Beyond that date, there will need to be extenuating circumstances that would warrant a change to schedule and teacher signatures will be required.

## **HONORS & AP COURSE PLACEMENT**

All Honors & AP courses require prerequisites to be met. Prerequisite information is available in the Guidance Office or Director of Curriculum & Instruction Office. Our Lady of Mercy Academy puts much thought and time into placing students in advanced level courses. The school wants every student to be successful in a supportive and challenging environment. Many factors are taken into consideration when it comes to placing students. It is recognized there may be times when parents wish to share specific concerns regarding class placement. Requests will be strongly considered; however, the school retains the right to make the final decision. Prerequisites will be determined based on cumulative grade at the Mid-Semester 2 point. If a student's final grade in a prerequisite course fails to meet the requirement, the student may be dropped from the Honors or AP level course.

## **STATE TEXTBOOKS**

Students will be issued some state books each year. Students are responsible for any damage to or loss of state books. Books must be returned at the end of the school year. OLMA reserves the right to hold report cards of students who neglect to return state issued textbooks.

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## **PART III: STUDENT CONDUCT & RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **STUDENT CONDUCT RATIONALE**

In order to maintain an effective learning environment, OLMA has the right and obligation to enforce the rules and guidelines set forth in this Student Handbook. The consequences for disregarding the principles set forth in this handbook may vary from case to case depending on the circumstances. The guiding principle for any disciplinary action shall be a measured response to the offense committed. Normally, in the first instance, students will be reminded about their obligations concerning respect and responsibility and asked to comply with the Student Handbook. Repeated instances, however, require increased accountability. OLMA's Accountability program is designed to address both initial and repeated student conduct concerns (See Appendix B). Based on the circumstances, a student wellness and conduct committee will review student conduct and discipline concerns when necessary to determine appropriate consequences and additional accountability support measures.

### **COMMUNICATION**

The school provides each student with an email address. This email address is used by the school to communicate with the students regarding academic issues and notifications of school activities and obligations. Each student must check their email regularly to make sure that she is informed about their obligations to their courses and to the school. Not checking one's school email will not be accepted as justification for failing to meet responsibilities.

### **AWARENESS OF ACADEMIC STANDING**

It is the responsibility of each teacher to make sure that grades for all students are current. It is the responsibility of parents and students to check grades and be aware of their academic standing. In the case that grades are not posted within two weeks of the assignment's due date, the student should make an appeal to the Director of Curriculum & Instruction.

### **MAKEUP WORK**

Students who are absent for a full day for any reason will be required to make up all the work in their classes. In the case of unexcused absences, tests or assignments that are due the day of the absence will be due the day the student returns. After an excused absence, it is the school's policy to allow one day for each day a student is absent to make up missed work and tests. If a student arrives late to school or leaves early for any reason, the student is responsible for any assignment due that day. Additionally, the student is responsible for any assignments given that day. If a student has a prolonged absence (five or more consecutive school days), teachers will meet with that student to outline a plan for making up the work.

Incomplete grades will be carried on records for no more than two weeks. After that time, a teacher will issue a grade based on marks that are available unless an alternative course of action has been discussed with and approved by the teacher, Guidance, and the Director of Curriculum & Instruction.

It is the student's responsibility to communicate with each of her teachers and ascertain what work has been missed and how, when and if any work can be made up. This communication should be specific for each class that is missed. If a student has made no effort to make up missed work, a failing grade may be issued. Grades will reflect failures to complete missed work.

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## **DRIVING TO SCHOOL**

Any student who has a valid New Jersey driver's license may request the privilege of driving to school. All drivers must register and obtain parking passes in order to keep their cars on school property. This is a safety requirement. Students must park in designated spaces. Spaces will be assigned randomly and parking lot location will be determined by graduation year. There will be a nominal fee charged for the parking permit.

While driving on the property, students must drive slowly and obey all traffic laws and speed limits. Students are expected to abide by New Jersey State law regarding the level of their driver's license. Reckless driving will result in the loss of one's driving privilege.

## **PARKING LOT**

Only with the permission and a pass from a Leadership Team Member may a student go to her car during the school day.

## **LEAVING SCHOOL**

Once a student has arrived at school, she may not leave unless it is after the last scheduled class of the day or she has permission from her parent/guardian and the administration (regardless of the student's age). To do otherwise constitutes truancy. Students must sign out at the front desk before leaving school early.

## **BUS CONDUCT**

Transportation to and from school on a bus is a public statement about the quality and character of Our Lady of Mercy Academy students. Behavior that jeopardizes the safety of other students or behavior that is deemed inappropriate by the bus driver will not be tolerated. Students must realize that they are ambassadors of the school and their behavior reflects on the reputation of the institution. Students who cannot abide by these guidelines will face disciplinary action which may result in not being permitted to ride on a bus.

## **SCHOOL PROPERTY**

If a student notices that some item of school property has been defaced or destroyed, she should immediately report this to the Main Office so that it can be repaired. If a student is the cause of the destruction, she should let administration know this without hesitation. Students who intentionally destroy or vandalize school property will face consequences commensurate with damage.

## **LOCKERS**

Lockers and locks are the property of the school. Lockers are to be locked and kept clean at all times. No food is to be stored in a locker past the lunchtime period. Students may not post anything offensive either inside or outside of the lockers. Failure to use a locker properly, including the "rigging" of a locker, will result in an infraction and may result in the loss of the privilege.

## **GYMNASIUM & VILLAGER ATHLETIC CENTER (VAC)**

The gymnasium and the VAC may only be used with adult supervision. When using the gymnasium or the VAC, proper footwear must be worn. Students must dress appropriately and food and drink are not permitted (other than water).

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## CAFETERIA

During the lunch periods, students may go to their lockers five (5) minutes at the start of lunch and (5) minutes at the end. The refrigerator and microwaves are provided for student use. Our Lady of Mercy Academy is not responsible for lost or stolen lunch merchandise left in the refrigerator or kitchenette area. Anything left in the refrigerator on Friday afternoon will be thrown out. The cafeteria is available to students after school, as long as the areas used are left clean before leaving the building.

## CELL PHONES

At the 8:08 a.m. bell, all cell phones must be turned off or silenced and placed in lockers or bags. Phones are permitted in the café at break and lunch only. Phones are prohibited in classrooms, hallways, and during WIN and iBlock periods unless a teacher has given explicit permission for instructional purposes. This policy also applies to earbuds/headphones.

A cell phone used at any other time of the day, other than at break or lunch, may be collected by any teacher and given to the Disciplinarian or designee. The student may retrieve the cell phone at the end of the day. Repeated offenses will result in an infraction and may lead to additional disciplinary action.

No student at any time may use a school phone unless she has permission from an appropriate administrator or staff person.

## IDENTIFYING PROPERTY

Students should take care to properly identify all their possessions. Since all books, Chromebooks, electronic devices, etc., look alike, students should write their names or make identification marks on these items. All computers, calculators and other electronic items should be marked with a unique form of identification to prevent theft and mistaken possession. Common sense dictates that other valuable items should not be brought to school and if brought, should be left in a secure place until the end of the school day. The school cannot be responsible for any missing items.

## MAC LAB

To utilize the Mac Lab students will need permission and access provided by an OLMA staff member. It is the responsibility of the student to not wait until the last minute when making arrangements to use the Mac Lab for research, printing or other needs. No food or drink is permitted in the computer lab. Students are expected to abide by all other computer lab rules. Failure to respect the computer lab or abide by its rules will result in a loss of computer lab privileges and an infraction.

## COMPUTER USAGE

The guidelines applied to the use of computers are the same guidelines used for any communication in the learning environment. Electronic mail is a form of speech and therefore cannot be used to harass others and its content must be appropriate. Obtaining someone's password or right to another's directory or email is a form of theft. Taking advantage of a student who inadvertently leaves a computer without logging off is no different than entering an unlocked room where one has no permission to be. An email message should not be shared with others unless the permission of the author is obtained. (Appendix D)

## PHOTOS

No photos of the school, its students or its employees are permitted to be taken and reproduced without the express written consent of the school. Any individual involved in sharing or posting photos of the school or its

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community without express written permission will be disciplined appropriately and if necessary, legal action will be taken against the individual.

## HALLWAYS

During class periods, students are not allowed to be in the halls, lavatories, or other areas without permission and a pass from a teacher or staff member. During lunchtime, students are permitted to go to their lockers only at the beginning and end of the period as stated above.

## SEARCHES

The school has the responsibility to maintain a safe environment where the rights of all are respected and protected. Therefore, the school reserves the right to search and inspect all book bags, lockers, and personal possessions when there is a reasonable suspicion that the safety of any individual or group of individuals may be in jeopardy.

## DRESS CODE

The dress code at OLMA fosters a sense of community pride and helps to maintain a safe, secure, and productive learning environment. A dress code helps promote school pride, self-respect, an awareness of equality among individuals, regardless of economic background, ethnic or cultural differences, or social environment and encourages a focus on academics, not personal style and fashion. Adjustments to the dress code for medical, religious or other reasons must be approved by the Office of the Head of School.

### Uniform:

- School ID worn on lanyard in possession.
- School uniform kilt or pants Uniform skirt length must not be altered or rolled to more than 4" above the knee in the front and back. The administration reserves the right to request a skirt be replaced if it does not meet the 4" requirement.
- Pants should be purchased from Lands End - Navy - [Uniform Pants](#)
- Yellow or green polo (white polo for seniors only)
- Green or gray embroidered OLMA v-neck or crew neck sweater (green or gray long sleeve cardigan for seniors only) **\*\*Please note, that sweaters are now required on Mass days and other special events.**
- No sweatshirts other than the embroidered OLMA gray quarter zip sweatshirt.
- OLMA crew socks: gray, green or navy
- Tights: Mid Semester - navy or gray
- No gauges
- Pierced earrings may be worn. No other visible body piercings are permitted to be worn to school. Piercing retainers are permitted.
- Tattoos are strongly discouraged. The administration reserves the right to require a student to cover any tattoos during school or at school activities.
- Head coverings are not part of the school uniform.
- Hair color should be a natural shade

### Uniform Shoes:

- Brown Leather Oxford Shoe
- Boat shoe (Sperry or other): Must be plain (no designs) in brown, tan or black. The **Sperry Sneaker** is **NOT** part of the school uniform.

## DRESS DOWN DAYS & VOUCHERS

Students will only be permitted to use dress-down vouchers on Fridays or the day preceding a holiday or school vacation (for example Easter, Christmas etc.) unless otherwise permitted by the Office of the Head of School. The

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student must present the voucher to the Office of the Head of School for validation before her first class period. When a theme is announced, students are expected to dress accordingly. OLMA themed dress down days must include OLMA tops and neutral colored bottoms. No other high schools or colleges should be represented on OLMA themed days. Parameters for other themed dress down days will be provided as necessary. Ripped jeans, tank tops, and crop tops are not permitted. Shorts are permitted only when specified and must be no more than 4 inches above the knee. Any student who does not comply will receive an Accountability infraction.

## GUM CHEWING

Gum chewing is not permitted. It is disruptive to the teacher and generally unsanitary because of improper disposal.

## FOOD AND DRINK

Food and drink consumption is limited to the cafe or outdoor patio areas. Food should not be taken out of the cafe. Water is permitted in the classroom with teacher permission.

## CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES & DRUG TESTING

**Possession, use, sale, or distribution of alcohol, drugs, electronic cigarettes, or other vaporizing devices is strictly prohibited both on and off campus.** Violation of this policy is considered extremely serious and may result in immediate dismissal with no refund of tuition.

Consequences may include, but are not limited to:

- A minimum of a Reflective Intervention suspension from school
- Disciplinary probation and detention (as determined by school administration)
- Mandatory assessment and counseling
- Ineligibility to participate in or attend extracurricular activities for a specified period of time

In addition, the police may be notified. The Leadership Team may also convene and recommend further disciplinary action to the Head of School, including immediate withdrawal from Our Lady of Mercy Academy.

## THREATS

Any student involved in the issuing of threats that jeopardizes the well-being of another student or the general safety and operation of the school will be subject to severe disciplinary action, including immediate dismissal.

## REPUTATION

The school has the right and obligation to do whatever it must to preserve the reputation of the school for the benefit of the common good. The administration will take whatever actions are necessary to do this. Any student who publicly embarrasses the school will be subject to immediate and possibly severe disciplinary action, including immediate dismissal.

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## PART IV: ATTENDANCE POLICIES

### ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is necessary and required to succeed at OLMA. Students are expected to be present and punctual for assigned classes and all required events. Make-up work is not a suitable alternative for classroom instruction. Poor attendance limits a student's ability to succeed and reinforces a negative habit that can be disruptive to a student's future development. Time missed in the classroom has the potential to greatly impact a student's grade. Parents have the right to keep their child out of school or take her out during the school day. The school, however, has the right to determine if an absence is excused or unexcused.

It is the responsibility of the student to see that her absence is reported as soon as possible to the Main Office. In the case of an unexpected absence, a parent or guardian must notify the school office between 8:00 AM and 9:00 AM on the day, and every day after, of the student's absence. For anticipated absences, an email from the parent/guardian or parent/guardian signed note of explanation can be sent to [attendance@olmanj.org](mailto:attendance@olmanj.org) or brought to the Main Office at least two days in advance. Anticipated absences during the school day must be preceded with a note/email to receive permission to leave school. For doctor or dentist appointments, the student is required to return to school with a note from the doctor/dentist indicating that she kept the appointment.

### EXCUSED ABSENCES

Excused absences may be unexpected or anticipated. Proper documentation for an excused absence must be submitted to the Main Office within two weeks of the student's return to school. Failure to submit necessary documentation will result in the absence being deemed unexcused. Excused absences include:

- Illness documented by a physician's note
- Illness that requires home instruction
- Funeral for an immediate family member
- College visitation
- Documented legal obligations

### UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Students may not exceed eight (8) unexcused absences per semester. Unexpected absences exceeding eight (8) will be made up as directed by the school administration. An unexcused absence is recorded when no acceptable reason can be given for the absence or when a student is suspended.

### COLLEGE VISITATION

Students are encouraged, beginning in their junior year, to visit colleges. During the school year, each junior and senior will be allowed two (2) days of college visitation. These days must be registered with the Main Office before they are used. With good reason, additional college visitation days may be requested through the Guidance Office. All college visitation days must be validated in writing by the college and this information is to be submitted to the Main Office within one week after the visit.

### EXCESSIVE ABSENCE

No student may be absent more than 16 days per year, including excused and unexcused absences. This will put the student in danger of not receiving credit for courses in which she is enrolled. The Leadership Team will re-evaluate the enrollment of any student who accumulates more than 16 absences in a school year. Students who are excessively absent run the risk of not being allowed to continue at Our Lady of Mercy Academy. The administration will take action based upon a review of the individual circumstances. If the decision is made that the student will be able to continue, she will be placed in credit recovery status. *College visitation days, a day when the student is representing the school, funeral for an immediate family member, documented legal obligations* and



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other days which may from time to time arise and are approved by the administration are not to be counted in the total number of days absent.

## CLASS TIME MAKEUP

After a student is absent in excess of 16 days for the year, she will need to complete class time makeup hours. When a student enters class time makeup status, she is no longer eligible for extracurricular activities or school sponsored events. One credit recovery day is equal to (4) hours. This will be served after school in 2hr increments from 2:45 to 4:45. Students are not eligible to participate in extracurricular activities again until required hours have been completed.

## LATENESS & EARLY DISMISSAL

OLMA recognizes that sometimes lateness is unavoidable and occasionally you may need to leave school early. Students who exceed 4 unexcused late to school **or** early dismissals per semester will receive a detention. Consequences for further unexcused lateness or early dismissals may include disciplinary probation.

## ATTENDANCE CREDIT & ELIGIBILITY

### Definition of Lateness/Early Dismissal:

- Students are considered **late** after 8:10am
- **Credit for Attendance:**
  - Arrival **before 9:00 am** → full-day attendance, late
  - Arrival **before 11:00 am** → half-day attendance
- **Early Dismissal:**
  - Leaving **after 1:45 pm** → full-day attendance, early dismissal
  - Leaving **after 11:00 am** → half-day attendance

### Half-Day Schedule:

- Arrival **before 10:00 am** → credited for attendance
- Early dismissal **before 10:00 am** → no credit for attendance

### Extracurricular Eligibility:

- To participate in any extracurricular activity, students must arrive **by 10:30 am**.



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## PART V: DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

### ACCOUNTABILITY PROGRAM

A guiding principle for our school community is that we take accountability for our actions. If we are to succeed as a sisterhood, we must consistently remain accountable to ourselves and each other. To encourage student accountability and support positive development, minor student offenses, such as late to class, cell phone use and dress code violations, will be addressed using the *Accountability Program* student misconduct process (See Appendix B).

### DETENTIONS

Classroom detentions are issued by individual teachers when the offense is directed at the teacher or toward the management of the classroom; these do not become part of a student's disciplinary record. The timing of a classroom detention is at the discretion of the teacher. A school detention may be issued by administration for serious classroom disturbances or as a result of multiple instances or directed toward the general operation of the school. A school detention is served at a time determined by the Head of School in coordination with the Disciplinary. Normally, school activities, sports events, work or transportation concerns will not be accepted as valid reasons for not serving detention.

### DISCIPLINARY PROBATION

Our goal at Our Lady of Mercy Academy is to create the best possible environment for the intellectual, social, physical and spiritual growth of students, faculty, staff and administration. Accountability is critical to this process. The disciplinary experience is intended to make clear to students the limits of acceptable behavior and to give students the opportunity to more fully understand the rules and incorporate the experience into her overall development.

A written disciplinary probation is an official notice for a specified period of time during which a student must demonstrate conduct that conforms to OLMA standards of conduct. Disciplinary Probation may include a combination of sanctions. Misconduct during the probationary period or violation of any conditions of the probation may result in further disciplinary action, including dismissal.

### DISCIPLINE INTERVENTION, SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

Continued violations of school rules and regulations or more serious student misconduct will result in a more serious course of disciplinary action.

1. **Reflective Intervention:** During a disciplinary Intervention, a student is not allowed to attend school but is able to complete academic work at home and submit it for grades. This course of action is taken when it is deemed by the administration that the student is not living up to the standards of the school and that her continued presence on campus is a contradiction to the ideals of Our Lady of Mercy Academy. The student engaged in a disciplinary Intervention is not allowed to attend extra-curricular activities (for example, sports, dances, graduation etc.). The student and parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing of the course of action and the reason for the action.
2. **Suspension:** This is the most serious form of discipline that allows a student to remain a part of the student body. A suspension must be administered outside of school. The student and parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing of the course of action and the reason for the action. This letter will be part of the student's record and will accompany any transfer or college applications that a student submits. During a suspension, the student receives no credit for any missed class work. As a result of the suspension, the student may be required to complete community service commensurate with the offense committed. The service must be approved by the administration.

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3. **Expulsion:** In the most serious offenses a student is permanently removed from membership in the student body. Expulsion can only be administered by the Head of School. The student's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing of the course of action and the reason for the action. This letter will be part of the student's record and will accompany any transfer or college application that the student submits.

The following are examples\*\* of student misconduct considered major offenses and may result in any of the above courses of action:

- Use or possession of drugs, alcohol, or controlled substance on school property or at a school function
- Use of any tobacco/vape/dabber product on school property or at a school function
- Stealing
- Possession of weapons
- Fighting
- Lying
- Truancy
- Cutting Class
- Insubordination or disrespect to faculty or staff
- Hazing, threatening, harassment, or disrespect to a fellow student
- Leaving campus during the school day without permission
- Gambling
- Bringing harm or disgrace to the reputation of the school
- Serious misuse of social media

\*\* This list is not exhaustive

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## **PART VI: ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES**

### **TUITION POLICY**

While Our Lady of Mercy Academy provides several different tuition payment plans and schedules, tuition must be kept current. Students whose tuition for the preceding semester remains unpaid or is only partially paid at the beginning of the current semester will not receive a report card for that semester and access to Facts Management System may be suspended. A senior whose tuition payment is not current at the time of graduation may jeopardize the awarding of her diploma. No records or transcripts will be released until all obligations are fulfilled.

### **SCHOOL CLOSING**

The Head of School or her delegate decides if school will be closed because of inclement weather. Because OLMA draws students from seven counties, severe weather in one area may not affect another area in the same way. Student safety will always be a top priority. Announcements surrounding school closings will be made by 6am whenever possible. If the closing is declared an Online Learning Day, students are responsible for assignments posted by teachers or attending school virtually.

### **MEDICATION POLICY**

The school provides the availability of a nurse. No student is permitted to carry any medication on her person or to have it in her possession. The nurse will administer all prescription medication. All prescription medication must be dropped off by a parent/guardian and must include the physician's order form. Additionally, the prescription medication must include the pharmacy label. NJ law also mandates that non-prescription (i.e. over the counter medication) must be accompanied by a physician's order form. Additionally, if a student has a life-threatening condition, wherein an Epi-Pen or inhaler is necessary for self administration, the student may carry on her person for immediate availability but requires appropriate paperwork to be completed by the student's doctor and parent/legal guardian.

### **ACETAMINOPHEN / TYLENOL POLICY**

Students often report headache, muscle aches, colds, menstrual cramps, etc. during school hours requesting a pain reliever. Students are not permitted to carry or take any pain medications on their own. Parents may give permission for OLMA to administer pain relievers. The permission form must be submitted annually.

### **ACCIDENT REPORTS**

If you have an accident in school, or while engaging in off-site school activities, you must immediately notify the school office. An accident report (found in the main office) will be completed by the supervising faculty member.

### **SECURITY DRILLS**

Fire drills and other security drills are to be taken seriously and conducted in an organized fashion and in silence. Students are to walk quickly to the assigned exits and stations, line up according to their assigned security group, and wait in silence at the designated site as determined by the type of drill. In the case of an actual emergency, silence contributes to an atmosphere of calm, and allows everyone to hear emergency instructions.

### **VISITORS**

All visitors must sign in and out at the main office and wear a visitor's badge while in the building.

### **CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR PHONE NUMBER**

Students/parents are responsible to communicate with the main office in the event of a change of home address, phone number and/or email address.

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## APPENDIX A COURSE OF STUDY & CURRICULUM OVERVIEW 2025-2026

### Required Courses for Freshmen:

- Math (Algebra I, Honors Algebra I, Honors Geometry, Honors Algebra II)
- Literature (Literature I, Honors Literature I)
- Science (Biology, Honors Biology)
- History (World History)
- Religion (Religion I)
- World Language or American Sign Language (Spanish I, Honors Spanish I, Spanish II, Honors Spanish II, ASL I, or online World Language)
- Leadership I

### Required Courses for Sophomores:

- Math (Geometry, Honors Geometry, Algebra II, Honors Algebra II, Honors Precalculus)
- Literature (Literature II, Honors Literature II)
- Science (Chemistry, Honors Chemistry)
- History (US History I, Honors US History I, AP US History I)
- Religion (Religion II)
- World Language (Spanish II, Honors Spanish II, Spanish III, Honors Spanish III, ASL I or II, or online World Language)
- Leadership II (One Semester) / Intro to Art or Intro to Music (One Semester)

### Required Courses for Juniors:

- Math (Algebra II, Honors Algebra II, Precalculus, Honors Precalculus, AP Calculus AB)
- Literature (Literature III, Honors Literature III, AP Language and Composition)
- Science (Anatomy and Physiology, Honors Anatomy and Physiology, Chemistry II, Honors Chemistry II, AP Chemistry, Exercise Science, Forensic Science, AP Environmental Science)
- History (US History II, Honors US History II, AP US History II)
- Religion (Religion III)
- Two Electives (3rd year of a World Language recommended)

### Required Courses for Seniors:

- Math (Precalculus, Honors Precalculus, College Algebra, AP Calculus AB, AP Statistics, Approved RCSJ Math Course)
- Literature (Literature IV, Honors Literature IV, AP Literature and Composition)
- Religion (Religion IV)
- Four Electives

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## Elective Courses

### Science & Math Electives

Anatomy & Physiology  
AP Biology  
AP Calculus AB  
AP Chemistry  
AP Environmental Science  
College Algebra  
Exercise Science  
Forensic Science  
H Anatomy & Physiology  
H Chemistry II  
H Physics

### Arts Electives

Advanced Art  
Digital Media Arts I  
Digital Media Arts II  
Ceramics I  
Ceramics II  
Painting I  
Painting II

### Interdisciplinary Electives

AP US Government & Politics  
AP Psychology  
Sociology of Criminology  
Principles of Business  
Honors Topics in Women's Leadership

## Online Courses:

Junior and Senior students have the ability to take additional elective courses online through Educere/RCSJ at an additional cost. This supervised online learning program provides opportunities for learning outside of the walls of the school while delivering and promoting valuable distance learning skills and abilities. Students that take courses through RCSJ will earn college credits with successful completion of their courses.

## Mini-Mester Courses:

Our Lady of Mercy Academy students participate in a week-long experiential learning Mini-Mester course during the freshmen, sophomore, and junior years. These courses deliver a wide variety of experiences and learning opportunities for students outside of the traditional classroom setting. Mini-Mester courses may take place on OLMA's campus, in the local communities, or consist of overnight travel. A complete catalog of available Mini-Mester courses is provided to students each year. Examples of previous Mini-Mesters include *The Art & Culture of Puerto Rico*, *Discovering the Hidden Gems of South Jersey and Philadelphia*, *The Golden Isles: Exploring Georgia's Gold Coast*, *Cooking for College & Beyond*, *Love in Action (Service-Based)*, *Exploring the Galapagos Islands*, and *CSI: Newfield*.

## Innovation Blocks (iBlock):

These courses promote the exploration of new interests, creativity, and the rewards of courage. There are both student and teacher-led iBlock courses. Students are able to propose iBlocks that align with their interests as an opportunity for leadership within our community. While student-led iBlocks have a teacher moderator, the student leaders are responsible for planning the activities of each meeting and preparing deliverables. The focus of iBlocks range from the arts to movement to academics. Some sample iBlock courses include *Musical Theatre*, *Journalism*, *Art through Film*, *Yoga*, *OLMA Newscast*, and *Culinary Arts*. Students are registered in one or two iBlock courses per school year.

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## APPENDIX B



### Student Accountability Program

A guiding leadership principle in our school community is accountability and as young women learning to lead a world of change, it is important we practice self-accountability. Taking responsibility for following the dress code and other **general student handbook rules and regulations** is expected.

**For example**, students will earn Accountability Infractions when:

- A student is not in uniform in homeroom, class, hallway, cafeteria, or other area of the building during a school day
- A student is using their cell phone during non-designated times (break/lunch)
- Using locker inappropriately
- Using a device other than a Chromebook
- Arriving to class late
- Other school rules and regulations

More serious student conduct instances will be addressed by the Disciplinarian.

#### Accountability Process:

1. **First Infraction:** Email communication to student & parent/guardian including notification of the accountability concern
2. **Second Infraction:** Email communication to student & parent/guardian including notification of continued accountability concern.
3. **Third Infraction:** After-school Detention from 2:30-3:30 pm on a designated day. Email communication and acknowledgment by parent/guardian required. Please note: Work, Athletic events etc., do not supersede detention.
4. **Fourth Infraction:** Parent meeting with Disciplinarian
5. **Fifth Infraction:** TBD

\*Repeat concerns may become part of the student's record and a student may become ineligible for school extracurriculars (athletics, school dances etc.) and honors such as NHS or Student Leadership Programs.

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## APPENDIX C

### TECHNOLOGY, SOCIAL MEDIA & INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Our Lady of Mercy Academy recognizes that access to technology in school gives students, parents, and teachers greater opportunities to learn, engage, communicate, and develop skills that will prepare them for work, life, and citizenship. We are committed to helping students develop 21st-century technology and communication skills.

This **Acceptable Use Policy** outlines the guidelines and behaviors that users are expected to follow when using school technologies or when using personally-owned devices on the school campus:

- Students, parents and teachers are expected to follow the same rules for good behavior and respectful conduct online as offline.
- Misuse of social media can result in disciplinary action.
- Our Lady of Mercy Academy makes a reasonable effort to ensure students' safety and security online, but will not be held accountable for any harm or damages that result from misuse of social media technologies.

Teachers, students, staff, and other school community members are encouraged to use technology/social networking/media (Twitter, Facebook, etc.) as a way to connect with others, share educational resources, create and curate educational content, and enhance the classroom experience. While technology & social networking is fun and valuable, there are some risks you should keep in mind when using these tools. Particularly, in the social media world, the lines can be blurred between what is public or private, personal or professional.

The following social networking/media guidelines should be followed when representing the school in all online and virtual settings:

- **Use good judgment**
  - You are expected to use good judgment in all situations.
  - Regardless of your privacy settings, assume that all of the information you have shared on your social network is public information.
- **Be Respectful**
  - Always treat others in a respectful, positive, and considerate manner.
- **Be responsible and ethical**
  - Unless you are specifically authorized to speak on behalf of the school as a spokesperson, you should always state that the views expressed in your postings, etc. are your own.
  - Only discuss school-related matters that are within your area of responsibility.
  - Be open about your affiliation with the school and the role/position you hold.
- **Be a good listener**
  - Keep in mind that one of the biggest benefits of social media is that it gives others another way to talk to you, ask questions directly and to share feedback.
  - Be responsive to others when conversing online. Provide answers, thank people for their comments, ask for further feedback, etc.
  - Always be doing at least as much listening and responding as you do "talking".

**Do Not Share the Following:**

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## *Confidential Information*

Do not publish, post or release information that is considered confidential or not public. If it seems confidential, it probably is. Online “conversations” are never private. Do not use your birth date, address, and cell phone number on any public website.

## *Private and Personal Information*

- To ensure your safety, be careful about the type and amount of personal information you provide. Avoid talking about personal schedules or situations.
- NEVER give out or transmit personal information of students, parents, or co-workers.
- Don’t take information you may receive through social networking (such as e-mail addresses, customer names or telephone numbers) and assume it’s the most up-to-date or correct.
- Always respect the privacy of the school community members.

## **Be cautious with respect to:**

### *Images*

- Respect brand, trademark, copyright information and/or images of the school (if applicable).
- You may use photos and video (products, etc.) that are available on the school’s website.
- It is not acceptable to post pictures of students without the expressed written consent of their parents.
- Do not post pictures of others without their permission.

### *Other sites*

A significant part of the interaction on blogs, Twitter, Facebook and other social networks involves passing on interesting content or linking to helpful resources. However, the school is ultimately responsible for any content that is shared. Don’t blindly repost a link without looking at the content first. Pay attention to the security warnings that pop up on your computer before clicking on unfamiliar links. They actually serve a purpose and protect you and the school. When using Twitter, Facebook and other tools, be sure to follow their printed terms and conditions.

And if you don’t get it right...

- Be sure to correct any mistake you make immediately, and make it clear what you’ve done to fix it.
- Apologize for the mistake if the situation warrants it.
- If it’s a MAJOR mistake (e.g., exposing private information or reporting confidential information), please let someone know immediately so the school can take the proper steps to help minimize the impact it may have.

## **Netiquette**

1. Students should use the internet, network resources, and online sites in a courteous, respectful manner.
2. Users should also recognize that among the valuable content online is unverified, incorrect, or inappropriate content.
3. Users should use trusted sources when conducting research via the Internet.
4. Users should also remember not to post anything online that they wouldn’t want parents, teachers, or future colleges or employers to see. Once something is online, it’s out there and can sometimes be shared and spread in ways you never intended.



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## Personal Safety

If you see a message, comment, image, or anything else online that makes you concerned for your personal safety, bring it to the attention of an adult (teacher or staff if you're at school; parent if you're using the device at home) immediately. Users should never share personal information, including phone number, address, social security number, birthday, or financial information without adult permission. The internet allows for anonymity and opens associated risks; users must carefully safeguard the personal information of themselves and others.

## Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying will not be tolerated. Harassing, dissing, flaming, denigrating, impersonating, outing, tricking, excluding, and cyberstalking are all examples of cyberbullying. Don't be mean. Don't send emails or post comments with the intent of scaring, hurting, or intimidating someone else. Engaging in these behaviors, or any online activities intended to harm (physically or emotionally) another person, will result in severe disciplinary action and loss of privileges as determined by the Head of School in coordination with the Student and Wellness Conduct Committee. In some cases, cyberbullying can be a crime. Remember that your activities are monitored and retained by others.

## Examples of Acceptable Use

Students Must:

- Follow the same guidelines for respectful, responsible behavior online that I am expected to follow offline.
- Treat social media carefully, and alert staff if there is any problem with their operation.
- Encourage positive, constructive discussion if allowed to use communicative or collaborative technologies.
- Alert a teacher or other staff member if I see threatening/bullying, inappropriate, or harmful content (images, messages, posts) online.
- Be cautious to protect the safety of myself and others.

## Examples of Unacceptable Use

Students Will Not:

- Use social media in a way that could be personally or physically harmful to myself or others.
- Engage in cyberbullying, harassment, or disrespectful conduct toward others—staff or students.
- Try to find ways to circumvent the school's safety measures and filtering tools.
- Use language online that would be unacceptable in the classroom.
- Use of social media that publicly embarrasses the school

These are not intended to be exhaustive lists.

Users should use their own good judgment when using social media.

## Limitation of Liability

Our Lady of Mercy Academy will not be responsible for damage or harm to persons, files, data, or hardware.

## Violations of this Acceptable Use Policy

Depending on the circumstances, more serious violations will result in more serious consequences. Appropriate discipline for violations of the OLMA Acceptable Use Policy is reserved to the administration. Violations of this policy may include:

- Suspension or termination of privileges and/or removal from positions of leadership at the school
- Disciplinary Intervention or Suspension
- Expulsion of student from Our Lady of Mercy Academy
- Additional consequences and disciplinary action determined by the Head of School in coordination with the Student Wellness and Conduct Committee