

DIVINE MERCY ACADEMY

FAMILY HANDBOOK



Divine Mercy Academy

Family Handbook

2024-2025

Contact Information

Mailing Address:
8513 St. Jane Dr
Pasadena, MD 21122
(410) 705-0778
divinemeracy.md

Image Credit: Breezing Up, Winslow Homer, 1876.

Table of Contents

- I. [School Leadership](#)
- II. [Letter from our Founder](#)
- III. [Mission and Philosophy](#)
- IV. [General Information](#)
- V. [Discipline](#)
- VI. [The Catholic Cultural Association \(CCA\)](#)

Divine Mercy Academy Board, School Leadership Team, and CCA Board

Board of Directors

Ali Ghaffari
William Haun
Cliff Andersson
Chester Bartels
Chad Burns
Adam Farber
Michelle Hill
Sean Maltbie
Stuart McGeady
John Rudder
Monica Ruppert
Becky Shipley
Fr. David Ousley
Anne Marie Kubik
Katie Farnoly

Leadership Team

Patrick Sullivan
Rina Brown
Christine Butrim
Jacqueline Dolch
Mary Forrest
Sue Lawson
Catherina Marshall
Lisa O'Keefe

CCA Board

Bernadette McClain
Charlotte Edwards
Krystal Garay
Stephanie Conley
Katie Farnoly
Cheryl Shoots

Prepare for life with seriousness and diligence. Always remember that only if one builds, as Saint Paul says, on the foundation which is Jesus Christ, will one be able to construct something really great and lasting. With the liveliness that is characteristic of your age, with the generous enthusiasm of your young hearts, walk towards Christ. He alone is the solution to all your problems. He alone is the way, the truth, and the life; He alone is the real salvation of the world; He alone is the hope of mankind.

Pope St. John Paul II
Speech to Children, Guadalajara, Mexico

August 2024

A Letter from our Founder

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to Divine Mercy Academy! It is an honor to begin this unique partnership with you as we strive to educate our children in a truly Catholic and Classical manner. When we began this journey in 2019, we spent a considerable amount of time refining a mission statement. I think it would be prudent for us to walk through this together as we start off.

The mission of Divine Mercy Academy is to partner with parents in their role as primary educators to help students to flourish as disciples of Jesus Christ. Through a Catholic liberal arts education, we foster a love for truth, beauty, and goodness. Under the patronage of Our Lady, we aim to form Saints and Scholars to live freely and joyfully in accordance with the truth revealed by God through nature and the Catholic Church.

Pope St. John Paul II brought the message of Divine Mercy to the world through his teaching and in the way he lived his life. In his encyclical on Divine Mercy, he states, "The Message of Divine Mercy has always been near and dear to me... which I took with me to the See of Peter and which, in a sense, forms the image of this Pontificate."

Pope St. John Paul II describes Divine Mercy as the answer to the world's problems and the message of the third millennium. Not only did he beatify and canonize Sr. Maria Faustina Kowalska, the nun associated with the message, he also established Divine Mercy Sunday (the feast day associated with the message) as a feast day for the entire Church. On that day, Pope John Paul II declared, "This is the happiest day of my life." Over and over again, Pope John Paul II communicated the need for us to turn to the mercy of God as the answer to the problems of our times. Remarkably, Pope John Paul II died on the Vigil of Divine Mercy Sunday (the evening before the feast day).

We have named ourselves Divine Mercy Academy, as we seek to manifest Pope St. John Paul II's message about the answer to the problems of today.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, in paragraphs 2223, 2225, 2226, and 2228 states, "Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by *creating a home* where tenderness, forgiveness,

respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule. The home is well suited for *education in the virtues*. This requires an apprenticeship in self-denial, sound judgment, and self-mastery - the preconditions of all true freedom. Parents should teach their children to subordinate the "material and instinctual dimensions to interior and spiritual ones"... Through the grace of the sacrament of marriage, parents receive the responsibility and privilege of *evangelizing their children*. Parents should initiate their children at an early age into the mysteries of the faith of which they are the "first heralds" for their children. They should associate them from their tenderest years with the life of the Church. *Education in the faith* by the parents should begin in the child's earliest years. This already happens when family members help one another to grow in faith by the witness of a Christian life in keeping with the Gospel. Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God. The parish is the Eucharistic community and the heart of the liturgical life of Christian families; it is a privileged place for the catechesis of children and parents...As those first responsible for the education of their children, parents have the right to *choose a school for them* which corresponds to their own convictions. This right is fundamental. As far as possible parents have the duty of choosing schools that will best help them in their task as Christian educators."

Divine Mercy Academy will not take on the "grave primary duty" of parents to educate and train their children in the Catholic faith, but we will assist parents in their task as Christian educators by providing a spiritually nourishing and intellectually challenging environment that will correspond to the convictions of parents whose primary goal is to prepare their children for eternal life in heaven.

The aim of Catholic Liberal Education is Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, which are called the "Transcendentals". These transcendentals are the ultimate desires of man. They transcend all space and time, pointing toward the objective Truth that is God.

Our focus is in forming faithful young adults, instilled with wisdom and virtue. Wisdom empowers a person "to judge and order all things in accordance with divine norms and with a connaturality that flows from a loving union with God." So while knowledge and understanding enable a person to know and to penetrate the divine truths, wisdom moves us to "fall in love" with them. We want our children to "fall in love" with Jesus Christ. Moreover, we are inculcating virtue. CCC 1803 states, "A virtue is an habitual and firm disposition to do good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but to give the best of himself. The virtuous person tends toward the

good with all his sensory and spiritual powers; he pursues the good and chooses it in concrete actions. The goal of a virtuous life is to become like God.” We want our children to fall in love with God and to be like Him. The natural extension of this relationship with God is to then witness to others about God by word and action. Pope Benedict XVI says, “The proclamation of the Gospel remains the primary service that the Church owes to humanity, to offer the salvation of Christ to the man of our time, who is in many ways humiliated and oppressed, and to orientate in a Christian way cultural, social, and ethical transformations that are unfolding in the world.”¹ Additionally, he exhorts us to “[h]elp each other to live and to grow in the Christian faith so as to be valiant witnesses of the Lord. Be united, but not closed. Be humble, but not fearful. Be simple, but not naive. Be thoughtful, but not complicated. Enter into dialogue with others, but be yourselves.”²

We seek to partner with parents in creating disciples of Jesus Christ – by educating students in the Truth and providing an environment where the Truth can be freely lived out. Our chosen instrument in this is a Classical Liberal Arts Education. But do we really know what we mean when we say ‘classical education’? Most of us have not been classically educated, so do we really know what it is? Could we explain it or defend it well to someone else? We want to avoid descriptions which imply that we simply teach Latin in addition to other courses... So what should we say? It’s important that we all understand the how and why... We need to understand the very real way in which all of the hard work over the past several years has brought us to a place where we can offer this best sort of schooling – classical.

According to Aristotle, you know what something is when you know its four causes: the material cause, the efficient cause, the formal cause, and the final cause. The formal cause is the thing’s shape or soul. The material cause is what it is made of. The efficient cause is who or what makes it, and the final cause is what its purpose is. Let’s now apply this to classical education.

Let’s begin with the material cause – the child itself. Our aim is the proper formation of the child, plain and simple. Next is the efficient cause – the tutor. While curricula and texts are important, it is really the tutor who brings these things to life in the mind of the child. The tutor leads their students in their pursuit of wisdom and virtue. It is

¹ Pope Benedict XVI Links Evangelization and True Peace, Vatican City, October 7, 2007

² Pope Benedict XVI, Genoa, Italy, May 18, 2008

therefore vitally important that our tutors be devout, orthodox Catholics who are striving to be saints.

The formal cause is the goal of the tutor with the instruction – the desired end of a child fully formed in accordance with their capacity, body and soul – filled with virtue and armed with true wisdom.

The tools of this process will be the great works of literature and truths spoken by the best minds of Western Civilization. They will know how to think, and what (the right thing is) to do.

One of the tools in this process is Latin. Latin teaches our students mental discipline. It's rigorous and systematic. Latin was the language of the Christian faith for over a thousand years, and possesses a critical place in classical education.

The final cause is simply to develop children of God, who will know, love, and serve God in this life, and become saints, happy with Him in eternity.

In summary, classical education begins with a child (material cause), who is taught by a tutor (efficient cause), to think and speak well via studying Latin, great books... the liberal arts (formal cause), for the greater glory of God (final cause)!

It is my hope that each of us will continue to grow in our understanding and appreciation of Catholic Liberal education during this academic year. As we work to bring these beautiful subjects alive for your children, rest assured that we will be doing everything we can to achieve that final cause.

Jesus we trust in you!

Deo gratias,

Ali H. Ghaffari
Board President
Divine Mercy Academy

TRUTH ~ BEAUTY ~ GOODNESS

2024-2025 HANDBOOK

*“Be not conformed to this world,
but be transformed by the renewal of your mind
that you may discern what is the will of God,
what is good, pleasing and perfect.”*

Romans 12:2

The Mission and Philosophy of Divine Mercy Academy

Divine Mercy Academy is a classical K-8 school that utilizes the Catholic Liberal Education model to create Saints and Scholars. Our purpose is to know, love, and serve God and to form others so they might joyfully do the same. Our educational model assumes a higher purpose and a created world endowed with beauty by God, Himself. We promote a faith that seeks understanding and we pursue the cultivation of virtue. The goal of a liberal arts education is liberty – freeing the mind so that it can understand God and the world He created in order that we may serve Him and love Him as we ought. Rather than subjects being understood as separate, they are all understood as integrated facets of the Human Experience. The result of this method is a love of God, a love of learning, and a love of school. Students learn and act in accord with how they are created; the result is nothing short of joy.

The Mission of Divine Mercy Academy

The mission of Divine Mercy Academy is to partner with parents in their role as primary educators to help students to flourish as disciples of Jesus Christ. Through a Catholic liberal arts education, we foster a love for truth, beauty, and goodness. Under the patronage of Our Lady, we aim to form Saints and Scholars to live freely and joyfully in accordance with the truth revealed by God through nature and the Catholic Church.

The Vision of Divine Mercy Academy

Divine Mercy Academy contributes to a renaissance of the Catholic intellectual tradition and a renewal of the Catholic Church with on-fire, faithful families, strengthening our Church and Nation as a whole.

School Philosophy

We believe that Divine Mercy Academy students are entitled to an excellent academic education provided in a caring atmosphere with Christian values. To assist us in meeting this goal, we must have a strong Catholic Identity, varying educational techniques, and active parental support. We strongly encourage parents to become involved in the life of the school, just as the school seeks to support the life of the family.

Catholic Identity

The student's growth in faith is the central purpose for Divine Mercy Academy. Students are challenged to achieve their highest potential. They are encouraged to live their faith in word and deed in their church and larger community.

Board of Directors and Tutors

Divine Mercy Academy Board Members and tutors are required to witness by their public behavior, actions, and words a life consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church. They also recognize the importance of a classical liberal arts education, and advocate the Catholic position that the parents are the primary educator of the child.

Catholic Culture Association

The Divine Mercy Academy Catholic Cultural Association (CCA) is composed of dedicated parents who work together to enrich the Catholic culture of the broader school community. It does this inwardly, by being a vehicle for service and fundraising for the school and outwardly, by providing opportunities for family faith formation and community building. In doing this, the CCA provides an example for our students that together we can make a difference for good in our community.

The CCA operates in an atmosphere of trust and cooperation with the school in consideration of respect of the distinctive qualities, talents, abilities, and needs of each person. CCA members should feel empowered through the organization to articulate questions, concerns, or issues with the school from its members to the headmaster and, if needed, to the DMA Board through its own President, who sits as its representative, on the Board.

“That they all may be one, as thou, Father, in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” John 17:21

Students

Divine Mercy Academy aims at inspiring its students to become faithful, virtuous, and intelligent disciples of Jesus Christ, who seek to embrace the True, the Good, and the Beautiful. Such a goal is essential to a school that models itself in the Catholic tradition, for catholicity involves the response of wonder at the recognition that all that is true, good, or beautiful is of God and, indeed, is a manifestation of one or another aspect of God's nature. The integration of faith, virtue, and reason that we seek to achieve in our school's curriculum finds its attestation – so we prayerfully hope – in the lives of our students. With respect to faith, we seek to set before students the Tradition in the embrace

of which they may journey toward their ultimate end—Beatitude with God. With respect to intellectual virtue, far more important than students merely fostering intellectual ability is promoting the desire to understand, a willingness to face challenging questions, and a tenacious diligence in the pursuit of learning. With respect to moral virtue, we encourage students to acquire the Cardinal Virtues, enlivened by the Theological Virtues, through engagement in co-curricular activities, charitable acts of mercy, and in the pursuit of the common good in the public square. Divine Mercy Academy aims to introduce young men and women to the Great Conversation, a conversation informed by familiarity with the great ideas and the perennial debates that swirl about them. Our graduates will have begun the intellectual journey in which they gain insight into first principles, learn how to express themselves logically and eloquently, and acquire an integrated body of knowledge. They will therefore be preparing a solid foundation upon which to build their lives and go into the world pursuing faithfully, boldly, and charitably vocations that serve Christ and His Church.

Parents

Parents, the primary educators of their children, establish a partnership with Divine Mercy Academy when they choose our institution. This choice implies that parents trust and support the school in her mission, goals, curriculum, and forms of teaching and discipline. When issues arise, parents are expected to seek resolution of them in orderly, charitable ways, collaborating with the school's administration and faculty. Only when parents and the school truly work as a team can the formation of young men and women be successful. Parents typically contribute to this formation at home, where they can make their homes to be environments supportive of the habits of faith, sound moral character, and intellectual culture. Parents who send their children to school are not absolved from their responsibility to teach their children the Faith:

Education in the faith by the parents should begin in the child's earliest years. This already happens when family members help one another to grow in faith by the witness of a Christian life in keeping with the Gospel. Family catechesis precedes, accompanies and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God.³

Likewise, it is expected that parents oversee the academic progress of their children by offering assistance to them in school studies, organization, and general habits of personal and academic responsibility. Of great importance, too, is parental attendance at school events and volunteering to work at school activities. Parents contribute to their child's formation at school when they assume that the faculty and administration will act in good faith and when they initiate communication about their own particular needs and concerns — and rightly hold the school accountable for a timely, appropriate response. We are obliged to provide such a response, for we realize that parents remain the primary educators of their children and have the moral duty to guide their children towards responsible adulthood. **These commitments are reflected in the family-school agreement, which is included**

³ Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2226. 13 Educating Young People in Justice and Peace (Message of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace, January 1, 2012).

at the end of this Handbook. All families are expected to sign the agreement and return it to the school.

Faculty

The ultimate aim of the educational vision set forth in this document demands that Divine Mercy Academy recruit and continuously form a faculty that fully embraces and bears witness to the unity of faith and reason, the Catholic understanding of the human person, to the authentic character of a liberal education, and to the school's particular mission. At all levels, members of such a faculty should be committed to the intellectual life in its fullest meaning with an enduring sense of wonder about God and His creation and with a habitual desire for the attainment of wisdom — that is, the intellectual, emotional, and artistic maturation of the human person. They must have a Catholic mind and heart and a desire to cultivate Catholicity in the school's students. As Pope Benedict XVI writes:

Education is the most interesting and difficult adventure in life. Educating—from the Latin *educere*—means leading young people to move beyond themselves and introducing them to reality, towards a fullness that leads to growth. This process is fostered by the encounter of two freedoms, that of adults and that of the young. It calls for responsibility on the part of the learners, who must be open to being led to the knowledge of reality, and on the part of educators, who must be ready to give of themselves. For this reason, today more than ever we need authentic witnesses, and not simply people who parcel out rules and facts; we need witnesses capable of seeing farther than others because their life is so much broader. A witness is someone who first lives the life that he proposes to others.

Tutors at Divine Mercy Academy endeavor to invite students into a world of mature faith, conversation, and behavior, a world that should daily be obvious to our students as they observe their tutors engaged in an ongoing pursuit of wisdom, marked by an integration of faith and reason to which the students are also summoned. The integration sought should not be that of an individual tutor, but of a fellowship of tutors in mutual communication and collaboration, for together we see farther than we do alone. The success of our school requires that the members of the faculty broaden their lives to each other, and that they seek the unity of a shared educational pursuit characterized by charity. To confirm these ends, tutors at Divine Mercy Academy are expected to sign a witness statement that is on file with the school.

General Information

Accreditation and Certification

Divine Mercy Academy is certified by the State of Maryland. The formal accreditation process is currently in progress. The classroom tutors are degreed in accordance with the Maryland Department of Education regulations. The Student-Tutor ratio is approximately 5:1.

Family–School Agreement

As the primary educators of their children, parents/guardians freely make the choice of a Catholic education for their sons/daughters. Registration and acceptance at Divine Mercy Academy, and signing of appropriate documents required by the school, including the family-school agreement included with this Handbook, constitutes an agreement by the parent/guardian to accept and abide by the rules and regulations of the institution and to support its philosophy of education.

Tuition

Please refer to the school’s website for current tuition rates. Family discounts are available for multiple children of the same family enrolled during the same school year. A limited amount of financial assistance is available to families each year. See Tuition Assistance below. Tuition is paid through TADS.

Tuition Assistance

Parents should first apply for financial assistance through TADS. The DMA Head of Admissions utilizes the TADS system to determine awards for families.

A referral program is offered to current families who refer new families to Divine Mercy Academy. A \$500 tuition credit may be awarded if an existing family refers a new family that enrolls children at DMA. The credit is applied once the new family submits their signed contract. In the event of a financial assistance grant, the grant is awarded in lieu of additional discounts.

Withdrawal of Students

Families withdrawing students from Divine Mercy Academy should notify the school in writing as soon as possible. Once all financial obligations are met and a Release of Records form is received from the new school, official school records will be sent directly to the new school.

Parent Communication

Open communication between parents and school is always crucial to the success of the whole organization. You are welcome to contact the tutor whenever you have a question or concern about your child’s education. Conferences with tutors are scheduled throughout the year, but additional arrangements may also be made as the needs arise.

In the event there is a concern involving your child, Divine Mercy Academy policies, or any related school issue, we encourage you to reach out to the homeroom tutor or school leadership so that we might collaborate and arrive at a resolution.

Student Information

The school must have accurate addresses, phone numbers, and emergency contact information. If you move or change your contact information, please let the office know immediately. If you will be out of town you must write a note and share a copy with the office and your child's tutor(s) indicating who is in charge of your child in case an emergency should occur.

School Directory

A school directory, listing all DMA students/families, is included on our EDUCATE communication site and will have families' names, addresses and phone numbers. If you do not want to be included, please indicate this within that system.

School Property

Divine Mercy Academy reserves the right to search student items brought onto school property. This includes, but is not limited to, the physical objects brought into school as well as any digital materials that may exist on an electronic device.

Smoking Policy

Smoking is not permitted on school grounds or in the school. "Smoking" includes, but is not limited to, cigarettes, electronic cigarettes, vapes, and any nicotine or tobacco product.

Cell Phones and other Electronic Devices

Please do not send your children to school with electronic devices including, but not limited to, smart phones, headphones, smartwatches, fitbits, kindles, etc.). Students may wear a simple digital watch but it must not have any internet capability. If needed, the school office phone is available for students during these hours. If a cell phone or other electronic device is used, seen, or heard during school hours, it will be confiscated. It will be released to a parent or legal guardian.

Lunch and Snack

The DMA school day runs from 8:00 until 3:20, please pack a healthy lunch and snack accordingly. We provide a time for morning snack break. Children should come to school each day with a healthy lunch and snack, as well as milk, water or juice from home. DMA does not provide microwaves to heat lunches nor does it provide silverware for lunches. Parents should not deliver restaurant lunches for their children. Presently, students eat a snack in the classroom and enjoy lunch in the hall. Working in cooperation with the St Jane Frances parish community, the hall is not available for lunch on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month. On those days, students will eat lunch in their classrooms. When the weather and schedule permits, students may occasionally eat outside. Nut allergies restrictions will be promulgated as they impact us.

Recess Guidelines

Children go outside for recess daily. Please be sure your child is dressed appropriately for the weather. No child may be excused from recess without a daily written excuse or phone call from the parent or guardian. Excuses are only accepted for situations such as acute asthma or environmental allergy, fractures, etc. In the cases of extreme weather, recess plans will be changed in accordance with proper judgment.

Early Dismissal

A parent picking up a student early should send an email, a phone call, or a written note to school that morning. The child will be called from the classroom when the parent reports to the office. Please sign out at the front office. Due to the nature of the end of a normal school day, **parents should make every effort not to schedule an early dismissal between 2:45 and 3:20.**

No child, under any circumstance, will be allowed to leave school during the school day with an adult other than a parent or guardian without prior permission from the parent/guardian.

Tardiness

A student is tardy if he/she arrives after 8:00 am. In the event that a student arrives late, his or her parent/guardian must sign in at the front office.

Dismissal Procedures

Student dismissal will begin promptly at 3:20 pm on regular school days and noon on early dismissal days. Parents/ Guardians may wait in their cars in the carline which forms in the small back parking lot (adjacent to Chelsea Road) or, if they have joined the school for the Divine Mercy Chaplet, they may pick up directly from the homeroom tutors and walk their child(ren) to the car. Students will be escorted to their vehicles by DMA staff. Only passenger side doors should be used for student loading. Please wait for the cars in front of you to move before moving forward or pulling out of the car line. Students who are not picked up by 3:30 pm on regular school days or 12:10 pm on early dismissal days will be taken to Stay and Play (held in the library)..

Attendance

If your child is absent from school, a parent must report the absence—please call or email the school office by 9:00am. Whether you call or email when your child is not going to be at school, please leave the following information:

- Child's name
- Grade/tutor
- Reason for absence

A note from parents to the school is to be sent by parents for each absence. If a student is absent for three consecutive days or more, a doctor's excuse must accompany the student upon return.

Vacations which occur over school days are strongly discouraged. This includes trips over multiple school days as well as extended trips over long weekends. While family celebrations, events, work requirements, etc. do come up, every effort should be made to plan vacations around school days. Students are required to visit each tutor to come up with a plan to make up missed work and to take any assessments that were missed. **In the event of a family trip or extended absence, DMA tutors are not expected to prepare work packets or extended assignments.**

Inclement Weather/Snow Day/Emergency Closing Procedures

DMA follows the Anne Arundel county school closing schedule in the event of inclement weather. If weather conditions indicate the possibility of an early closing once school is already in session, parents will receive a text and email. If parents cannot arrive at school on time for the early closing, they should have a friend or family member assist them by picking up their child(ren). Stay and Play will not be available on any day school closes early for inclement weather.

Visitors

For the security of our school community, all doors are locked throughout the day. Parents and other visitors must report to the school administrator upon entering the building. When volunteering or visiting during school hours, you will be asked to sign in and out and you will be asked to wear a badge showing that you are a visitor. Parents dropping off a lunch, or other items, are to leave the item with office personnel who will deliver them.

Emergency Drills

To ensure orderly and safe evacuation of the school in emergency situations, we will regularly hold drills in accordance with Maryland State Law. Students will be taught how to evacuate safely in the event of fire, to shelter in place during a lockdown, and how to protect themselves during a weather emergency.

Health

An Annual Student Health Survey form is required for each student for updating the student's health file with current and pertinent information (updated at least every three years, or with a vaccine change, whichever is less). In the event of a serious accident during school hours, we will attempt to notify parents before any medical care is given. If an accident occurs during a field trip, the nearest medical care facility will be utilized.

According to the Maryland Department of Education a student should be temporarily excluded from school for:

- A temperature of 100 or higher – before returning to school, the child must go 24 hours without a fever without the use of fever reducing medication
- Most inflammatory eye conditions, such as pink eye
- Rashes or eczema that is known to be contagious or infectious
- Head cold of any consequence, especially with a persistent cough and excessive drainage

- Sore or inflamed throat -- if strep throat is diagnosed, the student needs to be on medication for at least 24 hours before returning to school
- Discharge from the ears
- Body lice or head lice
- Diarrhea

If your child is sent home ill with a possible contagious condition during the day, he/she will not be permitted to return to school that same day. Students who were sent home, or have been absent during the school day, may not participate in extracurricular events that day or evening. A fever should be gone for at least 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medicine) before returning to school. Children who vomit at school must go home and remain home for 24 hours.

Medication Policy

All medication is kept in a locked medicine cabinet.

1. The school administration will administer all medications if at all possible, otherwise a parent will be called to administer the medication. Students are not permitted to medicate themselves at any time, with the exception of students who are authorized by their doctor to self-administer inhalers or Epi-pens (see allergy alerts).

2. All prescription medication to be administered during school hours must be in the original prescription container marked with the student's name, the name of the medication, the accurate dosage, and when it is to be administered. Any dosage changes must have a doctor's written statement (which may be faxed to the school) or a new original prescription container. All prescriptions must be current within the year.

3. All prescription medication, including inhalers that are administered on a regular basis, must have a completed "Prescribed Medication Permission Form" on file. This form can be obtained from the school office.

4. Medications, such as antibiotics, that are ordered to be given 3-4 times a day which necessitate a dose to be given during school hours, please request an extra bottle from the pharmacist so just the amount of medication needed at school can be sent in to avoid having the student carry the medication back and forth each day. Please communicate and arrange this with the front office as soon as possible.

5. Non-prescription medications to be given must also be in the original container (please, no baggies) with written authorization from a parent/guardian/medical professional detailing when the medication is to be given and the reason for giving it.

6. If it becomes necessary to give a student medication that is not kept at school, a parent/guardian may come to school and administer the medication. Please inform the office beforehand.

Allergy Alerts

It is the parent's responsibility to alert the school staff to allergies. Once informed, the school staff will take the necessary time to understand the child's allergies and will develop a plan that both reasonably protects the child and creates the least restrictive environment for the other children in the classroom and school. If a student carries an EPIPEN or inhaler with him/her, the physician's order must state this requirement.

Providing treats in school

Because we may have children with allergies, parents must first contact the tutor to inquire if treats are acceptable in class. The tutor will then take appropriate steps to ensure the safety and participation of everyone.

Curriculum

Divine Mercy Academy provides a liberal arts education for children in a Christ centered environment. Using the classical method, the order to our world is stressed in everything we do and throughout all the subjects our students study. Our children learn *how* to learn, acquiring the tools of learning which make this possible. Respecting the classical trivium, we strive to feed the soul as well as the intellect. Children respond beautifully to this approach to learning, quickly becoming people who love to learn. Divine Mercy Academy takes seriously our call to form "saints and scholars."

Assessment

We will assess children on their growth in both character and academics. Report cards may use a variation of the grading scale as deemed appropriate by the classroom tutor. Grading in Kindergarten, First and Second Grade depends upon intellectual development and ability, growth in knowledge and skills, neatness, completion of work, and on task time. Grading in Third through Eighth Grade depends upon: assessments, quizzes, class participation, homework/daily work, projects/reports. We will assess children's growth in character by measuring their behavior according to the Salesian Way.

Field Trips

All field trips are academic and/or spiritual in nature, and are aligned with grade level curriculum. A signed permission slip must be filled out for a student to participate in a field trip. Tutors and Administration have the right to prohibit a student from participating in a field trip when circumstances warrant. Parents are asked not to bring others along, including siblings, when they are chaperoning.

Homework

Homework is an essential part of the learning process. A certain amount of homework is necessary to reinforce what is taught at school. The student who successfully learns the process of completing homework also is mastering self-discipline, independence, initiative and responsibility. If minimum work requirements cannot be met, students will be placed on academic probation and placed on a program to assist them.

The purpose of homework is to foster habits of independent work-study, to reinforce learning that has taken place at school, and to relate school learning to out-of-school interests. Parents are asked to foster an atmosphere conducive to doing homework and stress the importance of the responsible completion of homework to the student. Homework includes written and/or study work, projects, and purposeful reading. Students at all grade levels are expected to complete homework assignments and turn them in on time. Assignments missed because of excused absences must be completed in the same amount of days that the student is absent.

Lower Grammar Stage (K-2)

Because the stages of the Trivium are aligned to a child's natural development, we believe that homework during the Grammar Stage should be minimal. The amount of concentration and effort expended during the school day should be such that the ability of students to learn material should be exhausted in school. Tutors are encouraged, however, to assign parent-child reading, narrations by the child to the parent, and other assignments that will bring parents and children together around learning. Minimal spelling, math, reading, memorization, etc., may be given as well. Work will be appropriate for the age and ability of each child.

Upper Grammar Stage (3-5)

In this stage, children continue in the Grammar Stage though some homework may be assigned to fostering a sense of responsibility and discipline. Homework assignments need not be lengthy, but should become slightly more structured. Tutors may assign tasks such as independent reading with brief narrations, practicing spelling and vocabulary, completing math exercises, observation in nature, and engaging in short-term projects to assist in the development of time management and organization.

Logic Stage (grades 6-8)

Beginning in the sixth grade, the child transitions to the logic stage of learning. Homework assignments, while not lengthy, should increase during this period. Students should be working with math and reading on a daily basis. Independent, long-term projects allow students the opportunity to learn to manage time and prioritize tasks. These skills reinforce the learning that occurs during the school day, and serve to prepare the student for high school. Homework may include poetry recitation and practice, copy work, spelling sentences, math problems, fact study, reading a chapter, etc.

Tutors will:

- Check assignment book each day in class
- Provide assignments relevant to class work
- Use assigned homework as an assessment tool
- Consider the age and capabilities of the student when preparing assignments
- Consider the time required to complete an assignment

Parents will:

- Check assignment book each day at home
- Provide adequate time and a suitable place for the student to complete homework
- Be available for questions, but remember that homework is the child's responsibility
- Contact the tutor when their child consistently has difficulty completing assignments

Students will:

- Clarify homework instructions with the tutor
- Take home materials needed to complete assignment
- Budget time
- Return all completed work to the tutor by due date

Homework Assignment

- For Kindergarten, the tutor will communicate assignments to parents through homework journals, handouts or electronic means.

- Students in all grades will use the provided assignment notebook

Make-Up Work

Students who have an excused absence have the same amount of time missed to make-up missed work. Example: If a student was ill two days, then they have two days, upon return to school, to complete and turn in missed assignments/activities. Homework may be requested before 9:30 a.m. on the day of the absence. Homework will be placed in the school front office to be picked up.

Physical Education

Students attend P.E. each week. Participation is expected except when a child has a note from a doctor releasing him/her from gym class. A doctor's note is required indicating the appropriate level of P.E. activity if a student has sustained a fracture or injury. If a student has worn a cast or a splint, a doctor's note is required to resume PE activity.

Promotion and Retention

While there are many hallmarks of a classical education, a great deal of effort is placed on the laying of a proper foundation before continuing on in a course of study. *Multum non multa* emphasizes a depth of content over a depth; it is the depth of study and firm foundation which allow the student to integrate cumulative knowledge and continue in the master of the liberal arts. With that in mind, as a student approaches the end of each academic year, he or she must have reached a certain degree of maturity and academic achievement so that he or she will properly begin the ensuing academic year on proper footing.

Students who have successfully completed grade requirements will be promoted to the next grade. That said, there may be a rare occasion when in the opinion of a tutor, school leadership, or the family, that the child's social, developmental, and/or academic needs would best be met by repeating the current grade. Such a decision should not be made lightly or with only academic struggle in mind. To be sure, *struggling* is not a cause of holding a child back; while students are expected to strive for academic excellence, such excellence may look different in each child. Still, should such a decision be up for discernment and discussion, **ongoing and early communication across the grade level and at home is essential. Any concerns regarding potentially having a student repeat the current grade, must be communicated to the family and school administration before the first day of the third trimester.**

Kindergarten-1

A decision to retain or promote a student in the Kindergarten and 1st Grade program shall be based on the progress of the child, especially with regards to the level of maturity attained and the ability to handle the academic program of the next grade. In particular, the student ought to show an ability to

follow classroom routines, show emotional and behavioral regulation, the ability to grasp and retain class content, and overall display reasonable progress through the curriculum. This decision will be a consultative one involving the tutor, parents, and administration.

Grades 2-4

The foundation in reading is laid in the primary grades, especially the first two grades. Inability to read causes more children to experience failure or lack of progress in school than any other single factor. Hence, in the primary grades, promotion is to be determined mainly by the student's progress in reading. Students ought not be more than one reading grade level below the standard.

Grades 5-8

Students in grades 5-8 are required to pass with a cumulative grade of 70% and above. In the event a student fails any subject for a given trimester and/or is in danger of failing a subject for the year, the tutor must communicate such concerns to the family and school administration so that a remediation plan can be implemented as soon as possible. Promotion to the rising grade may be contingent upon adherence to this remediation plan.

Reports to Parents

Reports of your child's progress will be made during the year. Report cards are sent home at the conclusion of each trimester. A mandatory Parent/Tutor Conference is scheduled in the fall and additional conferences will be provided upon request throughout the year.

If a tutor observes that a child is having difficulty with classroom work, parents will be notified by phone or in writing and an appointment may be made to discuss the child's progress. Report Cards and notes home are tools to communicate how your student is progressing in school.

Discipline

“Those countries in Europe which are still influenced by priests, are exactly the countries where there is still singing and dancing and coloured dresses and art in the open-air. Catholic doctrine and discipline may be walls; but they are the walls of a playground. Christianity is the only frame which has preserved the pleasure of Paganism. We might fancy some children playing on the flat grassy top of some tall island in the sea. So long as there was a wall round the cliff's edge they could fling themselves into every frantic game and make the place the noisiest of nurseries. But the walls were knocked down, leaving the naked peril of the precipice. They did not fall over; but when their friends returned to them they were all huddled in terror in the centre of the island; and their song had ceased”

- G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*.

Throughout the whole of the Gospels, Our Lord calls his followers to excellence while also admonishing the Pharisees for “[tying] up heavy burdens and [laying] them on people’s shoulders [without lifting] a finger to move them” (Matthew 23:4). The Laws are not for their own purpose, but so that we might come to know and love our Heavenly Father. Therefore, discipline at Divine Mercy Academy reflects a similar end: our standards are high and we expect nothing short of excellence in virtue from our student; however, rules are not placed as heavy burdens meant to suppress the students, but as walls so that they might play safely within and, through the course of study and formation in virtue, come to know and love Jesus Christ.

The approach to discipline at Divine Mercy has a singular aim - to raise up saints and scholars. To that end, the enforcement of rules and the enactment of consequences will not be done in service of fairness or equality, ensuring that every child receives exactly the same treatment, but in service to holiness, so that every child receives exactly what he or she needs to grow in sainthood. Cooperating with parents, we understand that some students will flourish with a gentle invitation whereas others thrive when the task is set with immediacy and the stakes are high. Still, as sons and daughters of our Heavenly King, we believe that, regardless of behavior, disciplinary status, academic record, or school history, each student is to receive the standard of excellence and the respect due to heirs to the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Salesian Way

All students are expected to learn and to live by the Salesian Way. Developed by St. John Bosco, the Salesian Way is an educational and pastoral approach, rooted in the Christian faith, designed to help young people grow into responsible and morally upright individuals.

The entire school community recites the Salesian Way each morning.

- **I will be cheerful. *Hope***

Our hope is in the Lord. To acknowledge God as King and the author of all that is good is to make the choice of cheerfulness each day. Choosing a cheerful disposition does not presume ignorance of sorrow, difficulty, or lethargy. Rather, as the Psalms often speak to, it is precisely in our moments of sorrow that we might place our hearts in the tender care of Jesus Christ, hoping that “all will be well, all will be well, and all manner of things shall be well” (St Julian of Norwich).

- **I will do my duties well. *Justice***

Justice is chiefly concerned with habituating the self towards that which ought to be. Duties and responsibilities are carried forth precisely because they ought to be done.

- **I will stay close to Jesus in the Eucharist. *Faith***

The Eucharist is “the source and summit of the Christian life.” “The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church (CCC, 1324). The entire mission of Divine Mercy Academy must flow from and back towards communion with Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. To that end, everything we do must not be guided by utility or servile need, but rather by an encounter with Jesus Christ.

- **I chose to honor Mary as my Mother and Helper. *Filial Piety & Humility***

St. Maximilian Kolbe instructed us “never [to] be afraid of loving the Blessed Virgin too much. You can never love her more than Jesus did.” In learning to honor Mary, we develop a greater capacity to honor our earthly parents. Further, devotion to the Blessed Mother helps us rest in the assurance that while we cannot do everything on our own, we have a great helper and intercessor in heaven.

- **I choose to be kind. *Charity***

Related to the Latin *caritas*, charity is much more than a monetary gift, or pity offering. True Christian Charity consists in the movement of one’s heart such that we develop the habit of willing the good of another for the sake of the other. Rather than trying to be “nice”, students

who choose to be *kind* develop a warmth and empathy that is driven by a genuine desire to do good for others. This is opposed to mere *niceness* which, while superficially polite or pleasant, is motivated by social acceptance and personal comfort rather than a genuine desire to raise up one's neighbors in virtue.

- **I choose to serve rather than be served. *Fortitude***

The virtue of fortitude orients the individual to face difficulty well. More often than not, students develop fortitude in choosing to offer themselves in humble, and often unnoticed, service. Like Our Lord, who knelt before His friends to wash their feet, regardless of position or status, we must also choose to kneel before others, so that we might serve and lead them closer to Jesus.

Excellence in Virtue

“The terrible thing, the almost impossible thing, is to hand over your whole self--all your wishes and precautions--to Christ. But it is far easier than what we are all trying to do instead. For what we are trying to do is to remain what we call “ourselves,” to keep personal happiness as our great aim in life, and yet at the same time be “good.” - C. S. Lewis

A virtue is an habitual disposition which orients the heart, mind, and will towards the end of joyfully accomplishing the morally good. In short, a virtue is a good habit. The Latin word *virtus* is related to strength, valor, and goodness. The root of *virtus* is *vir*, or “man,” that is, mankind or a human. To act virtuously is not only to act with goodness and valor, but to act according to our design. “God looked at everything He had made, and found it very good” (Gen 1:31). We have been made by God and for God. Therefore, in acting virtuously, acting according to our design, we act in such a way that draws each of us closer to the Heart of God.

Divine Mercy Academy's excellence in virtue program is guided by the *Virtues in Practice* as developed by the Dominican Sisters of Mary Mother of the Eucharist.

***Virtues in Practice* - Program Overview**

“The goal of Catholic Education is Heaven, but knowledge alone will not get us there. *Virtues in Practice* helps students to live out the faith in their everyday lives. *Virtues in Practice* is a program for children in grades pre-kindergarten through eight to grow closer to Jesus by imitating His life and

virtues. It is set up in such a way that a whole school studies the same virtue each month, to provide a whole-school (and at home, whole-family) focus. The program covers 27 virtues over a three-year cycle, with 81 saints held up as models of the virtues.”

The Code of Conduct

In the pursuit of holiness and the development of virtue, the following are the non-negotiable essential requirements of a DMA student:

1. Students will maintain decorum conducive to a well-ordered and properly directed learning environment.
2. Students will listen while another is talking.
3. Students will walk quietly in the hallways.
4. Students will keep hands, feet, and objects to self.
5. Students will not threaten another with physical violence or verbal abuse (includes name calling, humiliation, gossip, bad language).
6. Students will be honest; they will not steal or cheat.
7. Students will greet tutors, peers, parents, and all guests with courtesy and respect. They will stand up when an adult enters a classroom and greets the class.
8. Students are to be in proper attire every day.
9. Students will be good stewards of all property entrusted to their care; this includes desks, books, uniforms, athletic equipment, and the building itself.
10. Students will call forth excellence from their peers. They will encourage proper behavior and admonish poor choices.

Academic Honesty

“Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth; God has placed in the human heart a desire to know the truth—in a word, to know Himself—so that, by knowing and loving God, men and women may also come to the fullness of truth about themselves.” - St. John Paul the Great

At Divine Mercy Academy, the development and application of the intellect is done in service of coming to know Our Lord. A genuine relationship with anyone is perfected through the knowing of the individual and the time spent in their presence. Likewise, the academic pursuits at DMA provide a framework in which a relationship with Jesus Christ may be fostered. To that end, we hold the pursuit of Truth in high regard and demand nothing short of excellence in understanding and the development of the tools to assist in the same understanding.

Divine Mercy Academy also understands that, while our standards are high, all of us fall far short of perfection in the pursuit of Truth. To that end, a proper understanding of things is always tempered by a genuine desire and effort to come to know them. “The fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you” (Merton).

All students are expected to present their best academic work. Such work should be the culmination of a proper understanding and integration of materials alongside an authentic effort to offer one’s best work. To that end, no student may ever present any work that is not his or her own.

Plagiarism is defined as presenting ideas that are not one’s own as such. Beyond passing off a completed work as the work of the student him or herself, plagiarism also includes, but is not limited to, paraphrasing without proper citation, and the use of any artificially generated text and/images without due acknowledgement or direction to use either.

Cheating is defined as gaining and/or using any unfair or unauthorized means of assessment material, answers, questions, or any combination thereof.

In some situations, the act of plagiarism and/or cheating is not clear. In such an event, careful consideration should be given to the context, content, and potential intent. The final decision regarding what constitutes academic dishonesty lies with the school.

The Dress Code

Warn my children to avoid the precipices of pride and haughtiness and to walk in the pleasant meadows of modesty; not to be dazzled by the sight of gold; not to lament that they do not possess what they erroneously admire in others; not to think more of themselves for gaudy trappings, nor less for the want of them; neither to deform the beauty that nature has given them by neglect, nor to try to heighten it by artifice; to put virtue in the first place, learning in the second; and in their

studies to esteem most whatever may teach them piety towards God, charity to all, and Christian humility themselves.

These, I consider the real and genuine fruits of learning, and I would maintain that those who give themselves to study with such intent will easily attain their end and become perfect.

- Saint Thomas More to his children's tutors

Divine Mercy Academy sets a high standard for discipline and academic integrity. To that end, the same standard of excellence is applied to dress and appearance. DMA employs this policy for all students in an effort to foster a sense of community, professionalism, and to promote a positive work ethic. Furthermore, the dress code encourages a neat, consistent appearance and assists students as they concentrate on their studies. Students are expected to be proper in dress and appearance when on campus and whenever they are representing Divine Mercy Academy in any official capacity.

Uniforms

A school uniform accomplishes many things. School uniforms are designed to take the pressure off competition and economic status for students. Uniforms encourage a neat, consistent appearance and assist students as they concentrate on their studies. Above these, though, adherence to the school uniform on a consistent basis cultivates the virtue of obedience. The uniform code is strictly enforced by the school faculty and administration. All uniforms should be clean, pressed and free of holes. Shoes and socks must be worn at all times.

Uniforms for the 2024-2025 academic year can be purchased through Land's End, at the Spirit Wear website, the Uniform Locker, or, for certain items, at your preferred online or local retail store.

2024-2025 Uniform Checklist

Young Women

All young women shall wear the Royal Blue polo with embroidered DMA crest. Students may wear long or short sleeves. The shirt shall be tucked into the skirt at all times. They will wear a khaki skirt with white socks and brown dress shoes. Black or otherwise dark colored compression shorts (or other form of "bike shorts") should be worn underneath the skirt. Skirts may not be rolled or folded over. At a minimum, the bottom hem of the skirt should touch the kneecap. During the colder months, young women may wear black leggings and black socks. The black leggings should not be paired with white socks. Students may choose to wear a navy sweater with the DMA embroidered crest.

Checklist:

- Embroidered Royal Blue polo, long or short sleeve
- Khaki skirt
- "Bike" or other compression shorts (for under the skirt); a dark color
- White socks
- Black leggings
- Black Socks
- Embroidered navy blue sweater with DMA crest
- Brown dress shoes

Young Men

All young women shall wear the Royal Blue polo with embroidered DMA crest. Students may wear long or short sleeves. They will wear khaki pants, a brown belt, with white socks, and brown dress shoes. Shirts should be tucked neatly into the pants or shorts at all times. K-2 boys shall be excused from the belt required. During warmer weather days, young men may wear khaki shorts. The hemline of the shorts should touch the kneecap. White socks, a brown belt, and brown dress shoes will continue to be worn. Students may choose to wear a navy sweater with the DMA embroidered crest.

Checklist:

- Embroidered Royal Blue polo, long or short sleeve
- Khaki Pants
- Brown Belt
- Khaki Shorts
- White socks
- Embroidered navy blue sweater
- Brown dress shoes

PE

On PE days, students wear the Royal Blue polo with embroidered DMA crest. Students may wear long or short sleeves. Students will wear black athletic pants on all PE days. Pants should be all black and without distinctive patterns or logos. On warmer weather days, students may choose to wear black gym shorts. Gym shorts shall be with the DMA crest. Students may wear the Royal Blue ¼ zip with the DMA crest. Students will wear white socks and athletic sneakers. Students should not wear light-up sneakers and should only wear sneakers with a light “non-scuff” sole.

Checklist:

- Royal Blue polo, long or short sleeve, embroidered with DMA crest; only available through Land’s End
- Royal Blue ¼ zip
- Black athletic shorts, with DMA logo
- Black athletic pants
- White socks
- Athletic sneakers

Hairstyles

Young women shall have their hair neat in appearance every day. They may wear simple hair accessories such as headbands in colors that compliment the uniform (blues, reds, golds, white). Hair should not be dyed or otherwise styled in an extreme or bizarre fashion.

Young men shall have their in neat appearance each day. Hair should not extend below the collar, over the ears, or cover the eyes. Hair should not be dyed or otherwise styled in an extreme or bizarre fashion. Young men shall not wear a bun, knot, or pony-tail. No extreme hairstyles or designs will be permitted (this includes, but is not limited to, mohawks, spikes, symbols shaved into the hair, etc).

Jewelry, Watches, Accessories

Young women may wear simple, non-dangling or non-hoop earrings. They may wear a religious medal, such a Miraculous Medal, medal of a Patron Saint, or a scapular. Students may wear a simple analog or digital wristwatch (such that it does not have any internet capabilities). They may wear one religious or school related bracelet per wrist.

Young men may wear a religious medal, such a Miraculous Medal, medal of a Patron Saint, or a scapular. Students may wear a simple analog or digital wristwatch (such that it does not have any

internet capabilities). They may wear one religious or school related bracelet per wrist. Young men may not wear earrings or have any other piercings.

General Notes

The Royal Blue polo is available in mesh-cotton, cotton-interlock, and rapid dry materials. Each is acceptable each day of the week.

If a student chooses to wear an undershirt or garment under the polo, colors should be neutral with minimal design or patterns. White is preferred.

The Royal Blue ¼ zip may be worn on PE days and regular uniform days. The navy sweater may only be worn on regular uniform days and may not be worn on PE days.

While the new PE uniform is preferred, during the 2024-2025 school year, so long as it remains in good condition, students may wear the 23/24 PE uniform.

Students go outside for recess almost every day and often go outside for classes as well. Shoes should be sturdy and ready for students to run, jump, and otherwise play in.

On sunny days, students are encouraged to wear a hat from home for PE and recess.

Occasionally, the school will have dress down days. A dress down day is not to be confused with "free dress." All clothing should be in good condition and should not contain any words, messages, or logos that directly conflict with Christian discipleship or the teachings of the Catholic Church, nor should any clothing, logo, message, or text give cause to any scandal. Overly informal apparel (like pajamas, leggings, yoga pants, flip-flops, tank-tops without an undershirt, etc) should not be worn. Students wishing to wear shorts on dress-down days shall wear the DMA PE gym shorts.

The administration reserves the right to determine the definition of appropriate school dress. Parents may be called to bring a change of clothes for students who are inappropriately dressed. The children generally go outside, even when the weather is cold. During these times, it is necessary for them to have hats, gloves, scarves, etc. If a student is not adequately dressed for cold weather, he or she may not be permitted to go outside.

Recess Guidelines

1. Students must stay within the boundaries designated by the school. The recess boundaries are defined as the soccer fields closest to Chelsea Road, the playground, and the concrete top. If students wish to organize a game on the baseball field or otherwise play in an area not in the designated recess space, they must have a tutor with them.
2. Students may not throw wood chips, sand, rocks, or toys not specifically designed for safe throwing.
3. Students may not get on top of or climb equipment that is not designed for safe climbing. The upper and lower grammar schools may use the playground and shall follow the rules associated with it. (E.g. no climbing up the slides, or on top of tunnels, etc).
4. The Logic school (6-8) shall not use the playground.
5. Students will line up immediately when the supervising staff member gives the designated signal (whistle or bell).

Decorum at Mass

“For the liturgy, through which the work of our redemption is accomplished, most of all in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, is the outstanding means whereby the faithful may express in their lives, and manifest to others, the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church (Sacrosanctum Concilium, 2).”

Students at Divine Mercy Academy have the blessed privilege of attending Holy Mass. While at liturgy, all members of the Divine Mercy Academy community are called to a decorum proper to the One in whose presence they worship, while remaining cognizant of the reverence appropriate to each stage of development. All students are to sit with their respective homerooms during Holy Mass, but may be excused from this requirement should their family be in attendance. All students, but most especially those in the upper grades, should model the Eucharistic Reverence due, while worshipping at mass.

Within the DMA community, we are blessed with a diversity of liturgical expression and parochial membership. As Jesus Christ is fully present, body, blood, soul, and divinity, at each mass, DMA welcomes the One Body of Christ made up of our families who worship at Ordinariate, TLM, and

Novus Ordo parishes. Further, we recognize and are grateful to the non-Catholic families who have entrusted their children to us, as well.

All students are expected to participate in the proper and appropriate physical movements of the Mass with respect and reverence. While non-Catholic students are not forced or coerced into saying, singing, or otherwise praying contrary to their conscience, DMA remains unapologetic in its proclamation of the True Presence of Our Lord in the Eucharist and the fullness of Truth that subsists in the one Catholic Church, which He established. The Liturgy remains the most powerful expression of Christ's invitation for all Christians to be united in the one Catholic Church which He established.

The Sacred Liturgy is the heart of the school's life and its most solemn activity. The Sacred Liturgy is not a means to an end, even a worthy end such as moral instruction, but is itself the end to which all true education is ordered. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us that the Eucharist is the "source and summit of the whole of Christian life" (1324). Everything that we do must flow from and be ordered to adoration and reception of the Most Blessed Sacrament. For in worship we acknowledge the goodness of truth by surrendering to it, offering ourselves in Christ to the Father. And it is in worship, by God's gracious initiative, that our longing for beauty and truth finds its rest in the mystery of God who is beauty and truth. Contemplation and adoration, prayer and praise are therefore the highest form of knowledge and are foreshadowed by all others, even if this knowledge adores a mystery that is beyond our comprehension.

Sacred Liturgy is central to the life of the school, and this understanding should be made incarnate and explicit.

Beauty in liturgy is important because it is 'pointless' and extravagant, like the costly perfume with which Mary Magdalene anointed the head of Jesus. Liturgy should be beautiful because without beauty for its own sake, we forget that the worship of God is its own end—indeed the highest end—and that the Church is His mystical body. Other goals, such as building up the community, moral formation, and social action, all follow from the liturgy, but the liturgy itself must be ordered to the worship of God who both transcends and dwells among us.

Liturgy is beautiful and reveals the mystery of God when it is celebrated with solemnity and reverence. Silence and stillness should be observed before, during, and after the liturgy. The lectors should be competent and well prepared. The movements of the servers should be solemn, graceful, and deliberate. Musical selections should be beautiful and appropriate to the occasion. And the church itself should be beautifully and tastefully adorned in ways appropriate to the liturgical season. (Graduating classes could emphasize this by making a modest gift to the parish, e.g., crucifixes, icons, vestments, thuribles, etc.). The school should thus seek to 'worship the Lord in the beauty of Holiness' and to understand that holiness is beautiful.

Because the worship of God is its own end, because it is the gift of God's own life and the highest expression of our humanity, it should evoke a sense of wonder and gratitude and call forth the very best we have to offer—which is everything, ourselves, our souls and bodies. This means that students should present themselves at their best, appearing groomed and well-dressed. They should seek to love God with the whole of their being, soul and body. Children should have the intricacies of the Mass explained to them and learn a proper posture for prayer as well as to perform bodily gestures such as genuflecting, bowing, and crossing themselves. They should also understand why these are appropriate at certain moments in the Mass. Not only does this allow for a fuller and more comprehending participation in the Mass, it allows children to worship God with their bodies and their souls and reinforces that they themselves are persons who are a unity of body and soul.

-Adapted from the St. Jerome Educational Plan

Technology

Divine Mercy Academy is a tech-minimal school. We believe that the most powerful tool is a good story or a great book, therefore any and all technology used at school is always done in service to the story, the book, or the lesson. When appropriate, a tutor may elect to use some technology to showcase a song, augment the ability to analyze a work of art, or otherwise enhance the lesson in a significant way. Any technology used in the classroom, however minimal, should always be in service to the lesson. Certainly, there is a temptation to teach technological tools in a more explicit way to prepare students for future schools and potential jobs. While there is honor and dignity in servile pursuit, the teaching of technology for the sake of job preparedness is insufficient when juxtaposed to the importance of teaching logic, orderliness, industriousness, and prudence. Furthermore, due to the rapidly changing landscape of technology and innovation, we believe that while specific technological tools will not outlast a Divine Mercy Education, the foundational tools that will allow students, should they desire, to learn and master the technological tools placed before them in future schooling or the workplace.

Devices Not Permitted on Campus

Students are not permitted to bring the following to school: smartphones, traditional cellphones, handheld electronic games, portable music players, recorders, smart watches, fitness trackers, or any other device deemed inappropriate by the school. In the event any of these is found at school, they will be immediately confiscated by the teacher and returned to the respective parent or guardian at the end of the day. Should any such device be required for a class, parents will be notified in advance by the specific tutor in question.

Taking video or pictures of faculty, staff, and students without their permission is forbidden. Inappropriate pictures found on and/or distributed via cell phones or other smart devices will result in confiscation and disciplinary action commensurate with the offense.

In the event a student must bring a phone to campus, the school must be informed in writing from the parents/guardian of the student clearly stating the reason for the phone and the duration for which the student will need to bring the phone to school. Upon arrival, the student will check the phone in with the front office and retrieve the phone at the end of the day. Divine Mercy Academy is not responsible and assumes no liability for lost or damaged devices should a student bring one to school.

Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying occurs when any person is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another individual or group using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or cell phones. We reserve the right to discipline students for actions taken off-campus if actions are intended to have an effect on another student or they adversely affect the safety and well-being of a student, while in school.

Bullying

Bullying is a form of violence that hurts others and it is strictly prohibited at Divine Mercy Academy. Parents and tutors should be alert to bullying at school or during school-sponsored activities where a student or group of students intentionally and repeatedly uses their power to hurt other individuals or groups. Bullies' power can come from their physical strength, age, financial status, popularity, social status, technological skills, or by association.

Reporting Harassment or Bullying

Any occurrence of bullying or harassment should immediately be reported to a student's tutor and the administration. The Headmaster will investigate the incident and take appropriate disciplinary action, if necessary.

Before and After School Activities

Nothing at Divine Mercy Academy is considered to be "extra-curricular." Indeed, everything that the school does is part of a great integrated curriculum. From first arrival at school to departure in the afternoon, each movement of the day contains some lesson. To that end, careful consideration must be made in discerning what types of activities are commensurate with the DMA mission to raise up saints and scholars. No club, sport, or other activity can, in any way, operate outside of the mission and vision of the school nor, in any way, detract from it. Indeed, every expression of DMA's campus life must exist in accord with its singular mission of raising up saints. To that end, every club moderator, coach, or volunteer must work in full accord with the mission of the school and, as such, see that particular activity in full alignment with the singular purpose of raising up saints and scholars.

Public Displays of Affection/ Romance at School

While at school, at school sponsored events, or when representing the school in any capacity, students are not permitted to engage in public displays of romantic affection with other students which include, but are not limited to, holding hands, kissing, sitting on laps, embracing, or other romantic gestures. The final discretion of what is developmentally appropriate or otherwise rests with the school.

Representing Divine Mercy Academy

“Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope, and do it with gentleness and reverence.” 1 Peter 3:15-16a

All students are witnesses to the Gospel and act as ambassadors of Divine Mercy Academy. To that end, students are to conduct themselves in accordance with these standards at all DMA events, but, to the greatest extent possible, at all times, such that their continual pursuit of virtue and holiness would result in heavenly sanctification.

Athletics and Interscholastic Activities

As our incarnate Lord, God has blessed all of creation and called it “good.” The movement of our bodies, through dance, athletics, and organized sports, can be superb ways of glorifying God. “You have given all to me, to You O Lord, I return it. Everything is your, dispose of it wholly according to your will. Give me only your love and your grace, for this is enough for me” (St. Ignatius of Loyola). As a classical curriculum is integrated, so too an athletics program or team, integrates the same lessons throughout. Any practice, competition, or activity is an opportunity to grow in holiness. Athletics can teach the importance of discipline, setting high standards, and working together to achieve a goal. However, this is placed within the context of our Catholic, classical educational model; whatever we do, we do it with the aim of sainthood.

We must ask: does this program bring families together? Does it increase a sense of wonder and awe in our students? Are they led closer to Christ in the process? If done properly, competition can achieve these ends.

Disciplinary Ladder

The vast majority of behavioral issues will be minor, easily corrected or redirected. Whenever possible, and in a manner appropriate to the age and context of each child, the tutor should reteach the behavior, redirect the behavior, or verbally correct. As is best practice, students should be praised in public and corrected in private. As in most classroom issues, there is a great deal of grace and prudential

judgment in determining the intent and extent of individual behaviors. All consequences should be as immediate and proximate to the behavior as possible. That said, there may be more serious occasions when the consequences of a given action or series of actions is scheduled or set aside at a specific time. Consequences should be constructed in such a way that the student is clearly able to draw the connection between the action and the result such that he or she would not choose the same action in the future. Furthermore, in conjunction with our Education in Virtue program, those students falling short of the standards of Divine Mercy Academy are fully expected to be able to name the virtues they fell short of and which virtues might be needed in making amends. The behaviors and consequences outlined below are designed to address those incidents where they are more acute or chronic in nature. Finally, the development and relative maturity of the child is always considered when determining appropriate consequences.

Level 1 Misconduct and Possible Responses

Level 1: Minor misconduct on the part of the student that impedes orderly classroom procedure or interferes with the orderly operation of the school.

Examples of Level 1 infractions include but are not limited to the following:

- Repeated Classroom or in-school disturbance
- Five or more classroom tardiness
- Repeated behaviors that distract or frustrate peers
- Minor intentional irritation of other students
- Failure to follow prescribed procedures or directives from staff
- Repeated inappropriate attire (see Dress Code Policy)
- Disrespectful language or gestures
- Inappropriate display of affection
- Minor unwanted teasing (not bullying)
- Profanity
- Occasional minor misuse of technology

Procedure:

The student will write a reflection note and bring a signed copy back to school the following day. The teacher will administer a developmentally appropriate consequence, as warranted.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Loss of classroom privileges
- Loss of recess
- Eating lunch in silence vs. with the class
- Assigned chores

- Reflective exercises such as conferences with the tutor, family, or headmaster
- Written or oral apology for younger students (grades K-2)
- Written reflection or apology for older students (grades 3-8)
- Changed seating assignments
- Phone calls and emails home
- After several repeat offenses (approximately ten for K-4 or six for 5th-8th grade) the student may be placed on behavioral probation (see Behavioral Probation) at the discretion of the Headmaster.
- The decision to place a student on behavioral probation will be based upon the nature of the infraction/s leading up to the triggering offense and the student's attitude toward discipline.

Level 2 Misconduct and Possible Responses

Level 2: Misbehavior on the part of the student that tends to disrupt and detract from the learning climate of the school.

Examples of Level 2 infractions include but are not limited to the following:

- Serial Level 1 infractions that are not curbed by Level 1 disciplinary responses
- Public display of affection
- Vulgar language and use of the Lord's name in vain
- Blatant and/or egregious disrespect of authority
- Cheating or lying
- Failure to serve a disciplinary consequence
- Forgery
- Gambling
- Reckless behavior or ongoing horseplay
- Inappropriate pranks
- Insubordination
- Repeat or serious misuse of technology
- Mild violations of the code of conduct
- Minor physical scuffles (pushing, shoving, etc. often the result of high tempers, or a dysregulated competition)
- Skipping class
- Leaving the building or campus without permission
- Minor or careless vandalism

Procedure:

- Level 2 infractions are reported to the Headmaster
- If the behavior is disruptive or discovered outright, the student may be removed from the classroom, sent to the office, and/or sent home early.
- The Headmaster will investigate the incident.
- The Headmaster will record the incident and email it to the parents, teacher(s), and Headmaster.
- When appropriate, an after-school detention, in-school, or out-of-school suspension may be scheduled.
- The Headmaster will set up a conversation with the parents for the purpose of developing a plan.
- The plan will have designated re-evaluation dates to determine effectiveness and may be modified, extended, or terminated by the Headmaster based upon the conclusion drawn through the evaluation.

After two Level 2 infractions a student may be placed on behavioral probation.

Behavioral Probation: A six-week period during which a student...

- Will not be allowed to participate in any extracurricular activities.
- Will lose classroom and campus privileges as determined by the tutors and Headmaster
- May be expelled for any subsequent Level 2 or 3 misconduct (by the decision of a committee composed of the Headmaster, the cohort Lead Tutor, the homeroom tutor, and one additional member as determined by the Headmaster).

NOTE: If after completing the period of behavioral probation, the student commits any level of behavioral infraction, he/she will again be placed on behavioral probation and may be considered for suspension or expulsion at the discretion of the Headmaster.

After four Level 2 infractions, the student may be expelled (see Expulsion below) from school for at least the remainder of the school year.

Level 3 Misconduct and Possible Responses

Level 3: Acts directed against persons or property, which endanger the spiritual, physical, or emotional health or safety of others in the school.

Many of these acts may be considered criminal and may involve contacting local law enforcement agencies. These offenses are not calculated in the cumulative disciplinary measures taken with Level 1 and 2 offenses. Level 3 infractions are addressed independently of other infractions.

Examples of Level 3 infractions include, but are not limited to the following:

- Fighting (not pushing or shoving): Includes punching, kicking, throwing, or any common behaviors associated with fighting
- Sexual immorality and misconduct, including sexting and inappropriate comments or conversations related to illicit behavior
- Viewing, use, or distribution of pornography
- Bullying (repeated behavior against peers that is socially, emotionally, physically, or spiritually isolating, hurtful, or harmful).
- Threats to harm oneself or others
- Sexual harassment of students or employees
- Assault/battery
- Any attempt to do bodily harm to a staff member
- Vandalism (depending on the extent of damages and intentions)
- Extortion
- Hazing
- Arson
- Bomb threat
- Serious or serial violation of the Acceptable Use of Technology Policy
- Phone tampering
- Possession/use/transfer of explosive devices
- Possession/theft/sale of stolen property
- Possession/use/transfer of tobacco and smoking materials
- Possession/use/transfer of dangerous weapons
- Possession/use/transfer of unauthorized substances and/or paraphernalia (drugs, alcohol, mood altering substances, etc.)
- Possession/use/transfer of fireworks
- Possession/use/transfer of "look-alike" substances
- Use of cell phone cameras in private areas

Procedure:

- The student may be immediately removed from the classroom.
- The Headmaster initiates disciplinary action by investigating the infraction, meeting with the parents, and conferring with staff and parents on the extent of the consequences.

- The student will be suspended during the investigation and the duration of the discipline committee hearing and may be expelled by the decision of a committee assembled by the Headmaster. The committee may be composed of the Headmaster, the cohort Lead Tutor, the homeroom tutor, and one additional member as determined by the Headmaster.
 - If necessary, the Headmaster will contact the local law enforcement agency, and restitution for property and damages will be required.
 - In determining what disciplinary action will be taken in response to Level 3 offenses, the discipline committee will meet with the student's parents and may consider the student's discipline record from previous school years in addition to the current school year.
-

ISI (Detention)

“As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another” (Proverbs 27:17). The purpose of ISI (Iron Sharpens Iron) is to provide students with the opportunity to reflect on a given action or developing habit with the intent of returning to development in virtue. ISI is not a study nor a free period or mere solitude or silence, rather it is an intentional and directed time ordered to encourage the student to identify faulty habits, departure from virtue, and understand the impact of his or her actions.

In the event a parent or family member *must* pick up the student in question before the conclusion of detention, the student will serve detention the following school day. If a student is given detention, parents should be informed immediately so as to make appropriate dismissal plans.

Procedure

1. Student reports to detention room promptly at dismissal
2. Any student(s) in the detention room will pray the Chaplet at this time
3. Detention will last approximately 30 minutes
4. Students will complete the a reflection sheet covering the following:

Side 1

- a. Describe the choices you made which lead to you receiving detention
 - b. Explain how your action affected your tutor(s)
 - c. Explain how your action affected your peer(s)
 - d. Explain how your action affected yourself
 - e. Identify the principal virtue from which you deviated
 - f. Copy out the definition
 - g. Explain how you should have applied this virtue and how you will practice this virtue in the future
5. Reflection sheet is signed by the student and by the presiding tutor

6. The student brings the sheet home and completes **side 2** with his or her family:
 - a. After talking with my family, I understand that I have fallen short of the standard of Excellence in Virtue as set by Divine Mercy Academy in the following ways:
 - b. and I firmly intend to grow in virtue such that I will make the proper decision in the future in the following ways:
 7. The reflection sheet is then signed again by the student and signed by at least one family member
 8. The student returns the reflection sheet to the headmaster the following morning
-

Suspension and Expulsion

In the event of a potential expulsion, the headmaster shall call together the discipline committee to review the facts and determine an outcome. This committee will consist of the headmaster, the homeroom teacher of the student in question, the cohort lead of the student's grade, and one other at-large faculty member who, to the greatest extent possible, is somewhat removed from the situation. While considering an expulsion, the student shall remain suspended until a final decision is reached. The committee shall work with diligence and expediency, keeping in mind the gravity of the situation at hand, as well as the need to keep the child in school - even if that school proves not to be Divine Mercy.

If a student withdraws from Divine Mercy Academy, all outstanding tuition shall become due. No records will be transferred or released until financial obligations are met.

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, beloved...Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: rejoice! Your kindness should be known to all. The Lord is near. Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me. Then the God of peace will be with you.

-Philippians 4:1, 4-9

The Catholic Cultural Association



DIVINE MERCY ACADEMY CCA
CATHOLIC CULTURAL ASSOCIATION

Volunteer Handbook

2024-2025

*“Then I heard the voice of the LORD saying,
“Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?”*

Then I said,

“Here am I. Send me!”

Isaiah 6:8

Dear Parents,

In this handbook, you will find a list of the volunteer positions available for the 2024-2025 school year. Please read over the opportunities and find ones that interest you. Each position is a one-year commitment. You will have an opportunity to sign up for these positions via an electronic sign-up form provided by the school.

Please remember to record all of your volunteer hours via our online forms on the DMA website.

You will be given an opportunity to record your hours in a Google form. Each act of service needs its own submission. The form can be found on the DMA website or from a link within a CCA correspondence. A log of tracked hours will be maintained by the CCA and will be updated on a monthly basis. Families who have served a few hours by January will receive a reminder from the school.

Each family is asked to serve 25 hours by May 1st. Unserved hours after that date will be billed at the rate of \$20 an hour.

Please read through this handbook carefully, sign the Volunteer Pledge Sheet, choose your volunteer duty/duties for the year and return it to the school office by September 15, 2024. For the 2024-25 school year, opportunities can be found at this link:
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D4CAEAD23ABFDC16-49158786-20242024#/>

Thank you in advance for all of your devoted time to Divine Mercy Academy. It is your dedication that makes our school truly great!

In gratitude,
Catholic Culture Association (CCA)

2024-2025 Catholic Culture Association Overview

President - Mrs. Bernadette McClain
Vice President - Mrs. Charlotte Edwards
Secretary - Mrs. Krystal Garay
Treasurer - Mrs. Stephanie Conley
CCA Representative to DMA Board - Mrs. Katie Farnoly
Tutor Representative - Mrs. Cheryl Shoots

CCA Vision

The Catholic Cultural Association works to cultivate fertile soil in which the seeds of faith may grow and flourish. Through family support, strengthening community ties, and raising up a *liturgical* way of living, the CCA provides essential touch points so that families, tutors, and the greater community might labor together in raising up saints and scholars.

CCA Mission

The CCA strives to support Divine Mercy Academy in three distinct tiers - *Familia and Familiae, Tutor's Auxiliary, and Zelig and Louise Society* - which were formed to create better connection between families, coordinate volunteers and fundraising efforts, and promote liturgical living.

Familia Familiae (FA)

The goal of the Familia Familiae is to develop and support the DMA “family of families.” In short, the objective is to provide material, social, and spiritual support to our families.

1. Welcome and connect new families into the fold
2. Connect with community events
 - a. Spiritual
 - b. Social
 - c. Academic
3. Support families in need
 - a. Baby showers
 - b. Funeral support
 - c. Assistance during unforeseen family needs

CCA Board Member Point of Contact - Katie Farnoly

Tutor's Auxiliary (TA)

The goal of the TA is to provide material and financial support to the tutors, classrooms, and school at large. This would encompass classroom “wish lists” as well as coordinating volunteer efforts for classroom jobs or needs. The largest portion of this branch would be coordinating volunteer hours that directly impact DMA’s daily activities..

1. Volunteer Hours
2. Coordinate with Room Parents
3. Fundraising

CCA Board Member Point of Contact for Volunteer Hours - Charlotte Edwards

CCA Board Member Point of Contact for Fundraising - Stephanie Conley

Zelie and Louis Society (ZL)

This is the vehicle through which the school can directly develop our Catholic culture. The Society organizes family formation nights, service projects, lectures, book studies, etc. As we work to raise up saints, we look to saints like Zelie and Louis Martin, who, through their own witness, raised up a beautiful, holy family,

1. Faith and Family nights
2. Service Projects
3. Social events
 - a. Coordinate lectures or seminars lead by members of the faculty, fellow parents, or other pertinent speakers
 - b. Coordinate book studies
4. Family Faith Formation

CCA Board Member Point of Contact - Krystal Garay

Volunteer Handbook Purpose

“For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve...” (Mark 10:45)

Research indicates that parent volunteerism in schools enhances student self-esteem, increases academic achievement, and improves student behavior and attendance. We appreciate the priceless service that you provide us, and we have created this Volunteer Handbook to help you to use your time and talents efficiently within our school community . We want to make sure that you are well informed on all aspects of volunteering at Divine Mercy Academy.

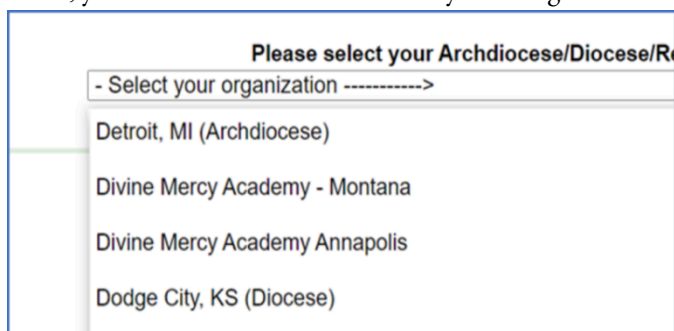
Volunteer Code of Conduct

Our children are the most important gift God has entrusted to us. As a volunteer, I promise to strictly follow the rules and guidelines in this booklet as a condition of my providing services to the children and youth at Divine Mercy Academy.

Volunteer Guidelines

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with us! We love having our parents and friends spend time with us to enrich the lives of our students! In order to be qualified to volunteer with us there are two steps which must be taken.

1. Fingerprinting/Background Check. Please download this form: [DMALivescan Pre-Registration App](#) and bring it to the nearest Livescan fingerprinting location. We will electronically receive your clearance within 24-48 hours. Fingerprinting will take place at Back to School Night on **September 12, 2024**. Please consult the email correspondence from the school for instructions on how to sign up.
2. VIRTUS online training. Please follow these instructions: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/18afSR4QGC1gAcD4H7iCtw-qF6VpP3f0r/view?usp=sharing> to create a first time registration, complete the training modules, download the certificate of completion, and email it to us at administrator@divinemercury.md. If you are going directly to virtus.org, as a first time registrant, you should find the correct site by selecting from the drop down:



The image shows a screenshot of a web form with a dropdown menu. The title above the dropdown is "Please select your Archdiocese/Diocese/R...". The dropdown menu is open, showing a list of options: "- Select your organization ----->", "Detroit, MI (Archdiocese)", "Divine Mercy Academy - Montana", "Divine Mercy Academy Annapolis", and "Dodge City, KS (Diocese)".

Once we have these files on record, coordinate with administration at the school for days/times/activities. Thank you for your generosity!

You are an important part of the school team and are asked to cooperate with the school staff and administration in the following ways:

- **Dependability:** The school relies on your support. We ask that you follow through on volunteer commitments by being on time. Please give notice of absence whenever possible.
- **Confidentiality:** A volunteer operates in a position of trust. Personal information pertaining to students must be kept confidential. Children's actions, responses, progress or problems at school are not for sharing in the community. Conversations between parents, teachers and students in the school are confidential. Volunteers should not discuss these conversations outside of school. Refer any concerns to the Administration. All volunteers will be required to sign the Volunteer Code of Conduct.
- **Supervision of Minors:** Preschool age children are permitted to accompany parents for volunteer duties in the school as long as you are able to still closely monitor all students. When chaperoning a field trip, parents are responsible for the safety of all students in their group. Therefore, younger siblings are not allowed to accompany parents on field trips.
- **Volunteer Dress:** Dress in an appropriate manner for the school setting.
- **Sign In-Procedure:** You must sign in each time you come to school on the sign in sheet in the lobby AND remember to log your hours on the Google form.
- Always be respectful of the learning environment. Hallways and offices are not suitable areas for socialization.
- Talk to your school volunteer director, principal, or CCA officers when you have questions, problems, or need advice.

CCA Volunteer Positions Organized by Tier

Familia Familiae

1. *Welcome and connect new families into the fold*
 - a. **Parent Ambassadors** - (5 hours/year)
 - i. Be an advocate for DMA in the community. Ambassadors are ready to promote DMA by doing any of the following: sharing information with their pastor, speaking at their parish about DMA, having brochures on hand to share with others, being connected to incoming families inquiring about the school.
 - ii. Reports to Head of Admissions
 - b. **Open House Volunteers** (2 hours per event)
 - i. Attend DMA Open Houses to provide a witness to new families and to answer questions. Assist the day of the event with set up and clean up. Be available during Open House to escort families around school
 - ii. Reports to Head of Admissions
2. *Connect with community events*
 - a. *Spiritual*
 - i. **Campus Ministry Events**
 - **Religious Luncheon Chair** (1 needed, 1-2 hours/month)
 - a. Organize volunteers to provide food for monthly luncheons with priests and religious sisters.
 - b. Reports to Dr. Sesmero (Campus Ministry Leader)
 - **Religious Luncheon Volunteer** (1-2 hours/month)
 - a. Provide food items for monthly religious luncheons
 - b. Reports to Dr. Sesmero
 - **Childcare during Parent Formation** (1-2 hours/month)
 - a. Provide childcare for moms during St. Faustina mom's group.
 - b. Reports to Dr. Sesmero
 - ii. **Yearbook Chairperson**
 - Create a committee of students and parents
 - Keep abreast of school events and field trips and assign someone to take and submit photos
 - Hold meetings around once a month from October to end of school year
 - Reports to School Administrator
 - iii. **Yearbook Volunteer** (Hours vary, as needed)
 - Photographers (be available to take photos at school events)
 - Business Manager (selling ads to raise funds)
 - 8th grade Tribute Pages Manager
 - Yearbook Sales Manager
 - Proofing/Editing Committee
 - b. *Social*

c. Academic

- iv. **Morning/Afternoon Administrative Work Volunteer** (Hours vary, as needed)
 - As parents are available (after drop-off, before pick-up, filling time after recess duty before the end of the school day), they report to the School Administrator to assist in various tasks that help keep the school running.
 - Make copies, file papers, reshelve school supplies. etc.
 - Reports to School Administrator
- v. **Classroom Aide** (Hours vary, as needed)
 - In younger grades - reading books aloud, helping with beginning and end of the day routines, sharing skills as needed
 - In older grades - being a consultant for work in your field, asking tutors what needs to be done in his/her classroom.
 - Reports to School Administrator

d. Material

- i. **Boys and Girls Uniform Exchange Chairperson**
 - Keep track of uniforms donated to school
 - Plan and advertise uniform exchanges as needed
 - Report to School Administrator
- ii. **Boys and Girls Uniform Exchange Volunteer**
 - Assist in organizing donation event
 - Help with set up and clean up
 - Reports to Uniform Exchange Chairperson
- iii. **Dad Squad Chairperson**
 - Coordinate with administration to plan projects, get materials, and organize Dad Squad volunteers
 - Report to CCA Vice President
- iv. **Dad Squad Volunteer - (10-15 volunteers needed- Hours vary- usually weekends)**
 - Manual labor that may include heavy lifting and cleaning like:
 - Replacing mulch on playground
 - Painting
 - Making repairs
 - Setup/cleanup after events such as concerts and family nights.
 - Reports to Dad Squad Chairperson

3.Support families in need

- e. **Family 2 Family Chairperson** (1-2 hrs/month)-

- i. Organize meal trains at the arrival of a new baby, funeral support, or assistance during unforeseen family needs.
 - Reports to CCA Vice President
- f. **Family 2 Family Volunteer - (10 needed - 2 hours per month as needed)**
 - Provide meals for those in need
 - Transport meals to those families for others if needed

Tutor's Auxiliary

The goal of the TA is to provide material and financial support to the tutors, classrooms, and school at large.

1. Volunteer Hours

- a. **Lunch/Recess Volunteer Coordinator**
 - i. Create monthly calendar for recess volunteers
 - ii. Monitor program and guide recess volunteers in duties
 - iii. Report to CCA Vice President
- b. **Lunch/Recess Helpers - (2 needed per day, 2 hours/day)**
 - i. ****Recess duty hours count as double hours**
 - ii. Relieve tutors during lunch/recess and supervise children ****This service is urgently needed in order to give our tutors a break!**
 - iii. Be prompt and reliable
 - iv. Adhere to all playground rules (a separate sheet is provided)
 - v. Line up students to return to classrooms
 - vi. 11:30am-1:05pm Lunch/Recess Volunteer Coordinator
- c. **Pizza Day Chairperson**
 - i. Organizes pizza day once a month
 - ii. Recruit Pizza Day Volunteers
 - iii. Report to School Administrator
- d. **Pizza Day Volunteer- (4-6 needed, 1-2 hours per day)**
 - i. Help collect and count up orders
 - ii. Purchase and bring to school pizzas
 - iii. Distribute Pizza at lunch time

2. Coordinate with Room Parents

- a. **Room Parent Chairperson**
 - i. Inform room parents about upcoming events and coordinate these events
 - ii. Give room parents a class email list along with tutor's "favorite list"
 - iii. Meet with room parents once at beginning of year to go over duties
 - iv. Organize class coverage for teacher luncheons
 - v. Lead Room Parents in organizing 3 days of Teacher Appreciation Week (each cohort will organize one day (coffee bar, fruit bar, snack bar, etc.))
 - vi. Reports to CCA Vice President

- b. **Room Parent** - (1 per class needed- 2-4 hrs a month as needed)
 - i. Meet with tutor within the first two weeks of the school year; ask tutor for a list of class parties for the year, liturgical celebrations (some additional liturgical celebrations may be added through the year)
 - ii. Assist with planning any class parties (creating, sending, and monitoring sign-ups, finding volunteers)
 - iii. Assist in finding ways to celebrate Catholic feast days throughout the year
 - iv. Coordinate Christmas tutor gifts by soliciting money from parents and purchasing gifts/gift cards
 - v. Assist with Tutor Appreciation Week: Each cohort (K-2, 3-5, 6-8) will plan one day of Tutor Appreciation Week (Room Parent Coordinator will be able to provide suggestions); Room Parent will solicit donations for group gifts for the classroom tutor; end of year gifts will be given on the Friday of Tutor Appreciation Week
 - vi. Solicit parent volunteers for field trip chaperones
 - vii. Room parents may also be responsible for meeting with tutors to assist in planning/organizing/soliciting supplies for grade-level specific events such as 7th/8th grade ball, 8th grade graduation
 - viii. Report to Room Parent Chairperson
- e. **Tutor Luncheon Chairperson** Organize all aspects of tutor luncheons and dinners (luncheons during back to school in-service, Catholic Schools Week, and end of year in-service; dinners prior to Back to School Night and Winter and Spring concerts)
 - i. Planning, set up, clean up
 - ii. Recruits Volunteers
 - iii. Coordinates with Treasurer for budget and reimbursement
 - iv. Organizes refreshments for Grandparents' Day
- f. **Tutor luncheon volunteers** (4-6 people needed, 2-3 hours per event)
 - i. Set up and clean up
 - ii. Serve tutors as needed

3. Fundraising

- a. **Fundraising Coordinator**
 - i. Coordinates a committee tasked with fundraising for specific goals within the DMA community.
 - ii. Funds raised are funneled back to the school to support the mission of CCA in one of the three tiers - Familia Familia, Tutor Auxiliary, or Zelig and Louis Society
 - iii. Past fundraisers include Raise Right (Script Money), restaurant fundraisers, social gatherings such as Skate Zone.
 - iv. Reports to Treasurer fundraising plans and results
- b. **Fundraising Volunteer (Hours vary, many needed)**
 - i. Works with the Fundraising Coordinator
 - ii. Takes the lead on a specific fundraiser
 - iii. Reports to Fundraising Coordinator
- c. **Gala Chairperson**

- i. Oversees entire event, traditionally held in the spring on the Saturday before Divine Mercy Sunday
- ii. Works with advertising and promotion
 - o Social Media- Flocknote- Website
- iii. Coordinates venue and all vendors
- iv. Oversees all Silent Raffle and Live Raffle preparations (delegate to additional volunteers as needed)
- v. Works closely with administration
- vi. Works with Room Parent Chairperson
- vii. Works with CCA Vice President
- g. **Gala Volunteer - (30+ needed)**
 - i. ****Gala hours count for double hours**
 - ii. Volunteers are needed before event to
 - 1. Solicit donations from businesses in area
 - 2. Solicit gift cards
 - 3. Create baskets
 - 4. Create badges and name tags
 - 5. Create Gala booklet
 - iii. Volunteers are needed the day of event to
 - 1. Set up room and decorate
 - 2. Set up tech equipment
 - 3. Assist in Gala Chairperson in any way
 - iv. Volunteers are needed the evening of the event to
 - 1. Assist at the door
 - 2. Assist with record keeping of raffles
 - 3. Greet and seat
 - 4. Input information into computer
 - 5. Run Tech equipment
 - 6. Clean up

Zelie and Louis Society

This is the vehicle through which the school can directly develop our Catholic culture. This is a growing tier of the CCA and one in which parent creativity and new ideas are welcomed.

1. Faith and Family Night Chairperson

- a. Oversees and coordinates DMA Family Nights
 - i. Plan Fellowship, potluck, and/or Adoration at each event
 - ii. Recruit volunteers
 - iii. Reports to CCA Secretary

2. Faith and Family Night Volunteers (5-10 needed)

- b. Works with Faith and Family Night Chair to execute event

3. Service Coordinator

- c. Develop and implement service projects for the students
- d. Develop and implement service projects for families
- e. Reports to CCA Secretary

4. Family Social Events

- f. Coordinate a lecture or seminar lead by members of the faculty, fellow parents, or other pertinent speakers
- g. Coordinate a book study

Acknowledgment Page

I have read and agreed to the guidelines in the Parent/Student Handbook.

Parent Signature

Student Signature

Date _____

Please sign this handbook acknowledgement form and return it to the Divine Mercy Academy office. Retain the handbook at home for your reference throughout the year.

Divine Mercy Academy Family Agreement

The mission of Divine Mercy Academy is to partner with parents in their role as primary educators to help students to flourish as disciples of Jesus Christ. Through a Catholic liberal arts education, we foster a love for truth, beauty, and goodness. Under the patronage of Our Lady, we aim to form Saints and Scholars to live freely and joyfully in accordance with the truth revealed by God through nature and the Catholic Church.

Divine Mercy Academy is open to families of all backgrounds who sincerely seek the true, the good, and the beautiful. As our patron, Pope St. John Paul II said, “Jesus Christ is the answer to which every human life is the question.” As a place to search for, and hopefully find, Truth Himself, Divine Mercy Academy welcomes all those genuinely searching for God, regardless of their religious tradition.

By signing this family agreement, the parents/legal guardians acknowledge that they have been informed and understand that their children will be educated in the Catholic faith and that the school seeks to partner with them as the primary educators of their children. The parents/legal guardians understand that, as partners in the school’s stated mission, they are expected to cooperate fully in it and to foster their children’s commitment as well. As such, parents and their students agree to live their lives in a way consistent with Christian discipleship and that supports, rather than opposes, the mission of the school. Failure to abide by the terms of this agreement may be grounds for dismissal from the school.

As parents/guardians, we ask that Divine Mercy Academy partner with us in the education of our children. We understand and agree with the school’s mission and purpose and will cooperate with school policies and with all school personnel. We pledge to cooperate fully with the school in forming our children to know, love, and serve God. We understand that failure to abide by this agreement may be grounds for dismissal from the school.

Printed Name and Signature of Mother/Guardian

Date

Printed Name and Signature of Father/Guardian

Date

Printed Name(s) of each child: _____

Divine Mercy Academy accepts your request to partner with you in the education of your children according to the school’s mission. We pledge our best effort to form your children in accordance with our school mission and purpose.

Printed Name and Signature of Headmaster

Date