

## **Commitment to Excellence**

### **Teacher's Commitment**

I fully commit to MOM at Our Mother of Mercy Catholic School in the following ways:

#### **Unity**

- I will always strive to act, think and do in order to meet MOM's high expectations and high standards. I will do whatever it takes to be successful
- I will support my school, my class and my peers in their pursuit of excellence.
- I will arrive at school on time, prepared and ready to facilitate learning.
- I will leave school on time, with all my materials, ready to plan.
- I will work Saturday school, summer school and any other extra opportunities I am given to facilitate my students' learning.

#### **Devotion**

- I believe I am a child of God, and as such, I am called to serve Him by using all the gifts He has given me to the best of my ability.
- I will help create an environment of achievement, respect and support by planning engaging lessons for my students and coming to school prepared.
- I know that I alone am responsible for my words and actions. I will follow school and Diocesan policies in place for schools and teachers.
- I will always make myself available to students and parents to address any concerns or questions they have.

#### **Universality**

- I am responsible for maintaining a positive attitude about my mission. I know everyone can learn, and it is my job to continually look for new opportunities for my students' education.
- I will be tenacious in my growth as a teacher and a person. I will never stop learning in all aspects of my life.

#### **Discipline**

I will live by the OMM Creed and the HONOR Code:

- I will help my students and support their learning.
- Only my best is acceptable.
- No shortcuts when it comes to teaching and planning – that shortchanges both my students and me. I will no make excuses when I do not fulfill my potential.
- I own my choices and their consequences – good and bad.
- I will respect everyone.

Failure to adhere to these commitments may result in my removal from MOM.

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Signature

## **Commitment to Excellence**

### **Parent's Commitment**

I fully commit to MOM at Our Mother of Mercy Catholic School in the following ways:

#### **Unity**

- I will always expect my child to meet MOM's high expectations and high standards. I will do whatever it takes to help my child be successful
- I will support my child's school, his/her class and his/her peers in their pursuit of excellence.
- I will make sure my child arrives at school on time, prepared and ready to facilitate learning.
- I will make sure my child leaves school on time. I will also check my child's homework every night, let him/her contact the teacher if there is a problem or question, and try to read with him/her every night.
- I will make sure my child comes to Saturday school, summer school and any other extra opportunities he/she is given to facilitate learning.

#### **Devotion**

- I believe I am a child of God, and as such, I am called to serve Him by using all the gifts He has given me to the best of my ability, and to encourage my child to do the same.
- I will help create an environment of achievement, respect and support by expecting my child to do all assigned work and to come to school prepared.
- I will always make myself available to my child and the school and address any concerns or questions they have.
- If my child misses school, I will notify the school immediately and make sure my child prepares any missed work.
- I will carefully read any and all materials sent home.

#### **Universality**

- I am responsible for maintaining a positive attitude about our school. I know my child can learn, and it is my job to continually monitor and support my child's education.
- I will be tenacious in my growth as a parent and a person. I will never stop learning in all aspects of my life.

#### **Discipline**

I will live by the OMM Creed and the HONOR Code:

- I will help my child and support my child's learning.
- Only my child's best is acceptable.
- No shortcuts – I will hold my child to high standards, expecting work to be completed, school uniform code to be followed, teachers and classmates to be respected, etc.
- We each own our choices and their consequences. I will not make excuses for any poor choices made by my child.
- I will respect everyone, and support the rules of OMM and MOM.

Failure to adhere to these commitments may result in my child losing various privileges and may lead to his/her removal from MOM.

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Signature

## **Commitment to Excellence**

### **Student's Commitment**

I fully commit to MOM at Our Mother of Mercy Catholic School in the following ways:

#### **Unity**

- I will always strive to act, think and do in order to meet MOM's high expectations and high standards. I will do whatever it takes to be successful
- I will support my school, my class and my peers in their pursuit of excellence.
- I will arrive at school on time, prepared and ready to learn.
- I will leave school on time, with all my materials, ready to learn.
- I will attend Saturday school, summer school and any other extra opportunities I am given to learn.

#### **Devotion**

- I believe I am a child of God, and as such, I am called to serve Him by using all the gifts He has given me to the best of my ability.
- I will help create an environment of achievement, respect and support by completing my work on time, coming to school prepared, and listening to my teachers and my classmates.
- I know that I alone am responsible for my words and actions. I will follow my teachers' directions.

#### **Universality**

- I am responsible for maintaining a positive attitude about my learning. I know everyone can learn, and it is my job to continually look for new opportunities for my education.
- I will be tenacious in my growth as a student and a person. I will never stop learning in all aspects of my life.

#### **Discipline**

I will live by the OMM Creed and the HONOR Code:

- I will help my classmates and support their learning.
- Only my best is acceptable.
- No shortcuts when it comes to learning – that only shortchanges me. I will not make excuses when I do not fulfill my potential.
- I own my choices and their consequences – good and bad.
- I will respect everyone.

Failure to adhere to these commitments can cause me to lose various MOM privileges and may lead to my dismissal from school.

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Signature

A student who has previously been suspended for the same or a similar offense may be subject to a suspension of six or more days or may be subject to expulsion. In addition, the following list of infractions may result in a suspension of six or more days, arrest and/or may result in expulsion:

- Possession within school, on school grounds, on school buses or during any school activity, of any firearm, knife, razor blade, explosive, mace, tear gas, or other dangerous object
- Arson on school property, whether accomplished or attempted
- Possession or use of illegal drugs or controlled substances within school, on school grounds, on school buses, or during a school activity
- Selling, distributing or purchasing illegal drugs or controlled substances within school, on school grounds, on school buses or during any school activity
- Assault of another student resulting in physical injury or any assault on a staff member
- Intentionally causing physical injury to another person
- Causing major damage to school property

All suspensions of six or more days require the approval of the Principal, Dr. Carolyn Yusuf, and the Superintendent, Mr. Don Miller. In all cases, families will be provided with a written explanation for the suspension prior to the beginning of the suspension and students and/or parents will have the opportunity to respond. When appropriate, arrangements for alternate instruction will be offered.

### ***Concerns and Questions***

If you have a concern about the implementation of the school policy, academic grade, discipline decision, or anything else, we encourage you to contact the appropriate staff member at MOM by telephone or email. All staff members are committed to responding promptly to parent/guardian concerns. If an issue is not resolved promptly or satisfactorily, please contact Ms. Vader to discuss the matter further.

Parents may also reach out directly to the Principal, Dr. Yusuf or Superintendent, Mr. Miller in writing if their concerns have not been answered by the director. The Principal or Superintendent will respond either in writing, telephone, or in person depending on the circumstance.

### **Uniform Code**

In most aspects, MOM follows the uniform code of OMM. The one exception is in our everyday shirts. Students may use their paycheck money to purchase spirit shirts from the school. These shirts may be worn instead of the everyday uniform shirts. How the shirts are worn will still follow the school uniform code.

- Responsibility – Completing tasks promptly and well.

MOM has expectations of behavior and academics. When a student is not meeting the expectations of MOM, their actions will be documented as a debit (\$1 of MOM Money taken away per infraction). When a student goes above and beyond or consistently displays the character traits that we expect at MOM, then their actions are documented on the paycheck as a credit (\$1 of MOM Money given).

Students are expected to meet our daily expectations and should have a paycheck of \$50 MOM dollars and above each week. Paychecks will be sent home every Thursday to be signed and returned on Friday. Paychecks must be returned signed by the parent in order for them to be added to the student's account.

Student's money will be available for their use at the school 'store' for spirit items, school supplies, etc, or may be used for other events throughout the year.

### ***Wema and Nia Programs***

The Wema and Nia program is an incentive-based initiative to push a culture of character. *Nia* means Purpose in Swahili and represents students who have met our daily expectations with a \$50 MOM Money paycheck and higher, over the course of a semester. *Nias* are given a bracelet that symbolizes their status in the school and are afforded the option to transition to classes independently. *Wema* means Excellence in Swahili and represents students who exceed the daily expectations by maintaining a \$60 MOM Money paycheck average, over the course of a semester. These students will also receive a bracelet that symbolizes their status and additional responsibilities/rewards for displaying leadership through character.

### ***Code of Conduct Overview***

The foundation of disciplinary procedures for MOM is been the Commitment to Excellence Form, the paycheck system (see previous pages for full details), and the strong relationships between parents, teachers, and children.

The following conduct are some of the behaviors that may result in suspension, whether it occurs on school site, in the vicinity of the school, on field lessons, on any school sponsored activity, or on school buses. Suspension may be short-term or long-term, in school or out-of-school depending on the severity of the offense and whether or not the student has previously been corrected for the same or similar choice. This list includes, but is not limited to:

- Assault of fellow student
- Endangering the physical safety of another by the use of force or threats of force that place the victim in fear of bodily injury
- Conduct which disrupts school or classroom activity
- Conduct which endangers or threatens to endanger the health, safety, welfare, or morals of others
- Insubordination and other forms of disrespectful behavior
- Failure to comply with school and classroom rules
- Failure to comply with disciplinary consequences
- Cheating on quizzes, exams, or plagiarism
- Use of forged notes or excuses
- Theft, or attempted theft, or possession of property known by the student to be stolen
- Extortion
- Gambling
- Abuse of school property or equipment
- Obscene or abusive language or gestures
- Verbal or physical harassment based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion or disability
- False bomb threat or false emergency alarm
- Possession of tobacco or alcohol
- Possession of pagers, beepers, or portable/cellular telephones
- Making a material false statement – i.e., lying about an important matter - to a teacher, principal, or other school personnel.

### ***Promotion***

Students may be retained in their grade at the end of the year for any one of, or combination of, the following factors:

- Failure to meet academic standards of readiness for the next grade: Students who fail (earn below 70%) a core subject (Reading, Writing, Math, Social Studies, Science) may be retained. Students who fail either the reading or math standardized test at the end of the year may be retained as well.
- Failure to meet adequate standards of attendance and lateness: Students who miss more than 10 days of school times may be retained. Please note that every 4 tardies in a quarter result in a \$25 fine.
- Failure to meet behavioral standards of readiness for the next grade level: Students whose behavior has not shown adequate growth or improvement, or is not at a sufficient level, may be retained.

### ***Standardized Testing***

MOM students take the Iowa Test of Basic Skills in the fall and spring. Testing results are shared with the parents and students.

### ***Student Organization and Supplies***

Organizational skills are taught to students in each of their academic classes. Students are given an assignment book at the beginning of the school year to track their homework. When a student is absent, he or she will be able to get back on track as quickly as possible and begin making up missed work.

Please check your child's assignment book and sign off on completed homework assignments to ensure that s/he has successfully completed all assignments.

Students will also be provided a binder with specific expectations regarding its organization. Please check your student's binder regularly to ensure its organization.

### ***Paychecks/Documentation***

At MOM, our mission is to provide an uncompromising, Christ-centered, educational environment which produces lifelong learners, who are prepared to succeed at the high school and college of their choice.

The best way for anyone to succeed is to be responsible for themselves and responsible to the world at large. Our values are: faith in God, constant learning, respect, empathy, pursuit of purpose, and teamwork. We have selected a few key character traits that are linked to our values, which will afford our students the character skills necessary to fulfill our mission. Therefore, we have installed a system of documentation that allows us all to reflect upon our school culture and the character traits we would like our students to exhibit daily and throughout life.

Each Thursday, your child will receive a document called a "paycheck." Students begin each week with \$50 of MOM Money that reflects their signing of the Commitment to Excellence. During the week, the students' paycheck should reflect their ability to meet our expectations as they relate to the following character traits:

- Devotion – A deep, faithful respect for the Sacred.
- Kindness – Acts considerate of other people; displays of sharing and caring for others
- Citizenship – Expressing pride in our school and community; sticking up for others
- Love of Learning – Mature decisions and actions that reflect a desire and effort to learn, regardless of the environment and without prompting.
- Tenacity – Working very hard and never giving up
- Self-control – Refraining from unwelcome or disruptive behavior, behaving appropriately, regardless of distractions
- Social Intelligence – An awareness of environment, an appropriateness of behavior and an ability to share ideas in a proper way.
- Gratitude – Being thankful and gracious to those who help us. Being empathetic towards the hard work and sacrifice of others.
- Honesty – Maintaining our personal integrity; being truthful and polite.

Students have until the next day to make up homework assignments. Incomplete homework assignments or assignments the student cannot find at the moment the assignment is asked for by the teacher will all be considered incomplete. Students will not receive a grade for them until they make them up. Students will receive a deduction from their Paycheck when they fail to turn in work on time.

### ***Make up Work***

Students who are absent are expected to call individual teachers to find out their assignments and make up the homework when they return to school. All missed, incomplete or incorrect work must be completed. It is the student's responsibility to check with each of his/her teachers to make sure s/he is aware of all assignments.

Late, incomplete, or missing assignments (for unexcused reasons other than absences) must be made up within the timeframe specified by the teacher.

### ***Parent Signature on Weekly Paychecks***

Parents are expected to sign all graded tests and weekly paychecks. Every MOM student will develop the character and academic skills necessary to succeed in high school and college, to be self-sufficient, successful, and happy in the competitive world, and to build a better tomorrow for themselves and us all.

A big part of developing those skills is to be responsible for our work.

### ***Cheating/Plagiarism***

Cheating is a serious offense. If a student copies another student's work or if a student gives another student his/her work, talking during quizzes/tests, etc, are all considered cheating. Plagiarism involves the stealing of someone else's ideas or words as one's own or the imitation of the language, ideas, and thoughts of another author (or person) and then passing them off as their own original work. Forging a signature on work to be signed is also an example of academic dishonesty. The consequences for any of these choices will be severe and will impact a student's academic standing.

### ***Report Cards and Grading:***

Report cards will be issued four times per year. Progress reports will be provided to parents at the mid-point of each quarter to update them on their child's academic progress. Progress reports provide a picture of a student's academic performance based on assignments and assessments administered in a given period. The grading system for report cards is the same as posted in the main part of this handbook.



**Mercy Students  
Making Our Mark!**

- If your child is going to miss school because of an illness, please call the Office (817-923-0058) as soon as possible. All absences should be followed up the next day with a note signed by a parent, guardian or doctor. MOM staff may call to verify absences.
- If your child is running late or will miss a portion of the day due to a doctor's appointment, please call the Office. (Please try to arrange doctor's appointment outside of the school schedule or during the later part of the day. Please speak to Ms. Vader if there are any concerns).
- Students who arrive late must report to the school office for a tardy slip. Four tardies in a quarter will result in a \$25.00 fine.
- If your child is absent, and the office does not receive a call, we will follow up with a phone call.
- All absences and tardies are noted on report cards. Students are responsible for all missed assignments and must arrange a way to complete all missed assignments and homework as soon as possible following their absence.
- Since missing class affects academic achievement, repeated absences may be reflected in the student's grades. After 10 days of absences, a student may not qualify to receive grades. If a student is chronically absent, MOM staff, the student, and the parent/guardian will meet to address the issue. In addition, poor attendance may impact the student's ability to be promoted at the end of the year.

### ***Field Lessons***

Our students and families look forward to various opportunities, especially our field lessons. Each year, MOM teachers plan several field lessons that complement the curriculum. Students earn their place on these field lessons based on their paycheck averages, attendance, academics, and overall character. In addition, the school reserves the right to remove a student from a lesson or prohibit him/her from participating for any reason that jeopardizes the physical or emotional well being of himself/herself or others.

### ***Student Cell Phones/Electronic Items***

Students have no need for cell phones or other electronic items during school hours. If a child needs to contact his/her parents during school, or a parent need to communicate with their student, they may contact the school office. Students should not bring these items to school. However, if a student does bring them to class, they are responsible for turning the item over to their homeroom teacher prior to the start of class, with the power off. The phone or other item will be secured by the teacher for the duration of school. Prior to dismissal, the teacher will return the items to the students.

Any phones/electrical items not turned in and found in the possession of the student will be confiscated by the teacher and will only be returned to a parent/guardian.

### ***Homework***

A key part of the academic program of MOM is the homework that every student will receive every night. Homework must be completed on the night before it is due and turned in on the day it is due. Students will not be allowed to complete homework during breakfast, unless given explicit permission by their teacher. No student is excused from any assignment without the permission of his or her teacher prior to the due date. If a student discovers that s/he will be unable to complete an assignment, s/he must contact the teacher by phone no later than the night before it is due. If the student is unable to contact their teacher for some reason, s/he must bring a written note from their parents/guardians.

### ***Key Homework Points***

There are many points we review with students. Below are some of the consistent messages we send to our students as we reinforce the importance of homework. Please review with your child and continue to reinforce accurate, thorough and timely completion of homework. As always students can call teachers with homework questions.

Homework completion will be tracked and communicated via the student's Paycheck, sent home to families each week (see more information below). Assignments and their completion will also be available online through RenWeb.

OK – it is not formatted completely (obviously), but this would be the Middle School supplement – we could attach it at the end of the school handbook.

### ***Mission:***

As it supports the vision of Our Mother of Mercy Catholic School, Making Our Mark exists to provide an uncompromising, Christ-centered, educational environment which produces lifelong learners, prepared to succeed at the high school and college of their choice.

### **The Four Marks of MOM**

**Unity:** One school, one class, one family, one student. MoM holds high expectations and high standards for all its students: success for one is success for all. We are all here because we choose to be. Because of that choice, we are responsible for the support and care of the school, each other and ourselves.

**Devotion:** We are all called by God to use the gifts He has given us to the best of our ability, seeking achievement in this world while looking for our citizenship in the next. This belief creates a culture of achievement, respect and support. We will use all means available and any means necessary to reach our goal: successful students enrolled in the best high schools and colleges.

**Universality:** We inspire and instruct all aspects of the person. We are responsible for seeking growth as a human being: as a student, a teacher, a parent, a person of faith, a citizen of the world. We strive to find ways to widen our horizons, strengthen our minds, and find success where we used to struggle. And we will take the time needed to effect this growth: more hours in the school day, more days in the school week, more school weeks in the year.

**Discipline:** We live by the OMM Creed and the **HONOR** Code:

**H**elp one another. **O**nly your best is acceptable. **N**o shortcuts, no excuses. **O**wn your choices and their consequences -good and bad. **R**espect everyone — especially yourself.

### ***Commitment to Excellence***

All teachers, parents and students sign a ‘**Commitment to Excellence**’ contract prior to enrollment every year. This contract ensures that all parties understand the level of effort and dedication required to be a part of this program. It makes clear our benchmarks of success and illustrates our expectations of one another. Samples of these contracts are included at the end of this handbook.

### ***Slogans, Chants, Credos:***

We are creating a culture of devotion, respect and discipline at MOM, and part of how we do that is by sharing common ideas and goals. There will be many chants, songs, slogans and credos we share over the course of the year. Here are two samples:

If there is a problem, we look for a solution.

If there is a better way, we try to find it.

If we need help, we ask.

If a teammate needs help, we give.

I. Be Nice. Work Hard. Pray All the Time,

II. One school, one class, one family, one student.

III. “This is the room that has the kids who want to learn to read more books to build a better tomorrow.”

IV. Climb the mountain to college.

V. SSLANT (Smile ☺, Sit Up, Listen, Ask and Answer Questions, Nod your head, Track the Speaker)

### ***Attendance***

- Attendance is **extremely** important at MOM. Students are expected to arrive to school on time every day. MOM students begin school with school prayer, in the cafeteria, at 7:50 a.m. Monday – Friday, and