

**Student and Parent Handbook**  
***Policies and Procedures***  
**2026-2027**

Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School  
7197 Mother Teresa Lane  
Liberty Township, Ohio 45044  
(513) 779 - 6585  
[www.mtces.org](http://www.mtces.org)

Updated 8/5/2026

Dear MTCES Families:

Thank you for your support and for choosing to partner with MTCES for the education of your child.

Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School is committed to nurturing the growth of every student--spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, physically and socially. Together the students, parents, faculty and staff join together in fulfilling this mission.

To help ensure our school's success in accomplishing its mission, this handbook has been prepared to provide you with a basic understanding of the mission, vision, policies, and procedures of Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School. It also includes the responsibilities of students and parents. It is important that you take the time to become familiar with its contents.

While this handbook provides important information relative to all aspects of the life of our school, it is not a binding contract on MTCES. Rather it is a unilateral set of policies which students and families are expected to, and must, follow. The principal retains the right to amend this handbook at any time and for any reason. Parents, guardians, and students will receive notification if changes are made.

We are grateful for your commitment to MTCES. We look forward to working with you during this 2025-2026 school year. We are ready to Live the Name and provide inspiration as Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School Volunteers!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Denise Harvey  
Principal & CEO

Mrs. Michelle Hinton  
Assistant Principal

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## **Introduction**

The Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School Student and Parent Handbook is a guide for parents and guardians whose children are enrolled at Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School. This handbook contains both policies and information to help parents and students understand the basic operational procedures of the school. We ask that you read the handbook and discuss it with your child. The handbook constitutes an agreement between the school, parent/legal guardian, and child. Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School strives to provide a quality education and to ensure that every opportunity for that quality education is maximized. After reading the handbook, please have your child return the signed Acceptance of Policies page to the school office.

## **Mission & Beliefs**

### ***Our Mission***

Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School is a private Catholic school founded in the spirit of Saint Teresa of Calcutta where students are educated and encouraged to grow in personal faith. Students are called to be witnesses to Jesus Christ as they maximize their God-given spiritual, intellectual, physical, and moral capabilities.

### ***Our Core Beliefs***

We believe, through the combined efforts of our faculty, staff, parents, and students that an environment of respect and shared responsibility exists at Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School.

### ***We believe our students...***

- share the love of God with one another and are called to be disciples of Christ
- learn and grow in a variety of ways across multiple disciplines
- treat each other with respect and dignity as they deepen their understanding of Saint Teresa of Calcutta
- strengthen their Catholic faith through prayer, service to others, and leadership in the school and surrounding communities

### ***We believe our parents...***

- model the Catholic faith for their children
- take an active role in their child's education and faith formation by being the primary educators of their children
- act as an example of Saint Teresa of Calcutta through volunteerism, kindness, and prayer to serve the school community

### ***We believe our faculty and staff...***

- create an academic and faith-filled environment where effective and engaging instruction promotes student growth based on their diverse needs and abilities
- model the example of Saint Teresa of Calcutta by sharing her love of Jesus
- develop confident young people rooted in the Catholic faith, who are morally and academically prepared for lifelong learning

## **Accreditation**

MTCES is accredited by the Ohio Catholic School Accrediting Association. (OCSAA)

## **Administration**

MTCES is a private Catholic school governed by a Board of Limited Jurisdiction under the direction of the Principal/CEO. MTCES is run as an independent non-profit corporation. The Board is responsible for the management of the corporation. The Board, which includes the Principal/CEO, governs over all of the business and administration of the school.

MTCES's Board of Trustees is responsible for the affairs, the property, and the funds of the school. A minimum of 2/3rd of the Members of the Board must be active, practicing Catholics committed to teaching the mission of the church and serve on at least one of the school committees and actively participate in school events.

### **Election of Board Members**

Because of the vast responsibilities with which our Board of Trustees is charged, specific skill sets must be represented. The Board strives to have sitting Board members with experience in education, finance, marketing & public relations, and general leadership skills. Individuals interested in serving may submit letters of interest to the Board. When positions become vacant, the Nominating Committee meets with candidates, and submits their recommendations to the entire board. The election is conducted at the May Board meeting, with only board members voting. The newly elected begin their service in June. Trustees serve a term of three years, and may be re-elected to one-year terms up to three additional years, for a total of six consecutive years.

### **Board of Trustees Committees**

**Advancement:** This committee will serve to assist the Director of Advancement and the Advancement Manager in fostering community and determining strategy for the two revenue drivers of the school--enrollment management and development. In sum, the committee will help to advance the mission of MTCES through constituent relations and integration of the school's marketing, communication, development, and enrollment programs.

**Education Commission:** This committee is composed of educators - including early childhood, elementary education, secondary education, and may include those at the college level - who have served in both the private and public school systems. The group works closely with our school administrators to enhance our curriculum through enrichment programs and teaching strategies, and they track our achievement against other area schools, and develop strategies to address academic problems, challenges and concerns.

**Facilities:** This committee is responsible for maintaining our current facilities, as well as the planning of future expansion.

**Finance:** This committee is responsible for planning and approving all expenditures of the school. We are fortunate to have several qualified professionals in the fields of accounting and finance who devote their time to ensure that MTCES operates in a fiscally responsible manner.

**Governance:** This committee assists with the creation, implementation and tracking of The Board of Trustees and School policies, evaluation of the Principal/CEO and overall process management of articles within the by-laws of MTCES.

**Strategic Planning:** This committee is responsible for setting short and long term goals for the school and seeing them to fruition.

### **Members of the Board of Trustees**

Names and contact information for members of the Board of Trustees can be found on the school website, [mtces.org](http://mtces.org).

## **Right to Amend**

This handbook is not a binding contract on Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School. Rather, it is a unilateral set of policies which students and families are expected to, and must, follow. The principal, or his/her appointee, retains the right to amend this handbook at any time and for any reason. Parents, guardians, and students will be given notification if changes are made.

## **Admissions and Registration**

Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School is a private, Catholic elementary school supported by tuition, donations, and volunteerism. The school believes strongly in the importance of a family's commitment to its parish and keeps an active, open and ongoing relationship with the area parishes to foster and nurture the identity of the Catholic parish.

All questions regarding Admissions should be directed to the Director of Enrollment and Engagement who leads the admissions process.

### **Notice of Nondiscriminatory Policy**

No student may be excluded from Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School solely because of race, color, national/ethnic origin, or ancestry. The governing board of MTCES located at 7197 Mother Teresa Lane in Liberty Township Ohio 45044 has adopted the following racial nondiscriminatory policies:

MTCES recruits and admits students of any race, color or ethnic origin to all its rights, privileges, programs and activities. In addition, the school will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, employment, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school administered programs.

MTCES will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or ethnic origin in the hiring of its certified or non-certified personnel.

## ***Registration Requirements for All Students***

### **Emergency / Medical Information**

Students entering Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School for the first time must have proof of immunizations and a birth certificate as is required by Ohio State Law. An emergency form must be submitted for each child prior to the first day of school each year. No child may start school until this form is complete. This form is kept on file in the school office.

### **Registration Policy**

Registration is conducted each year starting in late January or early February. Notices are published on social media, in area church bulletins, and sent home with students. A fee of \$250 is due upon registration and \$150 applies to tuition. If a child is not accepted into the school due to a lack of space, the registration fee will be refunded. Families have until June 15<sup>th</sup> to remove their student's registration for the next school year. After this date, parents will be responsible for paying full tuition for the upcoming school year, whether or not their child is attending MTCES. For all other reasons, the registration fee is non-refundable. Parents can choose to keep a spot on our waiting list by allowing the school to hold the \$250 registration fee. Registration fees are not covered by EdChoice or Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship.

## **Tuition**

All payments must be made through electronic funds transfer. Families may choose either the 10<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, or 20<sup>th</sup> of the month to have funds withdrawn or make a lump sum payment at the beginning of the year. Note: a \$30 fee will be charged for all bank drafts returned as non-sufficient funds.

If your monthly payment is not received by the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month in which said amounts were billed, you will be charged a penalty of the greater of \$50.00 or 1.5% of the outstanding balance. The penalty will accrue each month until the balance is paid in full. If the balance is not paid in full by the end of the subsequent month after it was first billed (approximately 60 days), the family will not be considered in good standing and the student (s) will be prohibited from attending school and school activities until (a) payment, including late penalties, is made in full, or (b) an acceptable payment schedule is submitted in writing (no verbal agreements) to the business office and approved by the Principal. Report cards and transcripts will be held pending approval of the payment schedule.

Penalty and non-sufficient fund fees are not covered by the EdChoice or Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship.

The Principal will always be given the discretion to waive any penalties for extenuating circumstances.

## **Tuition Assistance & EdChoice Scholarship Program**

MTCES is committed to providing a Catholic education to all who seek it, regardless of a family's financial position. In 2023, MTCES became an EdChoice Scholarship provider. The Edchoice program is a state funded program that provides tuition assistance to families who choose Catholic education. EdChoice scholarships are the primary financial assistance available for families.

MTCES maintains a donor funded assistance program that will assist families in times of crisis.

## **School Age**

In accordance with [Section 3321.01](#) of the Ohio Revised Code, no child may be admitted to kindergarten or the first grade unless he/she is five or six years of age (respectively) on or before the first day of school within a public school. For MTCES, students must be five by September 30 of the year of admittance. Children who become five or six before October 1 are "of age" for kindergarten and first grade, respectively. Children who become five or six between October 1 and January 1, inclusive, shall be considered as underage candidates for kindergarten and first grade, and may be admitted on a trial basis at the discretion of the administration. No children who turn six after January 1 will be admitted to first grade during the school year already in progress. No child shall be admitted to the first grade if he/she has not successfully completed kindergarten.

## **Educating Students with Special Needs**

MTCES will evaluate on a case-by-case basis whether or not it can meet the needs of a child with a disability. If the school can make reasonable accommodations to meet the child's needs, then the child may be offered the opportunity to enroll.

## **Admissions Policy**

Students will be admitted in the following order. Classes are filled per criteria below. A lottery will be used to fill openings at each level.

1. Current students whose registration is complete, tuition payments are current, and whose family is in compliance with the Family Volunteer Service Commitment.
2. Siblings of present students whose families meet criteria 1.
3. New students whose parent, family member, or guardian are faculty/staff or currently serving on the Board of Trustees, or who have served as a Board member in the past, as confirmed by

the Secretary of the Board. New students whose immediate family member (sibling or parent) is an alumni of the school.

4. Children who have stayed on the waiting list for the prior school year, have reregistered for the current school year, and still qualify for categories 5 through 7 in the admission policy. The waiting list will not be redrawn and the order carries over from the prior year.
5. New students whose parents, family member, or guardian have demonstrated significant volunteerism and or stewardship and are active parishioners as determined by the Board – See Family Volunteerism Section below.
6. New students who are Catholic, not meeting criteria in 5 above.
7. Remaining positions will be filled by lottery.
8. Any late applicants (past the new family enrollment period) will be placed in order of paperwork received.

Sibling status is defined as a new incoming student who is a sibling of an enrolled MTCES student. Sibling status is granted only to families who enroll a sibling during the priority enrollment period and do not withdraw the older child at a later time.

Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School reserves the right to refuse admission or terminate enrollment if false, inaccurate, or incomplete information is provided to the school.

### **Transfer Students**

Transfer students may be admitted after completing registration, a review of records from previous educational institution(s), and teacher recommendations for students in grade 4 and higher.

### **Family Volunteerism & Active Parishioners**

Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School was founded upon the principles of volunteerism, including active parish life. As such, this is considered in the admissions policy. We believe people with a history of active parish life and volunteerism will continue to be involved in their children's education and school. In order to qualify for Criteria 6 in the admission policy, a family must demonstrate that they have provided significant service and or stewardship to a charitable organization or cause. The Parish and Volunteer Documentation Form must be submitted.

Continued volunteerism is expected by all MTCES families. Families MUST volunteer at MTCES a minimum of 30 hours per year, or they may opt to make a contribution of \$600 per academic year in lieu of providing volunteer hours.

### **Accuracy of Information Statement**

Refusing to provide requested information to the school, or providing false, incomplete, or inaccurate information to the school or the State of Ohio, may result in the denial or revocation of admission and/or disciplinary action, up to and including suspension and expulsion.

### **Voluntary Withdrawal of Students**

Families wishing to withdraw their child from MTCES should contact the Director of Enrollment and Engagement to begin this process. A withdrawal form must be completed. MTCES will forward records within the required time once a request has been received from another school.

# **Volunteerism**

## **History**

Volunteerism and giving back to one's community was St. Teresa of Calcutta's strongest message; this same message of volunteerism is what makes being part of the MTCES community so special! The time our families put back into our school enables us to keep our tuition costs low. The work families do at MTCES saves all of us money because we do not have to hire outside resources for many of the tasks necessary to run a school. The program also allows families to meet each other and foster friendships as they work together on different committees. Most importantly, our children are learning from each of us that it is important to become active in their community and the obligation we all have to contribute.

## **Family Requirements**

There is an annual requirement of 30 volunteer hours per family each year (July 1<sup>st</sup> through June 30<sup>th</sup>). For those parents who just can't fit the time into their schedule, they may opt to make a contribution of \$600 per academic year in lieu of providing volunteer hours.

## **Volunteer Opportunities**

A variety of volunteer opportunities exist at MTCES throughout the entire calendar year. Activities needing volunteers are held during school days, in evenings, and on weekends to accommodate all schedules. Some examples include volunteering for special events, lunch and cafeteria duty, and serving on various committees.

# **Faith Formation**

## **Religious Education**

MTCES strives to enable students to develop a vital, personal relationship with God and to share the Gospels' realistic views of the human condition while affirming hope. Through the study of the Catholic faith, including our rich tradition, the school helps prepare students to celebrate God's love, proclaim God's message and live in accord with this message. For this reason, students attend Mass and liturgies on the assigned days and are encouraged to participate in the liturgies and to take advantage of service opportunities as permitted.

The Catholic Schools Office works directly with the school to ensure that the religious standards follow the doctrine of the Catholic Church and that all religion teachers complete at least 10 VOCARE credit hours each year. Non-Catholic students are required to participate in the religious programs.

## **Sacramental Preparation**

While the MTCES curriculum includes student sacraments, MTCES students make their sacraments including First Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation within their home parishes. MTCES parents are responsible for contacting their home parish to make arrangements for their children's preparations for the sacraments.

## **Community Service & Philanthropy**

Following in the footsteps of St. Teresa of Calcutta, students at MTCES participate in various outreach programs. Each year a determination is made as to what organizations will be supported by the efforts of students at MTCES. Past outreach programs have supported: Hawthorne Glen, Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament's School and Orphanage in Haiti, Reach Out Lakota, and St. Raphael.

In addition to the above-mentioned charities, the MTCES Student Council chooses charities to support each month and holds fundraisers to support those causes.

### **Junior High Service Hours Requirement**

In addition to participation in MTCES fundraisers, junior high students are required to complete a service project in 7th and 8th grades. The service project includes 10 hours of service, which is

divided into school, community, parish, and family.

## **Academic Program**

### **Academic Environment**

Academic excellence is part of the tradition and expectations of the school. Teachers work towards helping students form good study habits, tapping each student's potential so that each one enjoys a sense of accomplishment and self-worth. All of this is done in a loving, caring, Christian environment.

### **Curriculum**

The curriculum is based on the Archdiocesan Graded Course of Study, which has been approved by the State of Ohio, and the Department of Education. Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School is certified through the Ohio Catholic School Accrediting Association, and is considered a chartered non-public school. It is recognized by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati as a Catholic school. All faculty members are licensed by the State of Ohio.

Courses for all grades include religion, language arts, reading, mathematics, science, social studies, Spanish, art, music, technology, and physical education. While religion is a course of its own, our Catholic faith is infused into all courses.

### **Testing Program**

Students in grades K-8 participate in iReady testing three times per year. Testing is for both Math and Reading. Reports are provided to parents after each testing session.

Students in grades 5 & 8 participate in the State of Ohio Science test in April.

Students in grades 2-8 participate in the ARK assessment which measures student knowledge of the Catholic faith.

### **Third Grade Reading Guarantee**

MTCES is committed to supporting your child's Reading success. Multiple years of research have indicated the importance of early intervention and continued support for students not performing on grade level.

Results from the fall Reading Diagnostic Assessment (i-Ready) will be used to identify students who need additional Reading support per the state's guidelines. Those students who are identified as "not on track" will receive a Reading Improvement Plan and targeted tutoring. All students' progress to the minimum proficiency score will be monitored throughout the school year. This score is released by the ODE each fall. If a student has not obtained the minimum proficiency score after the January iReady assessment, families will be notified and in consultation with the Reading Specialists and the classroom teacher, a plan for intervention will be developed (if not already in place).

Students are required to achieve Reading proficiency by the end of third grade for promotion. Failure of a student to meet the proficiency score could result in them being retained. A student's parent or guardian, in consultation with the reading teacher and principal, may request that a student be promoted to fourth grade regardless of the student's score on the Reading Assessment. Your child's proficiency level in reading is directly connected to their long term success in reading proficiently across the curriculum. For these reasons, great emphasis and time is given to ensuring students can read proficiently by the end of third grade.

## Grading Scale / Grade Point Average

**Grades 4 – 8** receive letter grades based on the following scale:

Letter    Percentage    GPA Equivalent

|           |         |      |          |        |     |           |        |      |
|-----------|---------|------|----------|--------|-----|-----------|--------|------|
| <b>A+</b> | 98-100% | 4.34 | <b>A</b> | 95-97% | 4.0 | <b>A-</b> | 93-94% | 3.67 |
| <b>B+</b> | 90-92%  | 3.34 | <b>B</b> | 87-89% | 3.0 | <b>B-</b> | 85-86% | 2.67 |
| <b>C+</b> | 82-84%  | 2.34 | <b>C</b> | 79-81% | 2.0 | <b>C-</b> | 77-78% | 1.67 |
| <b>D+</b> | 74-76%  | 1.34 | <b>D</b> | 71-73% | 1.0 | <b>D-</b> | 70%    | 0.67 |
| <b>F</b>  | 1-69%   | 0.34 |          |        |     |           |        |      |

**Grades 1 – 3** receive an academic progress code based on the following:

|           |                   |         |
|-----------|-------------------|---------|
| <b>O</b>  | Outstanding       | 92-100% |
| <b>S+</b> | Satisfactory Plus | 88-91%  |
| <b>S</b>  | Satisfactory      | 77-87%  |
| <b>N</b>  | Needs Improvement | 0-76%   |

**Kindergarten** students are assessed on their skills within their academic and social areas, as such, they do not receive percentage grades, they instead receive a different report card which indicates which skills they have mastered.

### Calculating GPA:

GPA for a trimester is calculated in the following way:

GPA's are calculated by taking the sum of the point value for the grade of each class and multiplying it by class credit then dividing by the number of attempted credits.

Credits are as follows:

For Grades 7 & 8:

Language Arts, Reading, Math, Science Social Studies, and Religion=1 credit each

Spanish & Electives: .4 credits each

For Grade 6:

Language Arts, Reading, Math, Science Social Studies, and Religion=1 credit each

Spanish: .4 credits

Specials: .2 credits

For Grades 4 & 5:

Language Arts, Reading, Math, Science Social Studies, and Religion=1 credit each

Spanish & Specials: .2 credits each

GPA's are published on student report cards each trimester.

## Progress Reports

Parents can access student progress via Option C. Formal Progress Reports are not issued.

**For students with an IEP:** Progress reports are issued quarterly by the Intervention Team member supporting the student.

## Report Cards

Report cards are finalized after each trimester ends. Report cards are indicators of a child's strengths and/or weaknesses in school and should be read carefully.

## Academic Progress, Promotion, & Retention

If a student fails one major subject (language arts, reading, math, science, or social studies) for the year, arrangements will be made for a summer school/make-up period until it is deemed that they have completed the course expectations for a passing grade in the subject failed. These arrangements will be made between the parents/guardians, the subject teacher, and school administration.

If a student fails any two major subjects, a decision will be made to either retain the student in their current grade, or have the student attend summer school until it is deemed that they have completed the course expectations for a passing grade in the subjects failed. The decision to retain will be made by the parents/guardians, classroom teacher(s), the intervention team, and school administration.

If a student is unable to meet the standards needed to move to the next grade, the teachers and the school administration have the right to retain the student.

### Notification Process for Grades K-3

Students whose progress warrants a discussion regarding summer tutoring and/or retention will be identified by teachers. Families will be contacted no later than the end of second trimester to begin this conversation. Recommendations for retention and/or summer tutoring will be made in writing by April 1 and a parent response will be required by April 15.

### Notification Process for Grades 4-8

#### Report Card Review at the End of Trimester One

Parents should carefully review student report cards at the end of trimester one for student failures. If students have failed a course for the first trimester, it is strongly recommended that a conference be held if one was not held in October. Ongoing communication between parents and teachers is the key to ensure student success. **Any student who has failed a trimester of a core subject should be considered in danger of failing that course for the year.**

#### Mid-Trimester Two Notification

Parents will be notified in writing no later than January 31 if a student is not making adequate progress and is in danger of failing a course for the year. At this time, a conference will be held to discuss what needs to occur in order for the student to successfully complete the course for the year.

#### End of Trimester Two Notification

Parents will be notified in writing at the end of trimester two, at the time report cards are issued, if a student is in danger of failing a course for the year. At this time, a conference will be held to discuss what needs to occur in order for the student to successfully complete the course for the year. *Note: conferences may not be held if a mid-trimester conference was already held.*

#### Mid-Trimester Three Notification

Parents will be notified in writing no later than April 15 if a student is not making adequate progress and is in danger of failing a course for the year. At this time a conference will be held to discuss what need to occur in order for the student to successfully complete the course for the year.

**Failure Notification**

Should a student fail a course for the year and need to complete summer learning, notice will be sent to the parents in writing by June 5. Parents will have until June 15 to select the summer learning option for their student and communicate this to MTCES.

**Withdrawal/Disenrollment for Academic Reasons**

A student may be asked to withdraw for academic reasons from MTCES if it has been determined the school cannot meet the student's instructional needs or if the student or parents/guardians have not cooperated with the academic team in the educational process of the school. MTCES may disenroll a student if a parent/guardian is unwilling to act in accordance with the school's request for withdrawal due to academic reasons.

**Confidentiality of Student Records and Information**

Student records are private and accessible only to school administrators (including the principal), the teachers who are working with the student, and the students' parents/guardians who make official requests. Parents/guardians are asked to make a request for records in writing 24 hours in advance. An appointment shall be made to view the records the school retains for the student.

In the absence of a court order to the contrary, the school will provide the non-custodial parent with access to academic records and other school related information regarding the student. If there is a court order specifying that no information is to be given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order.

**Textbooks / Electronic Devices**

All textbooks and related materials which are the property of Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School, or allocated to the school through State and/or Federal Programs, must be taken care of by students. Replacement of lost or damaged books is the student's responsibility. If a student withdraws from school, all books and materials belonging to the school must be returned to the school before the student leaves. Student records will not be transferred until all books and materials are returned or current assessed value has been paid to the school.

**Physical Education Class**

Students are required to participate in physical education class unless they are exempted by a physician. If your child is unable to participate in a single gym class, a written note is required. If further exemption is required, a doctor's note must be given to the School Administration.

Children in grades 5-8 must wear their gym uniform on days they have physical education class. Students will remain in the gym uniform all day on these days.

**Spanish Class**

All students in grades K-5 have Spanish class once a week; those students in grades 6-8 have Spanish class twice per week. By the end of eighth grade, the goal is for students to have had exposure to high school Spanish I. Kindergarten—3rd grade does not receive a grade in Spanish.

If a student enters Mother Teresa during or after the sixth grade, enrollment in Spanish will be handled on a case by case basis depending upon their previous exposure to a foreign language and aptitude. Additionally, students who have an Individual Education Plan or other identified needs, may be eligible for a study hall or academic support period, in lieu of Spanish.

**Student Support Services**

The Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School intervention team consists of intervention specialists, reading specialists, and a speech-language pathologist. Intervention services are provided to students

that have been identified through classroom teacher recommendation, regular assessment, or through a formal evaluation process depending on the student need and the type of services provided. MTCES also offers Action Plans to students who have a documented medical diagnosis that negatively impacts their academic performance in the classroom. Academic concerns should be addressed with a student's classroom teacher(s) first. If a student is suspected of needing intervention services, the classroom teacher will contact the intervention team for further assistance. The intervention team will contact parents with additional information. Note: Services from the Reading Specialists are not covered by the Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship.

## Counseling Support Services

Recognizing that mental health needs have increased, MTCES has employed both a full-time and part-time school counselor. The school counselors teach age-appropriate lessons in the classroom. They also meet with students individually with signed parent permission. A permission form for students to receive counseling services can be obtained from the main office or by request from your child's homeroom teacher. These services are not covered by the Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship.

Counselors may recommend the use of a community counselor based on concerns identified or if the concern is not impacting school performance.

## Temporary Home Instruction

Home instruction for children who are physically unable to attend school for an extended period may need to be provided through the local public school district. The student may need to enroll in the local public school to receive this instruction. Special consideration should be given on a case-by-case basis and in full consultation with parents/guardians, physician, school administration, and other related parties.

## Schedule

### School Day

Homeroom and prayer begin at 7:45am; students are required to be present. School concludes at 2:20pm. Doors will be open at 7:20 am and students are asked to follow identified arrival procedures.

#### For car riders:

Students will be dropped off in the front circle. **Parents should remain in their cars at all times unless they have parked to walk their students to the front doors.** All students will enter through the main doors to the school and proceed to the gym until the start of the school day.

#### For bus riders:

All students will enter through the bus rider entrance near the bus drop off location. All students will proceed to the gym until the start of the school day.

**\*\*PLEASE NOTE:** At the start of the school year, kindergarten students will enter school then proceed to the Kindergarten Gathering Space until 7:30. After 7:30, all kindergarten students will go directly to their classrooms.

The school's business hours are from 7:30 am until 3:00 pm.

### Lunch and Recess Schedule

| Time        | Lunch   | Recess |
|-------------|---------|--------|
| 11:05–11:25 | 3, 4    | 5, 6   |
| 11:27–11:47 | 5, 6    | 3, 4   |
| 11:50–12:10 | 7, 8    | 1, 2   |
| 12:12–12:32 | K, 1, 2 | 7, 8   |
| 12:32–12:55 |         | K      |

## **Core Class Schedule**

Class schedules change each year due to the variety of demands that need to be met. Homeroom schedules are given out during the first week of school.

## **Specials Class Schedule**

Along with the core academic subjects, students also attend specials: music, art, gym, technology, library, and Spanish.

|                    |                |
|--------------------|----------------|
| Art                | Once per week  |
| Physical Education | Twice per week |
| Music              | Once per week  |
| Spanish K – 6      | Once per week  |
| Spanish 7 & 8      | Twice per week |
| Technology         | Once per week  |
| Library K-4        | Once per week  |

## **Homework**

### **General Guidelines and Procedures**

Your child(ren) will receive homework on a consistent basis as it often grows out of class work, and it is a reinforcement of what a child learns in the classroom. Some assignments may take the form of long range assignments, such as research projects, writing assignments, or presentations.

Parents are encouraged to show an interest in their child's work. This does not mean doing the child's work, but taking an interest in what the child does and guiding him/her to completion.

In general, students should expect 10 minutes of homework multiplied by the grade level they are in for grades K-4.(i.e. grade 2–20 min; grade 4–40 min) Students in grades 5 & 6 should expect 50-75 minutes of homework per night. Students in grades 7 & 8 should expect 60-120 minutes of homework per night.

### **Homework Make-up Procedures**

Students who are absent are required to make up missed assignments within the number of days missed; for example, if a child is absent for two days, he or she will be given two days upon returning to school to make up the missed work.

Work that is due the day of the absence will be due the day of a student's return, unless other arrangements have been made with the classroom teacher. If a student has been absent for an extended period of time (more than 3 consecutive days), it is always important to communicate with the classroom teacher to make arrangements that are in the best interest of the student. It will be the student's responsibility to schedule test/quiz make-ups within that amount of time.

Students in grades 7 and 8 will email their teachers when absent to get make-up work.

Teachers are not required to give work ahead of time. Please email teachers prior to 8:30 am on the day of a child's absence in order to have it collected for the day of their absence. Homework will be collected and ready for pickup after 3:00 pm that school day.

For policies and procedures regarding late assignments, please refer to the classroom packet for rules about late homework.

## Field Trips

Field trips for students are educational experiences which enhance the curriculum either as an introduction, reinforcement, or culmination of a unit of study. Advance notice of field trips, mode of transportation and cost, if any, will be sent home to the parents.

A permission slip will be completed for each trip. This slip must be completed by the parents. If the permission slip is not completed, your child will not be permitted to go on the trip. All field trips are supervised by teachers and/or parent chaperones. All fees will be charged to student accounts.

All school sponsored field trips will abide by school policies. Attending a field trip is not a "right" of each student. Students may be excluded from field trips due to past behavior or other justification.

## **Absences and Attendance**

***It is our expectation that students will be present in school as much as possible. Families are encouraged to minimize student absences due to travel and appointments. Every effort should be made to schedule these when school is not in session.***

### **Tardy to School**

A student will be considered tardy if he/she is not in homeroom/at morning prayer at 7:45 a.m. but arrives before 9:45 a.m. The only excused tardies are those that are documented with an original note from a doctor verifying a medical appointment that particular morning.

Doors will be closed and locked at 7:45 am so all MTCES Team members can attend Morning Prayer to start the day. Doors will be closed and locked at 7:45 until the conclusion of Morning Prayer. Students who arrive after 7:45 a.m. must be signed into the office by a parent. **Please do not drop off tardy students without signing the student in for the day. You must come into the office with your student.** A MTCES Team member will be available to assist you at the completion of Morning Prayer.

Upon receipt of a fifth unexcused tardy in a school year, an advisory letter will be sent to the parents. Upon receipt of an eighth unexcused tardy in a school year, a meeting with the principal may be required. Students may be put on probationary contracts for excessive tardiness. Excessive tardiness may be referred to the appropriate authorities. Students arriving on a bus which is late will not be counted as tardy.

## **Absences**

**Special Note:** The planned shadow days provided to eighth grade students will NOT be counted as absences. No Shadow Day Form is required on the planned shadow days. Further information is provided by the eighth grade teachers regarding these days.

### **Excessive Absences**

Students who are absent more than 10 days in a trimester, or who have a pattern of absences throughout the year, may be asked to produce a doctor's excuse. Excessive unexcused absence or tardiness may result in a failure to pass the current grade. The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce employs the following definitions for absenteeism and truancy:

Chronic Absenteeism is defined as being absent 10% of the total school hours over the course of the academic year, regardless of whether the absences are excused or unexcused.

Excessive Absences is defined as being absent 38 hours in a month, excused or unexcused, unless the absences are medically excused by a health professional.

Habitual Truancy is defined as being absent 30 consecutive hours without a legitimate excuse for the consecutive absences; or 42 hours in a month, or 72 hours within an academic year.

Absences are only marked as excused if:

1. a written parent note is provided listing all of the following: student name, date of absence, and reason for absence. Notes without a reason will not be accepted. These notes may be submitted via email to [attendance@mtces.org](mailto:attendance@mtces.org) or handwritten. There is a limit of **10** parent notes in a year.
2. written medical verification or verification of: death in immediate family, required court appearance, lack of bus transportation due to weather or required quarantine.

Absences **exceeding 10** will REQUIRE one of the following in order to be excused:

1. written medical verification with the doctor's/dentist's signature has been received;  
it is recommended that parents obtain medical verification whenever an appointment occurs during the school day or a doctor's visit in the evening will result in a child's absence the following day
2. verification that the absence is due to:
  - A. a death in the immediate family;
  - B. a required court appearance;
  - C. lack of school bus transportation due to inclement weather
  - D. required quarantine
3. special arrangements have been made with the principal.

It is the responsibility of the parent(s) to monitor their individual child's absences within a given trimester. Attendance information may be accessed using Option C. **Both excused and unexcused absences will be reported on the report card as "Absences". The notes section on Option C will indicate when an absence has been excused.**

### **Absences and EdChoice Scholarships**

Students who are receiving EdChoice Scholarships will not be eligible for renewal if they have more than 20 unexcused absences in a year.

### **Reporting Absences**

If it is necessary for your child to be absent from school, please follow these procedures:

On the day of absence, please email ([attendance@mtces.org](mailto:attendance@mtces.org)) the school office before 8:30 am, giving the reason for absence. MTCES must comply with the "Missing Child Act" which requires daily contacts with the parents of every absent child.

It is requested that parents send a written excuse with your child when he or she returns to school even if the absence is only one day. This note should include the child's name, date of absence, reason for absence, and signature of the parent. These written notes are kept on file. Absences of three consecutive days or more may require a doctor's note for a child's return to school.

### **Vacations**

***It is our expectation that students will be present in school as much as possible. Vacations during the school year are disruptive to learning and strongly discouraged.***

While families may choose to take vacation or remove children from school for other reasons during the school year, MTCES teachers **will not** provide assignments prior to a vacation. Assignments will be

provided to students upon return and will be the responsibility of the family to make up. Instruction missed during an absence cannot be replicated and families should be prepared to support their student(s) in learning the concepts missed due to a vacation. Absences for vacations **are not excused**.

## **Attendance Under Special Circumstances**

MTCES is a Catholic school that abides by the teachings and rules of the Catholic Church. Faith is integrated into all aspects of the school's activities. It would be inconsistent with the school's identity and mission to teach, promote, or encourage an understanding that is contrary to Catholic teachings. Thus, a student's expression of his/her gender, sexual identity, or sexuality that is inconsistent with the Catholic faith may be considered by MTCES when determining whether to admit or retain a student.

### **Student Pregnancy**

The decision to admit or retain a student in the school who has become pregnant, or caused another student to become pregnant, will be made by the principal after all involved parties have been consulted. In each case, the decision will be made with the welfare of the student(s) involved, and the common good and welfare of all the students considered.

### **Gender Identity**

According to the Catholic Faith, a person's sexual identity is rooted in one's biological identity as male or female. A person's biological identity and gender identity are considered to be one and the same.

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati has specified the following policy regarding gender identity:

In Catholic schools, all curricular and extra-curricular activity is rooted in and consistent with the principles of Catholic doctrine.

Catholic schools should:

1. Support students with gender dysphoria by treating them with sensitivity, respect, mercy, and compassion.
2. Require that participation on school teams be according to biological sex.
3. Require that names and pronouns be in accordance with the person's biological sex.
4. Designate Catholic sex education, uniforms and gender appropriate dress, bathrooms, locker rooms, showers, and sleeping accommodations on trips according to biological sex.
5. Maintain names in school records according to the student's biological sex.
6. Provide reasonable accommodation to a private bathroom for use by any student who desires increased privacy.

In case of a specific request, consider in a compassionate way, on a case-by-case basis, the physical and psychological needs of a student based on the following questions:

1. What is the specific request of the student and/or parents?
2. Is the request in keeping with the teachings of the Catholic Church?
3. Is the school reasonably able to accommodate the request?

## **Health and Safety**

### **Medical Information**

At the beginning of each school year, parents/guardians will provide current medical information for the students. If information changes during the school year, parents/guardians must contact the school with the updated information.

## **Administration of Medication**

MTCES follows the following Archdiocese of Cincinnati mandate and Section 3313.713 of the Ohio Revised Code regarding administering medication to students.

### ***Administering Medications to Students (O.R.C. 3313.713)***

Each school shall adopt a policy on the authority of its employees to administer drugs prescribed to students enrolled at the school. That policy must either: (1) prohibit, except as otherwise required by federal special education laws, employees from administering drugs, or (2) authorize designated employees to do so.

In the event the school adopts a policy allowing designated employees to administer drugs to students, the designated employees must be either: (a) licensed health professionals, or (b) have completed a drug administration training program conducted by a licensed health professional and considered appropriate by the school. Likewise, if the school adopts a policy permitting the administration of medication, that policy also may provide that certain drugs, types of drugs, or types of procedures should not be administered or used.

A school which elects to have a policy allowing the administration of drugs to its students may administer the drug only after all of the following occur:

- 1) The school receives a written request, signed by the student's parent or guardian, that the drug be administered to the student. This request should include a statement that the parent/guardian releases the school and its employees from any and all liability for damages or injury resulting directly or indirectly from the presence of the medication in the school or its use by the student;
- 2) The school receives a statement, signed by the prescriber, that includes the following information:
  - a) The name and address of the student;
  - b) The school and class in which the student is enrolled;
  - c) The name of the drug and the dosage to be administered;
  - d) The times or intervals at which each dosage of the drug is to be administered;
  - e) The date the administration of the drug is to begin and end;
  - f) Any severe adverse reactions that should be reported to the prescriber and one or more phone numbers at which the prescriber can be reached in case of an emergency; and
  - g) Special instructions for administration of the drug, including sterile conditions and storage.
- 3) The parent or guardian agrees to submit a revised statement signed by the prescriber if any of the information provided immediately above in (2)(a)-(g) changes;
- 4) The employee(s) designated by the school to administer the drug receives a copy of the statement set forth in (2) and (3), immediately above;
- 5) The drug is received by the employee(s) designated by the school to administer the drug to the student for whom the drug is prescribed in the container in which it was dispensed by the prescriber or licensed pharmacist; and
- 6) Any other procedures required by the school are followed.

If the school adopts a policy permitting the administration of drugs to its students, the school shall keep and retain copies of: (a) all written requests by a student's parent or guardian to administer the drugs; and (b) all prescriber statements noted above. The school shall keep and retain copies of all medical records pertaining to each drug a student receives in that student's respective file. The school also must establish a secure and locked location in each building for the storage of drugs to be administered. Drugs that require refrigeration may be kept in a refrigerator in a place not commonly used by students.

The possession or use of non-prescription, over-the-counter medication during school hours is discouraged. Administration of these medications (i.e. throat lozenges, acetaminophen drugs such as Tylenol and Datril, etc.) should be determined on the local school level, if the school determines that adequate personnel are available, and as long as appropriate permission forms are on file. The school

will not administer aspirin to students because of its connection to Reye's Syndrome. At the discretion of the principal, the school may require that medication be kept by school personnel until the student needs to use it.

Notwithstanding the above, a student may possess and use an epinephrine autoinjector to treat anaphylaxis, subject to the following conditions. First, the school must have written approval from the student's parent/guardian. Second, the school must have written approval of the prescriber of the autoinjector.

The prescriber's written approval must include the following:

- (1) The student's name and address;
- (2) The names and dose of the medication contained in the autoinjector;
- (3) The date the administration of the medication is to begin and end, if known;
- (4) Acknowledgment that the prescriber has determined that the student is capable of possessing and using the autoinjector appropriately and has provided the student with training in the proper use of the autoinjector;
- (5) Circumstances in which the autoinjector should be used;
- (6) Written instructions that outline procedures school employees should follow in the event that the student is unable to administer the anaphylaxis medication, or the medication does not produce the expected relief from the student's anaphylaxis;
- (7) Any severe adverse reactions that may occur to the child using the autoinjector that should be reported to the prescriber;
- (8) Any severe adverse reactions that may occur to another child, for whom the autoinjector is not prescribed, should such a child receive a dose of the medication;
- (9) At least one emergency telephone number for contacting the prescriber in an emergency;
- (10) At least one emergency telephone number for contacting the parent/guardian; and
- (11) Any other special instructions from the prescriber.

The school also must have received a backup dose of the anaphylaxis medication from the student's parent/guardian. And in the event a student or school employee has to administer anaphylaxis medication to the student, the school must immediately thereafter request assistance from an emergency medical service provider.

### **Medication Administered at School**

The school nurse, or designated school personnel, who has completed a drug administration training program, conducted by a licensed professional, may administer medication (prescription and over the counter) upon proper completion of a signed medical authorization form. This must be signed by the parent(s)/guardian(s) and prescribing physician. A note from the student's parent/guardian or verbal permission is not considered acceptable for school personnel to administer medication.

Medication sent to the school must be in its original container and have an affixed label indicating the student's name, name of the medication, dosage, route of administration and times of administration. Medication shall be brought to the office in the original bottle by the parent/guardian.

No medicine (prescription or over the counter) may be kept by the student in the desk, backpack, lunch box, etc. or on his/her person. Exceptions may apply such as treatment for food allergies, asthma, or diabetes.

### **Diabetic Care Policy**

MTCES complies with [Section 3313.7112](#) of the Ohio Revised Code regarding diabetes care.

MTCES is committed to ensuring students who have diabetes receive appropriate and needed diabetes

care in accordance with an order signed by the students' treating physician. Such care must include the following:

1. Checking and recording blood glucose levels and ketone levels or assisting the student with checking and recording these levels;
2. Responding to blood glucose levels that are outside of the student's target range;
3. In the case of severe hypoglycemia, administering glucagon and other emergency treatments as prescribed;
4. Administering insulin or assisting the student in self-administering insulin through the insulin delivery system the student uses;
5. Providing oral diabetes medications;
6. Understanding recommended schedules and food intake for meals and snacks in order to calculate medication dosages pursuant to the order of the student's treating physician;
7. Following the treating physician's instructions regarding meals, snacks, and physical activity; and
8. Administering diabetes medication, as long as the administration is performed by a school nurse or, in the absence of a school nurse, a school employee who is trained in diabetes care under [Section 3313.7112\(E\)](#) of the Ohio Revised Code.

Within 14 days of receiving an order signed by the treating physician of a student with diabetes, the school shall inform the student's parent, legal guardian, and/or other person having care or charge of the student that the student may be entitled to a school accommodation plan regarding the student's diabetes.

### **School Administration of Diabetes Medications**

Diabetes medication may be administered by a school nurse or, in the absence of a school nurse, a school employee who is trained in diabetes care under [Section 3313.7112\(E\)](#) of the Ohio Revised Code and so long as all of the following are satisfied:

- 1) The school receives a written request, signed by the student's parent, legal guardian, and/or other person having care or charge of the student, that the drug be administered to the student.
- 2) The school receives a statement, signed by the prescriber, that includes all of the following information:
  - a) The name and address of the student;
  - b) The school and class in which the student is enrolled;
  - c) The name of the drug and the dosage to be administered;
  - d) The times or intervals at which each dosage of the drug is to be administered;
  - e) The date the administration of the drug is to begin;
  - f) The date the administration of the drug is to cease;
  - g) Any severe adverse reactions that should be reported to the prescriber and one or more phone numbers at which the prescriber can be reached in an emergency; and
  - h) Any special instructions for administration of the drug, including sterile conditions and storage.
- 3) The parent, legal guardian, or other person having care or charge of the student agrees to submit a revised statement signed by the prescriber to the school if any of the information provided by the prescriber pursuant to section (2) above changes.
- 4) The person authorized by the school to administer the drug receives a copy of the statements referenced in section (2) and (3) above.
- 5) The drug is received by the person authorized to administer the drug to the student for whom the drug is prescribed in the container in which it was dispensed by the prescriber or a licensed pharmacist.

- 6) Any and all other procedures required by the school are followed.

If a drug is administered to a student, the school shall acquire and retain copies of the written requests required by section (1) above and the statements required by sections (2) and (3) above. Additionally, the school shall ensure that by the next school day following the receipt of any statement required by sections (2) and (3) above, a copy is given to the person authorized to administer drugs to the student for whom the statement has been received. Diabetes medication that is to be administered at school shall be kept in an easily accessible location.

Parents, legal guardians, and/or other persons having care or charge of the student with diabetes are responsible for providing the needed medication and supplies (including but not limited to foods for treating low blood glucose) for the student.

### **Student Administration of Diabetes Medications**

On written request of the parent, legal guardian, and/or other person having care or charge of a student and authorization by the student's treating physician, a student with diabetes shall be permitted during regular school hours and school-sponsored activities to attend to the care and management of his/her diabetes in accordance with the order issued by the student's treating physician so long as that physician determines that the student is capable of performing diabetes care tasks. The student shall be permitted to perform diabetes care tasks in a classroom, in any area of the school or school grounds, and at any school-related activity, and to possess on his/herself at all times all necessary supplies and equipment to perform these tasks. If the student or the parent, legal guardian, and/or other person having care or charge of the student so requests, the student shall have access to a private area for performing diabetes care tasks.

If the student performs any diabetes care tasks or uses medical equipment for purposes other than his/her own care, the school may revoke the student's permission to attend to the care and management of the student's diabetes.

### **Non-Restriction Disclaimer**

The school shall not restrict a student who has diabetes from attending the school on the basis that the student has diabetes, that the school does not have a full-time school nurse, or that the school does not have an employee trained in diabetes care. The school shall not require or pressure a parent, legal guardian, and/or other person having care or charge of a student to provide diabetes care for the student with diabetes at school or school-related activities.

### **Policy On Student Use of Marijuana**

MTCES is committed to providing the most optimal educational environment for all of its students. Drug abuse is a significant problem throughout our society, and it can have devastating consequences, particularly on young people.

MTCES maintains a policy of zero tolerance for students' use of marijuana, in particular due to its continued criminalization under federal law. Therefore, any student who uses, possesses, sells, distributes, purchases, or is under the influence of marijuana may be subject to discipline, up to and including expulsion. For purposes of clarity, this policy applies in all respects and with equal force regardless of whether a student holds a prescription or recommendation from a health care provider and regardless of a student's status as a medical marijuana cardholder under Chapter 3796 of the Ohio Revised Code. A positive drug test for marijuana will be treated the same as a positive test for any other illegal or controlled substance.

### **Child Protection**

MTCES follows all Archdiocese of Cincinnati mandates and [Section 2151.421](#) of the Ohio Revised Code

regarding reporting suspected child abuse or neglect.

## **Immunizations**

MTCES complies with the minimum immunization requirements set forth by Sections 3313.67 and 3313.671 of the Ohio Revised Code. Although MTCES complies with those minimum requirements, it also retains discretion to enforce stricter requirements at any time, for instance, by requiring vaccination even over a parent's/guardian's conscience or religious conviction, objection, or by revoking a previous exception.

## **Health Screenings**

Annually, vision and hearing screenings are conducted for students in grades K, 1, 3, 5, & 7. In addition, all students new to MTCES in grades 2, 4, 6, & 8 are screened.

## **Diagnosis, Treatment & Illness**

If your child needs to be sent home due to fever, vomiting, diarrhea, pinkeye, head lice or suspicious rash, please pick him or her up promptly. **The nurse will communicate a date and time which shall be the earliest a child may return to school.** This information will be shared with office personnel. Students who return to school before the given date will be sent home immediately. We take every precaution to keep our students and the general school population healthy.

## **Visitors**

Parents and other visitors are required to register in the school office and wear a school visitor pass. Do not go to any classroom without permission from the school office. This regulation is meant to keep "unwanted" visitors out of the school and is in accordance with Section 2917.12(1) of the Ohio Revised Code, and applies to all visitors.

## **SafeParish**

Based on the formal requirements set by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati all MTCES volunteers who may or may not have contact with children, young people and individuals at risk, as part of their duties, are required to set up and maintain a SafeParish account by completing the following:

- Register on-line at <https://www.aocsafeenvironment.org/>
- More information regarding the SafeParish registration process, including directions, can be found at this link: <https://resources.catholicaoc.org/offices/safe-environment/safeparish>
- Complete the registration and initial online training.
- Complete a background check through selection.com in your account.

Once the Archdiocese of Cincinnati has received confirmation you have completed SafeParish training for the Decree on Child Protection and have a clear background check, the information will be sent to Mother Teresa and you will be cleared to volunteer and work with our children.

All volunteers must be current on training with SafeParish. Those who do not maintain their quarterly training will be deactivated and will no longer be able to volunteer. Please pay careful attention to remaining current with your training.

For assistance with SafeParish please contact Betsy Kessler at [bkessler@mtces.org](mailto:bkessler@mtces.org)

## **Missing Children Law**

According to Ohio State Law, Section 3313.672, a pupil at the time of his/her initial entry to a public or non-public school shall present to the person in charge of admission a copy of the original certificate of the child's birth and copies of those records maintained by the school that the child most recently attended. If copies of the items mentioned above are not presented, the principal of the school shall notify the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction in the area.

## **Rapid Dismissal, Tornado, and Lockdown Drills**

Monthly rapid dismissal drills are mandated by law as are tornado drills during the tornado season. A lockdown drill must be conducted at least three times a year. It is essential that everyone follows directions promptly when the signal is first given. All adults who are in the building at the time of a drill are also expected to follow the safety procedures and regulations. The fire alarm will sound as a signal for a rapid dismissal drill. Tornado and lockdown drills will be communicated via the school's intercom system. Procedures to be followed in the event of a rapid dismissal, tornado or lockdown will be discussed with the students early in the school year and directions for evacuation procedures will be posted in each classroom.

## **Security**

Once the school day begins, all of the doors to the building are locked and the School Resource Officer (SRO) assists with all safety operations. If you are visiting the school, you must go through the main entrance and be buzzed in. There is a camera at the entrance which is used by the office staff to screen visitors. Please report to the office, and sign in using the school's enhanced visitor identification system.

## **Safety Plan**

Should an emergency situation ever arise in our area, or at our school, while school is in session, we want you to be aware that Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School has made preparations to respond effectively to such situations.

Should we have an intruder in the school building or on or near school grounds during school hours, plans have been made to help keep your student(s) protected. MTCES has an emergency operations plan, which has been formulated to respond to such a crisis; this plan has been approved by the MTCES faculty and staff, the MTCES Board, and the Butler County Sheriff's Department. While all members of the MTCES faculty and staff have a copy of the MTCES Operations Plan, we will not be distributing this plan to families; distribution of the plan to families would create a major safety concern.

While we are unable to give you specifics, please know that in the event of a serious emergency, parents will be contacted through the school's on-call system. It is imperative that your contact information is accurate and up-to-date in the event that an emergency all-call needs to be made.

In the event of an emergency at MTCES, your cooperation is necessary. We will do our absolute best to keep you informed but we ask that you avoid the following:

- Do not telephone the school. Telephone lines may be needed for emergency communication.
- Until you are notified, please do not drive to school to get your child. In the event that students need to be transferred to another location for pick-up, MTCES will again message you to keep you up-to-date and informed.

For the safety of the students, there is little information that we can give you in advance of such a crisis, but we do ask that you make sure to:

- Impress upon your children the need for them to follow the directions of any school personnel in times of an emergency.
- If you need to add any additional contact information for our all-call list, please submit this information via Option C or contact the main office

Please discuss these matters with your immediate family. Planning ahead will help alleviate concern during emergencies.

## **Student Code of Conduct**

MTCES is a caring and supportive Catholic faith community, and as such, parents/guardians, teachers, and classmates should expect to be treated in a Christian manner. All members of our community are expected to be respectful and polite to each other at any time and place.

Discipline will be administered fairly but firmly, whenever an individual's action interferes with the rights of teachers to teach or the students to learn, or otherwise disrupts the educational environment. All adults on the staff are responsible for student discipline. Students who fail to follow these rules are subject to disciplinary policy and subsequent consequences.

MTCES reserves the right to require a student to participate in counseling/therapy as an ongoing means of remedying behavioral issues, or as a condition of returning to school at all. By signing this Handbook, all students and parents/guardians agree that they will provide whatever authorization is necessary for MTCES to speak with the counselor, therapist, or other mental health professional in such instances to ensure the students' behavioral issues have been or are being fully addressed. As with the method and extent of any disciplinary measures, MTCES reserves final judgment in these matters.

The code of conduct and rules stated in this handbook are not exhaustive. There may be inappropriate incidents that occur which are not stated here. In all disciplinary matters, administration and faculty reserve the right to apply disciplinary measures based on their professional and educational discretion. Additionally, please see the Conduct Disclaimer section below.

### **Student Discipline Policies**

One of our primary aims is to provide quality instruction for our children; this cannot happen when proper discipline is lacking. When an individual student insists on disrupting the class or causing other trouble, measures will be taken to control the situation. Parents will be informed when a certain problem needs attention. Your cooperation is vital to effective discipline. If you do not understand measures used with regard to your child, please contact the teacher involved.

Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School has instituted a discipline system for all grades, which includes conduct points, tardiness, lunch/recess detentions, after-school detentions, loss of privileges, in-school suspensions, out of school suspensions, and expulsions. General details are outlined below, including an explanation of offenses. Every attempt is made to maintain consistent discipline measures.

MTCES reserves the right to impose discipline for unacceptable behavior that takes place off school grounds and outside of school hours.

It is the policy of MTCES **not** to discuss the discipline of another child with any parent besides the parent of the child.

#### **Kindergarten – Third Grade**

Teacher discipline/behavior policies are determined by that teacher and are outlined at the beginning of each school year. Depending on the severity of the behavior, a student may lose recess time, receive a conduct mark, and/or receive a detention. In some instances, if a student repeatedly violates classroom rules, he/she will be sent to the main office. Students that are sent to the main office could be sent home with documentation requiring a parent signature and conversation. If a pattern of poor behavior continues without effective disciplinary resolution, a meeting between the teacher, administration, and parent(s) will be necessary.

#### **Fourth Grade**

To help 4th Graders make good choices and take responsibility for their actions, we will use a Respect and Responsibility Chart. When a student demonstrates behaviors that do not meet our classroom and school expectations, the following will occur.

- Each offense will be recorded on the student's Respect & Responsibility Chart. A brief description of the behavior will be noted, and the chart will be sent home for a parent/guardian signature.
- A parent/guardian must sign the chart and return it to school the following day.
- After three parent/guardian signatures, the student will receive a missed recess as a consequence and an opportunity to reflect on how to make better choices.
- This system is to encourage accountability, strengthen communication between home and school, and help students develop positive habits.
- Each trimester, the student will be given a fresh opportunity to demonstrate respect and responsibility with a new chart.

#### **Fifth – Eighth Grade**

A conduct point will be given for each minor conduct incident. Examples include excessive talking, being disruptive, being late to class (3 minutes past bell w/o checking in), uniform infractions or failure to have a planner/ class materials.

A lunch detention (silent recess/lunch in classroom with assigned teacher) will be given to students for two minor conduct incidents in one day or two consecutive school days. Lunch detentions are also given for three minor conduct incidents in a five day period. These lunch detentions will be logged and parents will receive an email informing (but not debating) about the infraction. Please note that if the detention is given in the morning, the detention will be served that day. If it is given in the afternoon, it will be served the next school day.

Parents can request a students' conduct record at any time by contacting the homeroom teacher.

*3 recess/lunch detentions* = 1 hour after school detention with administration.

**\*\*Detentions will be held every Thursday from 2:20-3:20. After school detentions will be served on the Thursday following the date the detention was issued.**

*6 recess/lunch detentions* = parent/ teacher meeting and two one hour after school detentions with administration. A behavior plan may be created.

*9 recess/lunch detentions* = 3 hour after school detention with administration and possible loss of field trip privileges including the 8th grade class celebrations.  
Further action as needed.

Direct detentions will be given for blatant rule violations such as chewing gum, misuse of technology including cell phones, inappropriate/hurtful language, minor/first-time plagiarism (2 detentions) and classroom disruption.

Further infractions will be handled on an individual basis as determined by the team and administration. Serious infractions, such as bullying, discrimination, repeated plagiarism, and fighting, as stated in the handbook, will result in further disciplinary action. If further disciplinary action is needed, field trip privileges may be revoked.

Expulsions are the result of major violations of school rules and/or unacceptable behavior as determined by the Principal. Expulsion decisions are subjective. Although parents will have an opportunity to discuss the situation with the teacher, principal, and Board of Trustees, the decision of the Board of Trustees is final and cannot be appealed.

### **Description of Violations**

Examples of **minor violations** (though not limited to the list below):

Disruption of class/school activity

Tardiness to class

Violation of school safety rules

Violation of school uniform code

Misbehavior at school Masses

Violation of classroom rules determined by the teacher

Verbal altercations

Depending on the circumstances, any of the above could be considered a major violation.

Examples of **major violations** (though not limited to the list below):

Drug/Alcohol/Substance Abuse

Verbal, Physical, Sexual harassment / bullying

Crude and/or profane language or gestures

Defiance of school personnel, volunteers, or visitors

Leaving school property without permission of school personnel

Vandalizing property

Jeopardizing a person's safety, including self

Truancy

Stealing

Lying/misleading statement

Cheating/Plagiarism

Behavior contrary to the philosophy MTCES

Any of the above may result in the student's suspension and/or expulsion

### **Academic Integrity**

Plagiarism is the act of using the ideas or words of others as one's own. Students are instructed regarding the nature of plagiarism. Students are expected, in all work, to acknowledge the ideas and words of others appropriately through conventional standards.

### **Use of AI**

Using AI to generate assignments, papers, images, etc., is considered an act of cheating UNLESS a teacher has specifically instructed its use. This includes using AI to generate outlines, topic ideas, and other pre-writing materials. Student use of AI should always be cleared through the classroom teacher.

### **Responsible Uses of AI for Students**

***With their educator's permission***, students may be permitted to utilize AI for the following purposes:

**Aiding Creativity:** Students can harness generative AI to spark creativity across diverse subjects, including writing, visual arts, and music composition. Students should not use AI to replace their critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

**Collaboration:** Generative AI tools can assist students in group projects by contributing concepts, supplying research support, and identifying relationships between varied information.

**Content Creation and Enhancement:** AI can help generate personalized study materials, summaries, quizzes, and visual aids, and it can assist students with organizing their thoughts and content.

**Tutoring:** AI-powered virtual teaching assistants may provide support, answer questions, help with homework, and supplement classroom instruction.

Students and their parents/guardians should recognize the risks and limitations associated

with newly developed technologies like AI. For example, information contained in AI tools may be unreliable or inaccurate. Additionally, students should not enter personally identifiable, private, confidential, or proprietary information into AI models or tools.

### **Prohibited Uses of AI for Students**

Below are the prohibited uses of AI tools:

Inappropriate Use: Using AI tools to engage in bullying, harassing, intimidating, or other inappropriate behavior is strictly prohibited. Students are expected to use AI solely for educational purposes, upholding values of respect, inclusivity, and academic integrity at all times.

Plagiarism and Cheating: Students are prohibited from copying any source, including generative AI, without prior approval and adequate documentation. Students are prohibited from submitting AI-generated work as their original work. Any AI-generated content used in assignments must be appropriately cited. AI tools may be used for brainstorming or preliminary research, but using AI to generate answers or complete assignments without proper citation or passing off AI-generated content as one's own.

Unauthorized Use: Educators will clarify if, when, and how AI tools may be used in their classrooms. Students may not use AI without advance approval from their educator. Students are expected to review AI-generated content before using it.

Noncompliance with Other Policies: The use of AI technologies must comply with all school policies, including, but not limited to, academic integrity policies and student codes of conduct. Students and their parents/guardians are responsible for familiarizing themselves with these policies and ensuring compliance.

### **Illegal Substances**

The possession, use, distribution, or sale of illegal drugs or controlled substances, tobacco products, inhalants, alcoholic beverages, and/or instruments or objects capable of inflicting harm or used in a dangerous manner are not permitted.

### **Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Policy**

It is the policy of MTCES (the "School") that any form of harassment, intimidation, or bullying is expressly forbidden.

The Parish and School's internet and computer system and equipment may not be used to engage in harassment, intimidation, or bullying. The "Student Responsible Use of Technology" form must be signed by each student and on file with the School.

The School reserves the right to impose discipline for harassing, intimidating, bullying, and other inappropriate behavior that takes place off School grounds and outside School hours.

### **Definition of Terms**

"Electronic act" means an act committed through the use of a cellular or other telephone, computer, pager, personal communication device, or other electronic communication device.

"Harassment, intimidation, or bullying" means either of the following:

- Any intentional written, verbal, electronic, or physical act that a student has exhibited toward another particular student more than once and the behavior both:
  - o Causes mental or physical harm to the other student; and
  - o Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for the other student.
- Violence within a dating relationship.
- “Harassment, intimidation, or bullying” also means electronically transmitted acts i.e., by Internet, social media/network, blog, cell phone, personal digital assistance (PDA), wireless hand-held device, or other electronic communication device, that a student has exhibited toward another particular student more than once and the behavior both:
  - o Causes mental or physical harm to the other student; and
  - o Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for the other student.

In evaluating whether conduct constitutes harassment, intimidation, or bullying, special attention should be paid to the words chosen and the actions taken, whether such conduct occurred in front of others or was communicated to others, how the offender interacted with the victim, and the motivation, either admitted or appropriately inferred. What may constitute harassment, intimidation, or bullying in one circumstance might not constitute such in another. As in all disciplinary matters, the School will make this determination utilizing its professional and educational discretion and judgment.

#### Types of Conduct

Harassment, intimidation, and bullying can include many different behaviors including, but not limited to, overt intent to ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate another student. Examples of conduct that could constitute prohibited behaviors include:

- Engaging in unsolicited and offensive or insulting behavior;
- Physical violence and/or attacks;
- Threats, taunts, and intimidation through words and/or gestures;
- Extortion, damage, or stealing of money and/or possessions;
- Exclusion from the peer group or spreading rumors; and
- Repetitive and hostile behavior with the intent to harm others through the use of information and communication technologies, computers, cell phones, other electronic devices, the Internet, online websites, blogs, or social media/networks (also known as “cyber-bullying”). Examples of cyber-bullying include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - o Posting slurs on the Internet, websites, blogs, or social media/networks;
  - o Sending abusive or threatening instant messages, text messages, emails, or other communications through the Internet, websites, blogs, or social media/networks;
  - o Taking embarrassing photographs of students and posting them online or otherwise distributing them; and
  - o Using the Internet, websites, blogs, social media/networks, or electronic communication devices to impersonate another individual or circulate gossip or rumors to other students.

#### Complaints Regarding Harassment

##### Formal Complaints

Students and/or their parents/guardians may file reports regarding suspected harassment, intimidation, or bullying. Such written reports shall be reasonably specific including persons involved, number of times and places of the alleged conduct, the target of the suspected harassment, intimidation, or bullying, and the names of any potential witnesses. Such reports may be filed with any School staff member or administrator, and they shall be promptly forwarded to the principal or his/her designee.

##### Informal Complaints

Students and/or their parents/guardians may make informal complaints of conduct that they consider to

be harassment, intimidation, or bullying by verbal report to a teacher, School administrator, or other School personnel. Such informal complaints shall be reasonably specific as to the actions giving rise to the suspicion of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, including persons involved, number of times and places of the alleged conduct, the target of the prohibited behavior, and the names of any potential witnesses. A School staff member or administrator who receives an informal complaint shall promptly document the complaint in writing, including the above information. This written report by the School staff member and/or administrator shall be promptly forwarded to the principal or his/her designee.

#### Anonymous Complaints

Students who make informal complaints as set forth above may request that their name be maintained in confidence by the School staff member or administrator who receives the complaint. The anonymous complaints shall be reviewed, and reasonable action will be taken to address the situation, to the extent such action may be taken that (1) does not disclose the source of the complaint, and (2) is consistent with the concept of fairness to the student alleged to have committed acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

#### **Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School Anti-Bullying Parent/Student Contract**

I promise that I will do my best to keep our school a safe and caring place. This means I will:

1. Treat everyone with kindness and respect.
2. Resolve disagreements with other students peacefully.
3. Never tease, hurt, or name-call.
4. Never bully another student.
5. Refuse to join in if I see someone else being bullied.
6. Ask for help from an adult if I am bullied or see someone else being bullied.
7. Support decisions made by teachers and administrators about incidents and/or consequences of bullying.

Submission of the signature page at the end of this handbook serves as our signature for this Anti-Bullying Policy.

#### **Criminal Misconduct**

Allegations of criminal misconduct will be reported to law enforcement, and suspected child abuse will be reported to law enforcement and/or Child Protective Services, consistent with the Archdiocese Decree on Child Protection and Ohio law. All School personnel must cooperate with investigations by outside agencies.

#### **Search And Seizure**

MTCES reserves the right to search and inspect school property used by students at any time. MTCES also reserves the right to search and inspect personal property when the administration (1) suspects items prohibited by the school are in a student's possession; or (2) suspects a student may be engaged in conduct in violation of the school's policies and procedures. Such items may be confiscated and appropriate action, including disciplinary action, may be taken.

#### **Playground Behavior**

General playground rules:

- Christian language and behavior is expected.
- No hardballs or skateboards are permitted.
- No snowballing is permitted.
- No chewing gum is permitted.
- No tackle football is permitted.
- No personal electronics of any kind are permitted on the playground.
- Students must respect the adult supervising.

## Conduct Disclaimer

No discipline issued pursuant to any handbook shall bind the School to issue the same, or even comparable, discipline to other students in the future. Nor will any form or extent of discipline be construed as a precedent for how discipline will be imposed moving forward. Rather, the School reserves sole judgment and discretion in disciplining students based on the circumstances of each incident, including but not limited to the respective age(s) of the student(s) involved, the student(s)' perceived maturity level, the conduct at issue, the student(s)' attitude and degree of cooperation, the student(s)' disciplinary history, and any other aggravating or mitigating circumstances the School deems relevant. Nothing in this Handbook limits or otherwise constrains the School's authority, discretion, judgment, or responsibility in any student disciplinary matters

## Finality of Decisions

The principal is the final recourse in all disciplinary situations and may waive or impose a disciplinary action at his/her discretion.

## Uniform Policy

A condition of enrollment in MTCES is the acceptance on the part of both students and parents of the uniform code of the school. Parents are asked to enforce this code. Any child in violation of the uniform code will be sent to the school office and will remain there until proper school attire is brought to the student.

## Student Appearance

Clothing worn to school should reflect the seriousness and importance of the learning environment; therefore, student attire is expected to be clean and neat at all times. The uniform code is based on modesty, neatness, cleanliness, good taste, and safety.

Girls in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades may wear very light make-up. Girls may not wear eye shadow, eyeliner or heavy mascara. Boys are not permitted to wear any makeup.

Student hair should be a natural color. Hair accessories should be simple and not distract from the learning environment. Items that may distract include, but are not limited to, oversized bows and headbands that include extra embellishment (i.e., a top hat, unicorn style, or cat ears).

## Girls' Uniforms

*All uniform items should be clean and in good repair.*

|                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Shirt</b>         | White or light blue polo with collar, long or short sleeve, plain or with MTCES logo or turtleneck.                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Skirt Gr. 5-8</b> | Clear Blue Plaid, pleated, worn all year, must be no shorter than 3 inches above the knee. Skirts may not be rolled at the waist. Navy or white leggings or tights only are allowed under the skirt. Shorts must be worn under the skirt. |
| <b>Skort Gr. K-4</b> | Navy, uniform-style skort, worn all year, must be no shorter than 3 inches above the knee. <b>Skorts should be twill or cotton uniform style.</b> Athletic wear skorts should not be worn.                                                |

|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Jumper Gr. K-4</b>  | Clear Blue Plaid, pleated, worn all year, must be no shorter than 3 inches above the knee. Navy or white leggings or tights only are allowed under the jumper. Shorts must be worn under the jumper.                                                                                       |
| <b>Pants or Shorts</b> | Navy, worn all year. Must be of appropriate length and worn at the waist. <b>Pants &amp; shorts should be twill/chino style.</b> No joggers or leggings are allowed. <b>Belts must be worn with pants/shorts with belt loops in Gr. 5-8.</b>                                               |
| <b>Sweater</b>         | Plain navy or white in crew neck or cardigan style.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Sweatshirt</b>      | Plain navy or white crew neck sweatshirt (a small logo is allowed) or MTCES spirit wear uniform-approved sweatshirt. See the document on OptionC for allowable styles. <b>All uniform-approved sweatshirts have the MTCES logo and DO NOT have the running knight or say "Volunteers".</b> |
| <b>Shoes</b>           | Shoes should have closed toes and full backs. Athletic shoes are suggested and must be worn on PE days. No sandals, Crocs, open back or slip on shoes without a full heel covering, sling back, slippers, or open toe shoes.                                                               |
| <b>Socks</b>           | Socks must be worn at all times.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Jewelry</b>         | Limited to watches, simple necklaces, and post earrings.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

### Boys' Uniform

*All uniform items should be clean and in good repair.*

|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Shirt</b>           | White or light blue polo with collar, long or short sleeve, plain or with MTCES logo or turtleneck. Shirts must be tucked into the pants/shorts.                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Pants or Shorts</b> | Navy, worn all year. Must be of appropriate length and worn at the waist. <b>Pants &amp; shorts should be twill/chino style. No joggers or cargo style pants/shorts are allowed.</b> <b>Belts must be worn with pants/shorts with belt loops in Gr. 5-8.</b>                               |
| <b>Sweater</b>         | Plain navy or white in crew neck or cardigan style.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Sweatshirt</b>      | Plain navy or white crew neck sweatshirt (a small logo is allowed) or MTCES spirit wear uniform-approved sweatshirt. See the document on OptionC for allowable styles. <b>All uniform-approved sweatshirts have the MTCES logo and DO NOT have the running knight or say "Volunteers".</b> |
| <b>Shoes</b>           | Shoes should have closed toes and full backs. Athletic shoes are suggested and must be worn on PE days. No sandals, Crocs, open back or slip on shoes without a full heel covering, sling back, slippers, or open toe shoes.                                                               |
| <b>Socks</b>           | Socks must be worn at all times.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Jewelry</b>         | Limited to watches and simple chains.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

## PE Uniform Grades 5-8 for both boys & girls

|                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Shirt</b>      | Charcoal Gray MTCES PE t-shirt. Purchased from MTCES.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Shorts</b>     | Navy blue MTCES <b>unisex PE shorts</b> . Purchased from MTCES.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Sweatpants</b> | PLAIN (free from embellishments, large logos, stripes, patterns, etc) Navy blue sweatpants or Navy blue MTCES sweatpants. These may be worn year-round. Navy blue sweatpants not purchased from MTCES should be the deep navy blue color of the MTCES joggers and PE shorts. No other colors of blue are acceptable even if the manufacturer calls it “navy”. |

### Where to Buy

Pants, polos and skorts can be found at many retailers such as Land’s End, Old Navy, Target and JCPenney. Girl’s plaid skirts and jumpers can be purchased through Shaheen’s (2656 Sharon Rd. Cincinnati, OH 45241). The option to purchase uniform-approved sweatshirts that may be worn during the school day and PE uniforms will be available via the school website.

### Mass Uniform Guidelines

Students are expected to look neat for school each day, but especially on Mass days. Only tucked-in polo shirts may be worn to Mass; uniform-approved quarter zip style sweatshirts, crew neck sweatshirts, full zip sweatshirts, and sweaters may be worn to Mass. All other sweatshirts may be worn during the school day, but should be removed for Mass.

NOTE: For students in grades 5-8 who have PE on Mass days and will be in PE uniforms, students will wear their PE uniforms to Mass unless otherwise informed by teachers of a need to change due to special circumstances. **Any student participating in the Mass as a lector, Eucharistic Minister, cantor, or presenter of the gifts should be in full regular uniform.**

### Out of Uniform Days

Out of Uniform Days are posted on the school calendar. Out of uniform days are a privilege that require the student to exercise good taste and judgment. All clothing must be modest and neat. If a student chooses to, they may come to school in full uniform instead of out of uniform.

- Shorts may be worn. Must be appropriate length, not form fitting, and worn at the waist. No undergarments should be visible.
- Blue jeans without holes or tears, sport jerseys, sweatshirt, sweatpants, and appropriate T-shirts are permitted on out of uniform days.
- Shirts and tops must cover all undergarments and have high enough necklines to cover all cleavage. Shirts with spaghetti straps, strapless tops, crop tops, tank tops or low cut shirts are not permitted on out of uniform days.
- Lower garments should not drag the floor or allow undergarments to be exposed when the student sits, stands, raises his/her hand, or bends over. Form-fitting lower garments must be worn under a long shirt, skirt or dress.
- No skin should be visible between a student’s top and bottom garment when the student sits, stands, raises his/her hand or bends over.

There are a few typical out of uniform days, which are listed below. There may be other out of uniform days throughout the year such as field trip days, holiday parties, picture days, etc. These will be communicated either through the Tuesday efolder or classroom newsletters.

**Reach Out Lakota:** The first Wednesday of every month, MTCES assists in the mission of the Reach Out Lakota program by collecting items for local needy families. Those children who bring in the designated monthly items or any nonperishable item may be out of uniform on that day.

**Wacky Wednesday:** Once a month, Student Council sponsors an out of uniform day, known as Wacky Wednesday. There is a theme and a donation will be collected in support of the Student Council's selected initiative.

**\*\*NOTE:** parents have the option to prepay for the above mentioned out of uniform days at the start of the school year.

## **Spirit Days**

Certain days may be designated Spirit Days. On those days, students may wear any t-shirt or sweatshirt from MTCES including any MTCES team, club, or organization. These include but are not limited to sports teams, Cub Scouts, AHG, RAK, and Robotics Club. Students may wear their choice of bottoms as is appropriate for the season.

***Please Note:*** *There may be other days identified for specific student groups or organizations to wear organization t-shirts or special attire. These will be communicated as they arise.*

## **Special Note:**

Students may not wear any clothing including but not limited to t-shirts, sweatshirts, hats, or costumes (including Halloween) which are political in nature. This extends to all out of uniform days and events.

## **Lost and Found**

There is a lost and found box located in the Kindergarten connector. Because of the quantity of items that accumulate, it is necessary to periodically donate to charity what has not been claimed in a timely manner. There will be notices sent home for parents before this donation occurs.

**PLEASE MARK YOUR CHILD'S BELONGINGS WITH THEIR NAME!**

## **Parent/Guardian Information**

### **Communication**

#### **School Website – [www.mtc.es.org](http://www.mtc.es.org)**

The school website is the primary portal of communication. It is useful to access things such as the school calendar, winter school closings, and Option C. Information about the school's history and mission can also be accessed through the main website.

### **Calendar**

You will find a link on our website to the School Calendar, which features all school and extracurricular activities.

### **Option C**

Option C is the main source of information for MTCES families. Weekly newsletters, Volunteer Voice, lunch menus, billing account information, grades, etc. are found on the Option C site. Each parent and each student should have received a login for Option C. When students log in, they can only view their own grades and cannot view billing information or order lunch.

**NOTE: The Option C messaging system does not replace email. Please email faculty and staff via their mtces.org email addresses with questions, comments and/or concerns.**

## **Tuesday Communications**

Every Tuesday, information will be shared in the Volunteer Voice and additional attachments. This information will include information from the principal as well as from the various offices and organizations at MTCES. The Volunteer Voice will be emailed to families and can be found on Option C. Hard copies of information will be sent home with students when necessary.

## **Teacher Newsletters**

Teachers will share the individual communication methods of each self contained classroom and/or grade level team. This may include posting newsletters to Option C and/or emailing updates to families.

## **Faculty/Staff Contact Protocol**

The easiest way to get in touch with an MTCES faculty or staff member, including your child's teacher, is via email. Staff members' emails consist of their first initial + last name + mtces.org. A list of staff can be found on Option C. The School Directory also provides all teacher email addresses and contact information. Teachers are expected to return emails within two academic days.

## **STEP BY STEP COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL**

**Here is the process for appropriate communication regarding questions and concerns:**

1. If you have a question or concern related to your student, please email your child's teacher as soon as possible. Please express any concerns that you have to a teacher directly before reaching out to the Administration. Teachers can help decide next steps in many situations.
2. If after discussing the situation with the teacher, you feel further action is necessary, please contact the school administration. Please allow 24-48 hours for a timely response. Administration will decide next steps in the communication process.
3. If, after meeting with school administration, you still feel that further action is necessary, please notify the school administration and she will contact the Executive Committee of the Board for further consideration.

## **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

Conference nights are held in October and in February. If you wish to set up a conference with a teacher at another time during the school year, please contact the teacher via email so that a meeting can be set up at a mutually agreed upon time. School administration asks that parents/legal guardians understand and respect that teachers have obligations during school hours and avoid conferencing with teachers during the academic day without an appointment.

If you contact a teacher via email and do not hear back from the teacher within 2 academic days, please contact the school office or administration via phone or email and the administration will inform the teacher of your desire for a conference.

## **Student/Parent Messaging & Deliveries**

Please email the office if you need a message given to your child. Parents should not text students during the school day and expect return messages until after school hours. Please email the school office if you need a message delivered before the end of the school day.

Parents should avoid delivering materials to their child during the school day. Items dropped off at the office after the start of the school day will be held in the office until the student can retrieve them. Students will not be called out of instruction for items. This includes materials, homework, projects, etc.

The only exception to this is a forgotten lunch. **Parents may not send DoorDash food deliveries for**

**students and may not drop off fast food in place of a forgotten lunch or for a special treat.**

## **Emergency Closings**

MTCES will make an independent decision for weather-related closings and delays. Transportation decisions for MTCES students will follow the district of service. (i.e., if Lakota makes the decision to close, there will be no busing available for MTCES students even if MTCES chooses to remain open.) For all closings, parents will be notified of this via an automated message based on your personal preferences as listed in Option C. Additionally, a notice of closings or delays will be posted on the school website and on social media sites.

## **Parent Code of Conduct**

### **Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct**

Enrollment at Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School is subject to the approval of the Administration and the Board of Trustees. In order to foster an environment that promotes the optimum educational and spiritual development of the student, every parent/guardian is expected to act as a cooperative partner with the school, and comply with all of the policies and rules that have been established by the school.

In the unlikely event that the principal determines that a student/family is not a good fit with MTCES, the principal may, in the best interest of the student, the School, or the other students attending the school, or for the fulfillment of the School's mission, terminate enrollment of said student, upon approval by the Board of Trustees. The student/family will have an opportunity to discuss the situation with the Board of Trustees, but the decision of the Board of Trustees is final and cannot be appealed.

MTCES promotes respect and discipline in a positive Catholic based learning environment. In order for the school to be successful, all parents/guardians, students, staff, and visitors must contribute to a positive attitude. It is expected that parents/guardians shall demonstrate behavior that supports a Christian atmosphere.

Therefore, parents/guardians of MTCES students shall adhere to the following:

- I will have my child attend Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School with the necessary school supplies and appropriate dress.
- I will not tolerate vulgar, sarcastic, or catty language from my child or bullying, violent, or aggressive speech or behavior.
- I will show respect for the teachers, staff, students, volunteers, and administration of the School, as well as to the parents/guardians of other MTCES students, in both my written and oral communication.
- I will not initiate or participate in any rumors or damaging comments with respect to the parents/guardians of other MTCES children, teachers, staff, students, administrators, or volunteers. I will discourage others from participating in such conversation.
- If I have any concerns during the academic school year, I shall address such with the teacher, staff, or administration in a professional manner. I understand that the teacher, staff member, or administrator may schedule an appointment with me so that concerns may be dealt with privately.
- I will abide by all policies, regulations, and procedures of the school.

## **Multi-custodial Family Policies**

Parents must provide, in writing, all current, dated information regarding custody and visitation rights. A copy of the appropriate section of the divorce decree should be sent to the school office. This school abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, the school will provide the non-custodial parent access to the academic records and to other school related information regarding the child. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide

the school with an official copy of the court order.

When conferences and/or meetings are scheduled for an individual student, all legal guardians must be present as there will be only **one** meeting scheduled. If the student's legal guardians wish to share information discussed in the conference with other concerned parties, they will be responsible for doing so.

## **Technology**

Use of the internet at MTCES is guided by the principles stated in the Archdiocesan Responsible Use of Technology Agreement. A copy of this document will be posted in Option C for parent's/guardian's signature before a student can use the internet at school.

While MTCES attempts to filter internet traffic at school for the purpose of safeguarding staff and students, nothing is full-proof. It is always the responsibility of the user to comply with MTCES policies and the Archdiocesan Responsible Use of Technology Agreement. Further, the parent/guardian and student are solely responsible for internet usage outside of school, even if on a school-issued computer or other device.

***The use of a student's MTCES login and Chromebook is for educational purposes only. All other uses are prohibited.***

### **Personal Electronic Devices**

Cell phones and other personal devices are permitted for after-school use; however, they must be turned off and stored in the student's book bag/locker during school hours. **Students may not use cell phones at the end of the school day until they have exited the building.**

Personal devices include but are not limited to cell phones, iPads, non-MTCES laptops/chromebooks, SmartWatches of any kind, earbuds, and/or headphones for non-educational purposes or outside of classrooms.

If a student is found using a phone or any other personal device without permission during school hours (beginning at 7:45 am with morning prayer), the student will receive a detention, an email will be sent home, and the personal device will be given to the administration and returned to the student at the end of the following school day.

## **1:1 Technology Program**

Students in grades 5-8 will be issued Chromebooks for use at home and in school. The care of these Chromebooks is the responsibility of the students. The Chromebooks will remain the property of MTCES until a student graduates, and at that time, ownership will transfer to the student's family.

Beginning with the class of 2027, in order to protect the Chromebook, all students must keep their Chromebook in a protective case purchased through MTCES. If this case is damaged or destroyed, the cost of the replacement will be charged to the family's account.

Students in 5th - 8th grades will have the option to choose one of the following:

- a) leaving Chromebooks at school each evening for charging and storage
- b) taking Chromebooks home each evening

Students are responsible for the following:

- bringing a fully charged Chromebook to school each day and/or having left their Chromebook plugged in to charge the night before
- taking good care of their Chromebook and adhering to the responsible use of technology agreement

Should a student encounter a problem regarding their Chromebook or need a loaner, they should bring the Chromebook to the technology classroom for assistance.

Families will be asked to sign a 1:1 Chromebook usage agreement which outlines all policies related to the MTCES chromebook and which includes detailed information about warranties.

## **Theft or Loss of Personal Property**

MTCES shall not be directly or indirectly liable for theft or loss of any personal property of students on school grounds or at school-sponsored functions. Should a student choose to bring personal belongings to school or to a school-sponsored function, the student, not MTCES, is personally and solely responsible for ensuring that his/her belongings are properly secured.

Students are discouraged from bringing valuable belongings to school or to a school-sponsored function. Valuable belongings include cash, expensive electronic or digital equipment, expensive clothing, attire, jewelry, etc. Should students choose to bring such items to school or to a school-sponsored function, they do so at their own risk. Parents/guardians should take steps to ensure that any valuable items are appropriately insured.

When appropriate, MTCES will report to authorities and prosecute all thefts or vandalism to property.

## **MTCES Parent-Teacher Organization**

### **Mission**

The MTCES PTO exists to enhance the educational and spiritual growth of the MTCES community. We strive to offer opportunities for learning that enhance the classroom curriculum for our students; to support the outfitting of classrooms and technology needs; to provide continuing education, supplemental materials and appreciation programs for our faculty and to strengthen our sense of community through programs and activities for the MTCES families.

### **PTO Officers**

PTO officers are announced at the start of each school year and their contact information will be shared

### **PTO Program and Activity Examples**

#### **Classroom Outfitting and Technology Support**

Smartboard Replacement  
Classroom Furniture  
K-4 Chromebooks  
Classroom Outfitting

#### **Student Support**

Catholic Schools week  
8th Grade scholarships  
Assemblies  
Field Trip - Transportation or Fees (not both)  
Art Room Supplies

Playground supplies

### **Teacher & Staff Support**

Catholic Schools week  
Teacher stipends  
Team appreciation  
Conference dinners  
Classroom mini-grants  
Holiday Party  
Staff Birthdays

### **PTO Scholarships**

Each year, PTO will honor two eighth grade students who embody the Spirit of St. Teresa of Calcutta with a scholarship to be applied to the Catholic High School of their choosing for their freshman year.

## **Athletics**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the MTCES Athletics program is to help develop the entire child. Our primary goals are:

- To teach the children the fundamentals of each sporting activity in which they participate
- To promote involvement throughout the community by displaying sportsmanship wherever they may be
- To make sure our children are taught the importance of learning, having fun, and competing fairly
- For all involved with the program to conduct themselves in the spirit of St. Teresa of Calcutta, starting with our coaches, teachers, administrators, and parents, thereby leading our children to respect the game, the opposing teams, the referees, as well as the spectators

The Athletic Director oversees the individual sport programs, oversees all coaches, is in charge of tryouts and team placement, runs tournaments, schedules the use of our two gyms, and other athletic facilities.

The MTCES Athletic Director can be contacted via email at [athleticdirector@mtces.org](mailto:athleticdirector@mtces.org)

## **After School Activities and Extra - Curriculars**

### **Extended Care**

The MTCES Extended Care Program offers parents quality care for their children from dismissal until 6:00 pm. Parents who plan on using Extended Care at any time during the school year need to complete the Extended Care registration paperwork and will be charged a one-time per family per year fee of \$25.00. This paperwork contains all policies and costs of Extended Care.

### **Student Council**

The MTCES Student Council is a great opportunity for students to gain leadership experience through involvement in a wide variety of activities, including event planning, fundraising, outreach, pep rally planning, and many other activities. Students in grades 7 & 8, who are in good academic standing with no more than 3 detentions, are able to run for elected Officer positions.

### **Robotics Club**

MTCES sponsors a Robotics team that competes in the First Lego League. The team is open to students in grades 5-8 and is dependent upon parent support in order to operate. Students practice after school

and prepare for competitions. Competitions are held locally on weekends.

### **Random Acts of Kindness (RAK) - Grades 3 and 4**

The Random Acts of Kindness (RAK) Club is a service club open to MTCES students and focuses on spreading God's love and kindness throughout the hallways of MTCES as well as within our community. We meet at least once a month during the students' lunch and recess times to work on various kindness projects. We also coordinate at least one weekend service project within the community during the school year. RAK students are encouraged to be positive role models for their peers and exemplify that "being kind is cool."

### **Service Club - Grades 5 and 6**

The service club for students in grades 5 and 6 will focus on providing service opportunities to participating students in these grade levels. This club is designed to build and expand on RAK.

### **Cub Scouts**

Mother Teresa charts and supports a growing Cub Scouts program designed for boys who are in the first through fifth grades. A student joining the Mother Teresa Cub Scout Pack is assigned to a den with other boys in his grade. Dens meet once a month, and all dens gather with their families for a monthly Pack meeting.

Cub Scouting combines fun with educational activities and lifelong values. It also helps parents to help their boys strengthen character, develop good leadership, and enhance both mental and physical fitness. In addition, the program provides boys with positive peer groups and tools to shape their future.

### **American Heritage Girls**

Beginning in Kindergarten, Mother Teresa girls have the opportunity to participate in the American Heritage Girls. AHG is an organization dedicated to the mission of assisting girls in learning about themselves, their community, and their country. The American Heritage Girls was founded in August of 1995 in West Chester, Ohio. It was founded with the love of God, the love of families and for the love of children. Its mission is to build women of integrity through service to God, family, community, and country. The troop is completely dependent on adult volunteers and is always looking for people interested in the scouting experience.

### **Vocal Music**

MTCES offers opportunities for students who wish to share or grow their musical talents.

### **Band**

When offered, the after-school band will be open to students in grades 4-8. Band instruction will be provided by The Music Staff after school. Beginner and Advanced instructional levels are offered. Students can choose to play flute, clarinet, trumpet, trombone, saxophone, and drum. Two concerts are held each year with students from other schools throughout the Archdiocese.

### **Athletics**

A variety of sports are offered for MTCES students, including

- Boys Basketball
- Girls Basketball
- Cheerleading
- Cross Country (Coed)
- Dance Team
- Golden Bears Football
- Golf (Coed)
- Track & Field (Coed)

Boys Volleyball

Girls Volleyball

A copy of the Athletics handbook can be found on Option C.

### **Athletic/Extracurricular Eligibility Policy**

In order for students in grades 6-8 to participate in athletics, musical performance and club activities, they must meet the following academic requirement and behavior expectations:

#### **Academic Requirements**

Students are expected to be passing all courses; this includes all courses, as well as all core academic areas, Spanish, and all special courses. Grades will be checked mid-trimester as well as at report card time. Failing grades will result in academic probation and possible academic ineligibility.

#### **Behavior Expectation**

Students may be removed from participation in an extracurricular activity due to a disciplinary infraction that is deemed an actionable offense by the administration at Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School. This is a special circumstance and will be handled on a case to case basis.

### **Use of the School Building**

Alcoholic beverages are not permitted at any events endorsed or sponsored by MTCES where students are present on school property.

School functions and activities include all recreational, sporting, scouting, committee meetings, volunteer activities and social occasions which are formally endorsed or organized by MTCES. They also include all social and fundraising activities which are organized or sponsored by a parent association and held on school property.

Events requesting the use of alcohol must be made on a case by case basis with the written approval of the Principal, but will be limited to special occasions when students are not present. Requests for an exemption must be made in writing to the Principal at least 30 days prior to the planned event and must include the date(s) and time(s) of the function and the purpose of the function.

## **Transportation**

**NOTE: For changes to normal transportation routine, parents must use the Pick Up Patrol App to indicate a change prior to 1:00 PM.**

### **Bus Riders**

The location of your home determines which bus picks up your child. Parents must fill out a form with their local public school district to request bus service. Bus routes are sent to the home by the local school district within one to two weeks of the start of the school year. The bus routes can also be viewed on-line for most public school buses under the public school district website.

Student misbehavior on the bus will be handled by the school administration and the bus driver. Parents will be notified as to the misconduct. Students who receive written disciplinary notices may be suspended from bus privileges for one to three days depending on the severity of the behavior. Repeated misconduct on the bus will result in loss of bus privileges. The safety of the students relies on the attention of the bus driver. When students cause a distraction, safety is threatened.

**Students may ride only assigned buses.** Children not assigned to a bus are not permitted to ride home with friends who ride a bus from another district or are on a different bus route.

## **Car Riders**

### **Morning**

Parents should drop students off at the main entrance of the school located at the front of the building. **Students can be dropped off between 7:20 am and no later than 7:45 am.** Car traffic **MUST** use the Mother Teresa Lane entrance off Yankee Road. If you are walking your child into school, please park in the lower lot, and walk up to the main entrance.

When dropping off, please follow the traffic pattern and pull forward to the mailbox (even if no one is behind you). All students will enter via the main entrance.

### **Afternoon**

Students may be picked up between 2:20 pm and 2:30 pm. Those picking students up should enter through the Mother Teresa Lane entrance off Yankee Road, and students will be dismissed as your vehicle pulls up. When waiting in the dismissal line, please be sure to display your family name card in your front window, and be sure to follow any sign or staff instructions.

Any students not picked up by 2:30 will be sent to Extended Care and the parents will be billed for the time.

For early dismissals, parents should park their cars in the school parking lot, and come to the office to pick up students. Parking in the fire lanes, adjacent to sidewalks is prohibited at all times. The student will be called from the classroom. Please submit an early dismissal for your child using Pick Up Patrol. All students must be signed out before leaving the school. Please note, on Mass days, early dismissal must occur prior to 1:15.

## **Motor Traffic on School Grounds**

All cars should be operated in a safe manner, especially while on school property. All cars should obey speed limits (10 mph), signage, and pavement markings. No parking is permitted in the fire lanes, adjacent to the sidewalks at any time. Car traffic should not cross over parking space markings, i.e., cutting across yellow lines. Unless necessary for events, no cars should park or drive on landscaped or grassy surfaces. Cars should not be left unattended at the school for longer than 24 hours without notifying the school office. The use of four wheelers, motorcycles, mopeds, powered skateboards, etc. is prohibited on school grounds, fields, and grassy surfaces.

## **Lunch and Cafeteria / Snacks / Treats**

***Parents may not send DoorDash food deliveries for students and the school will not accept drop offs of fast food for students in place of a forgotten lunch or as a special treat.***

### **Soda/Energy Drinks**

Students may not pack soda or energy drinks for lunches. Students should not enter the school building with an energy drink, coffee, etc. in the morning.

### **Sharing of Food**

Due to potential food allergies and in order to protect the safety of all students, there will be no sharing of food at lunchtime or during snack periods by any student.

## **Hot Lunch**

Hot lunch is offered every day. Your account will be charged for the days your child buys; there is no need to send in cash.

**You will need to order lunch a month ahead of time via Option C;** due dates for lunch orders will be posted on the menus and on Option C. The menu items range from pizza to “breakfast for lunch.” The lunch price **does not** include a beverage – milk, chocolate milk, and orange juice are available on a daily basis. You do not need to indicate beverage purchases ahead of time.

Please make sure your child's name is clearly marked on any lunch boxes, bags, thermoses, water bottles, etc.

## **Cafeteria Rules**

- Students must enter the cafeteria walking.
- Students must enter the cafeteria using normal speaking voices.
- Students may not throw food and must use proper table manners.
- Students are responsible for clearing their own lunch trash and disposing of their trash in the proper trash containers.
- Students may not share food with other students. This presents the potential for lifethreatening allergic reactions due to food allergies.

Students who fail to exhibit the behaviors expected of them in the cafeteria will receive classroom disciplinary consequences. For repetitive behaviors and/or instances which are severe, a referral to the office will occur.

## **Birthday/Classroom Party Treats**

Birthday and party treats should be discussed with your child's teacher before bringing them. Prior to the first party of the academic year, a letter will be sent home informing you whether a child in your child's homeroom has a food allergy. We ask that you carefully read and respect the letter as these types of allergies are incredibly serious and can be life threatening.

Soda and/or energy drinks are not allowed for classroom parties.

During the school day, birthdays will be recognized. Party invitations MAY NOT be distributed at school under any circumstances. Party invitations should be mailed to avoid confusion and hurt feelings.

## **Snacks**

Students in grades K-4 have a designated snack time each day. We encourage parents to send in healthy snacks to fuel the kids through lunchtime. Please contact the school nurse, the office, and your child's teacher if there is an allergy concern.

Please keep the snack separate from the lunch as some students attempt to eat their lunch for snack.

## **Advancement**

### **Description**

As an independent school, MTCES does not receive financial support from a parish or the Archdiocese. The school operates through a combination of tuition revenue, fundraising efforts, and the generous volunteerism of our community. These resources are essential to sustaining day-to-day operations, academic and extracurricular programming, and ongoing facility maintenance.

The Advancement Office collaborates closely with the Board of Trustees and the Finance Committee to

plan and implement a comprehensive strategy that supports the long-term growth and sustainability of MTCES. School families are encouraged to share their time, talent, and treasure by actively volunteering and/or providing financial support for Advancement initiatives.

### **Development Activities**

***The Spirit of Mother Teresa Annual Appeal-*** This crucial annual effort seeks contributions from parents, alumni, and friends to invest in our mission through their financial support. SOMT contributions are applied directly to the current year's operating budget and help close the gap that exists between tuition and the actual cost of educating a student at MTCES. Gifts to the annual fund support Catholic outreach, academic excellence, and building maintenance.

### **Special Events**

**Extravaganza-** Our largest fundraising event, the Extravaganza is a semi-formal gala consisting of dinner, live and silent auctions, raffles, and dancing.

**Fall Fundraiser-** This is a casual adult-only fundraising event with a brand new theme. (Formerly Oktoberfest)

**Annual Golf Scramble-** Participants enjoy 18 holes, lunch and dinner, raffles, and amazing contests and door prizes.

**Corporate Support-** MTCES receives the majority of its corporate support in the form of special event sponsorships and employer matching gifts.

***Sister Anne Schulz Legacy Scholarship-*** In honor of Sister Anne Schulz, the founding principal of MTCES, a scholarship award was established through funds raised at Extravaganza. Three scholarships of up to \$1000 each are awarded each year to MTCES students in grade 5-8 who exemplify the spirit of Sister Anne Schulz in the following categories: leadership, mission/faith, and volunteerism.