



# COTTER

S C H O O L S

2023-2024

## STUDENT & FAMILY HANDBOOK

### Early Childhood Education – Grade 12

#### **St. Teresa Campus**

St. Teresa Hall - Business Office  
1115 W. Broadway  
Winona, MN 55987  
507.453.5000

#### **St. Joseph Hall - Main Office**

1165 W. Wabasha  
Winona, MN 55987  
507.453.5001

#### **John Nett Rec Building**

360 Vila Street  
Winona, MN 55987  
507-453-5035

#### **St. Luke Hall**

365 Hilbert  
Winona, MN 55987  
507-454-7449

#### **St. Mary's Campus**

1315 W. Broadway  
Winona, MN 55987  
507-452-2890

#### **Main Square Montessori**

123 W. 4th Street  
Winona, MN 55987  
507-453-5016

CHALLENGING YOU TO BE THE DIFFERENCE

[www.cotterschools.org](http://www.cotterschools.org)

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## **I. Overview of Cotter Schools**

Welcome to Cotter Schools! We are glad that you have chosen Cotter Schools for your students. For over one hundred and thirteen years, Cotter Schools has provided students from Winona and across the globe, with a challenging, faith-based, liberal arts education grounded in Catholic faith and values. Cotter Schools is named after the first bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Winona, Minnesota, Bishop Joseph Bernard Cotter. In 1913, eleven young men comprised the first graduating class of students at Cotter. Today, Cotter Schools serves over 1,000 students ages 16 months through grade 12 across various buildings located in Winona, MN.

- Main Square Campus: Montessori: 16 months – 6 years
- St. Mary’s Campus: 16 months – Preschool / 4K
- St. Luke Hall: Grades K-6
- St. Teresa Hall: Grades 7-8
- St. Joseph Hall: Grades 9-12

Cotter Schools is a community of respect and inclusion. Our community is rooted in faith, hope and love. We are called each day to serve others and our community with our talents and gifts. We believe all people are intrinsically good. As such, each person is valued and respected. Our differences are our strengths. As a community, we are all dedicated to our mission and values.

### **Mission, Belief Statements, and Values**

*Cotter Schools challenges students to achieve their full potential and use their lives in service of others.*

*As a Catholic learning community, we believe:*

- *God is present in all creation.*
- *Each person is valuable and deserves respect.*
- *Education prepares people to build a better world.*
- *In community, everyone grows.*

*Core Values: Community, Faith, Service, Respect*

### **Brief History of Cotter Schools**

With the 2023-24 school year, Cotter begins its 113<sup>th</sup> year. The school opened its doors on September 5, 1911. Named for the diocese's first bishop, Cotter was a Diocesan boys' school directed by the Christian Brothers. In 1952, the Brothers handed the operation of the school over to the diocese and Cotter became co-educational. In 1989, Cotter High School separated

governance from the Diocese of Winona and was reorganized as a private, independent, Catholic, co-educational high school. In 1998, Cotter Junior High School was established and grades 7 and 8 became part of Cotter Schools. Main Square Montessori opened its doors in fall 2019. In 2021, we opened the newly constructed and renovated St. Joseph Hall and Cotter Residence Hall. In the fall of 2023, we will proudly open our doors to our newly constructed and renovated St. Luke Hall where we will welcome students in Kindergarten through Grade 6. Cotter Schools encompasses all levels of Catholic education in Winona from early childhood education through grade 12 and is home to students from the city of Winona, the area surrounding Winona, and several countries from around the world.

## **Organizational Structure and Governance**

As a Catholic, private, independent school, Cotter Schools is governed by a Board of Directors. The Board of Directors has primary governing and fiduciary responsibility for the mission of the school. The Board sets major policies for the school and oversees their implementation. The Board is also responsible for selection and supervision of the President of Cotter Schools. Board members are selected as representatives of parents, the local community and the Catholic Diocese of Winona-Rochester. Pastors of the Winona parishes are full voting members of the Board of Directors. Cotter receives its authorization as a Catholic School from the Bishop of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester.

## **Accreditation**

Cotter Schools is accredited through Cognia, a consortium of educational institutions that provides accreditation and consultative services to accredited schools and school systems. Cognia is the world's largest educational community, representing over 23,000 public and private schools and districts in 30 states and 65 countries and serving nearly 15 million students.

## **II. Student and Family Behavior Expectations (All Students)**

### **Code of Conduct**

Cotter Schools has set forth an expected code of conduct for all students and employees within our school. This set of behavioral expectations is designed to guide and positively influence the choices, actions, and practices of those who are members of the Cotter community. This code of conduct has been developed to reflect Cotter Schools' commitment to our mission of modeling the values of community, faith, and respect while challenging every student to "achieve their full potential and use their lives in service of others."

Students are expected at all times by their words, attitudes, actions, and behavior to show respect not only for Cotter Schools students, teachers, and personnel, but also, any member of the Cotter community. Students also have an obligation to interact with other students, teachers, and staff members in a respectful manner in any area inside or outside of the school buildings or campus. All students must behave in a mature and respectful manner at any school function or activity. If students do not exhibit good sportsmanship as spectators during extracurricular activities, they may be subject to disciplinary action and suspended from representing the school as a spectator as well as on their current team or organization or a future team or organization.

All students will respect others' religion, culture, gender, race, and ethnicity. Racial and ethnic intolerance and sexual harassment are unacceptable behaviors for any student. Respect for others will apply in all areas of school life, including classrooms, on the playground, co-curricular activities (both in and out of school), locker rooms, hallways, learning areas, lunchroom, student activities, etc. as well as in all electronic communications. Behavior contrary to these expectations will not be tolerated at Cotter Schools and may be subject to disciplinary action.

Students are expected to interact with each other in a respectful manner at all times. Physical violence, bullying, sexual harassment, demeaning speech, behavior and actions or technological inappropriateness toward another student or his/her personal property, or toward a teacher or staff member, violates that person's dignity. Such behavior will not be tolerated at Cotter Schools and will be subject to disciplinary action.

Bus owners and bus drivers have the responsibility to transport students to and from school in a safe and courteous manner. Students are expected to cooperate with the drivers to ensure the safety of all riders. Students who violate standards for safe riding shall lose their privilege to ride the bus. All bus behavior violations, as defined by the contracted bus companies and drivers, will be reported to the building Principal for follow up and possible disciplinary action.

### III. All School Policies and Procedures

#### Dress Code Policy

**Preschool / 4K:** Students are expected to take pride in the way they dress. Students are expected to dress modestly and neatly. Attire should always be suitable and appropriate for the classroom. Please be aware that tennis shoes are required for use in the gym. Shorts and sandals (with socks) may be worn. Tank tops are not allowed at any time.

**Grades K-12:** Students are to be neat, clean, modest, and respectful in their attire, reflecting a positive self-image. Dress code descriptions for grades K-12 are as follows:

#### Dress Code Tops:

- Solid colors: White, Black, Royal Blue, Baby Blue, or Navy Blue.
- Short or long sleeve solid polo, oxford shirt, collared blouse, or turtleneck
- Crew neck, quarter-zip, V-neck or cardigan sweater or sweatshirt may be worn over the shirt.
- Logo must be 4''x 4'' or smaller.

#### Dress Code Bottoms:

- Solid colors: Black, Navy Blue or Khaki
- Casual dress pants (chinos, Dockers, etc.)
- Casual dress shorts, skirts, skorts or collared dress (knee length or slightly above)
- Solid white, navy or black leggings or tights may be worn under skirts, skorts, or dresses.

#### Footwear:

- Shoes, sandals, or boots must be worn at all times.
- Sandals must have a back strap.

#### Spirit Day Dress on Fridays:

- Cotter Sports and Activities apparel tops or sweatshirts with dress code bottoms can be worn.

#### Mass Days (Grades 7-12):

- On all-school mass days, students will wear dress code clothes only.

Students may not wear jeans, sweatpants, leggings, jeggings, yoga pants, athletic shorts or pants, flannel pants, other form-fitting pants, spandex, hoodies, crop tops, jackets, backless shoes, slippers, or any apparel with holes or rips.

Dress code clothing may be purchased from any store. Please consult the Cotter Schools website for pictorial examples of the dress code and additional information. ([Cotter Schools Dress Code](#))



Consequences for Dress Code Violations: (Grades K-6)

- First Offense - verbal reminder to student
- Second Offense - a note will be sent home to the family
- Third Offense - meeting with family

Consequences for Dress Code Violations: (Grades 7-12)

- First Offense - Verbal warning and white card. Students may be asked to change clothing.
- Second Offense - Detention. Students may be asked to change clothing.
- Third Offense - Detention and meeting with Administration. Family notified. Students may be asked to change clothing.
- Fourth or more - Meeting with Student, Family and Administration to address behavior and develop a plan. Students may be asked to change clothing.

**LOST AND FOUND:** Please mark your student's belongings for identification. Many articles are found during the year. Please regularly check the designated Lost & Found for your building for all lost items. Unclaimed items are periodically donated throughout the year to a charity or they are discarded.

## **School Lunch Program**

Cotter Schools participates in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program. Nutritious meals are served each day on all of our campuses. Additional information about the food program will be posted on our website and shared each school year in August.

## **Health and Wellness Services (Medications and Immunizations)**

**Student Health:** The Winona County Health Department and Public School District 861 provide supportive health services. Students who are ill should report to the building's Main Office. The district nurse will oversee health records including immunizations, arrange for vision and hearing screenings, check any concerns with parents, and screen for scoliosis (curvature of the spine). General health conditions and allergies (as provided by the parents) are noted in the student's online health record.

If a student's health requires medication to be given during school hours, the school will need to have the following:

- An adult must bring the student's medication to school. All students who must take prescription and/or any other medication while at school must have a "School Medication/Procedure Form" on file in the building's Main Office. School personnel must administer all medication.

- A written authorization from the doctor stating the name of the medication, the dosage, the time(s) it is to be given, the reason your child needs the medication, any special directions for administering the medication, the date the medication is to be stopped, and family permission for your child to receive the medication in school.
- The medication supplied in a prescription bottle or container properly labeled by a pharmacy or physician. Family should request that the pharmacy provide two prescription bottles or containers at the time you obtain the medication. This will allow for a prescription container at home and school. If medication is a non-prescription drug, it must also be accompanied by a physician's written order.
- A written authorization from the doctor stating the name of the medication with any special directions, if applicable, and family permission will allow an inhaler to be kept in the possession of the student during the school day. Alternatively, inhalers can be kept at the building office for accessibility for the student when needed.

**Immunizations:** The State Law requires that every student who is admitted to Cotter Schools provide evidence of updated vaccinations. The school nurse reviews these records annually. Minnesota Statutes 1978, Section 123.70, requires that all children entering a Minnesota public, private or parochial elementary school, day care center or nursery school for the first time be immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, measles, mumps, and rubella. These requirements can be waived only if a properly signed Medical Conscientious Exemption Form is filed with the school. In order for your child to enter school, a form must be completed, signed, and on file prior to admission at the school your child will attend. The information you provide on this form will be available to the local public health agency and the Minnesota Department of Health to determine if your child has received the minimum recommended immunizations.

Cotter Schools requires ALL students in grades 7-12 participating in athletic events to have a Sports Qualifying Physical Exam (SQPE) on file in the Activities Office. These signed physical examination forms are good for three years.

### **Return to School Following Illness Policy**

We are asking for your help with keeping your child home when they are sick or show signs of illness. This includes fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, vomiting, headaches, chills, unusual fatigue and rashes that are not identified or that have not been diagnosed by a physician. Your cooperation can help to reduce the spread. Please consider getting a flu shot for your child this year. As a reminder, here are some general illness guidelines:

- Fevers (100.4 degrees F or higher): Students must be fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication before returning to school
- Vomiting: Students may return to school 24 hours after vomiting has stopped
- Diarrhea: Students may return to school 24 hours after diarrhea has stopped
- Coughing: Coughs need to be controlled and non-continuous in order to come to school

### **Medical Emergency**

In the event of a medical emergency, Cotter Schools will immediately call 911 and seek emergent care.

### **Excessive Absences from School**

Any time a student is not present at school is considered an absence. The total number of absences includes excused and unexcused absences. Therefore, any student absent from a class period four (4) or more days during a semester will receive a letter that must be signed by the student and family and returned to the Main Office in recognition of stated absences. Seven (7) or more absences from a class per semester will result in a meeting with the student, and a call from administration to parents to review the student's academic standing and discuss means for remediation. Ten (10) absent class periods and the student, parents and administration will meet to discuss alternative academic plans and review the student's progress. All excused or unexcused absences, regardless of reason, count toward these totals. If a student misses (10) days or more in a class during a semester, credit may not be granted due to excessive missed classroom learning. Where credit is still granted, students missing more than (10) days in a class will make up learning time before or after school as deemed by the principal. Absences due to attending a school event or field trip do not count toward these totals.

**Family Out of Town:** When family or guardians expect to be out of town, they should notify the school where they may be reached in case of emergency. It is also recommended that family leave a name and phone number of a local party that the school might contact in case of emergency.

### **Records (Student Records)**

Cotter Schools will keep permanent records of students who attend the system. Cotter Schools will collect, maintain, and disseminate student records with great care and responsibility. Family, or legal guardians, may ask to review the contents of any records of their child. Teachers may review the records of the students whom they teach, at any time. These may include any or all of the following: a) identifying data b) academic work completed c) achievement test scores and grades d) attendance data e) scores on standardized intelligence, aptitude and psychological tests f) interest inventory results g) health data h) family background information i) teacher or counselor

ratings and observations j) verified reports or serious or recurrent behavior patterns. No one but school personnel, family/guardians of minors, and students who reached legal age should have access to individual pupil records without either a subpoena or written permission of family/guardians.

## **Special Education Services**

Students attending nonpublic schools may receive special educational services from local public school district personnel. Parents are encouraged to discuss any special learning needs with the principal, and the principal will assist in referring students for an assessment by public school personnel.

## **Appropriate Use of Technology Policy**

Cotter Schools integrates computer and network technology into its educational and professional environments. Acceptable uses of the Internet are activities that support learning, collaborative work, and teaching. Inappropriate use of technology exposes Cotter Schools to risks including virus attacks, compromise of network systems and services, and legal issues. It is expected that every technology user will show respect for other people at all times.

A comprehensive *Appropriate Use of Technology Policy* has been developed to provide direction and safety to our technology users – adults and students – as well as to protect our technology assets. The full policy can be accessed on the Cotter Schools website. Any student or employee found to have violated the *Use of Technology Policy* may be subject to disciplinary action.

Summary policy statements and examples of policy content include the following:

- All computer, phone, and technology equipment will be used in a manner that is consistent with the mission and goals of Cotter Schools.
- The use of computer, phone, technology and network equipment is integral to a quality education and working environment.
- Inappropriate use will result in disciplinary or law enforcement action.
- Content inclusions: ownership of information, confidentiality, privacy, examples of unacceptable use, prohibited email activities, web page publishing guidance, appropriate use of social media
- Cotter Schools students and employees shall abide by the procedures established to support this policy.

## **Internet Posting Policy**

Cotter Schools supports the use of video and still photography by families to record their children's experiences in school events. However, to protect the privacy of their children and the children of other families that may be in the pictures, videos and photos should not be placed on Internet sites in an unrestricted manner. For example, videos posted on YouTube should be flagged as "private" instead of "public." "Private" videos can be shared with specific family members and friends and will not be available to all YouTube users. Other photo and video sharing sites have similar privacy settings. Our school website will contain recognizable pictures of our students unless we receive a written request from the family or guardian not to do so. This list of prohibited subjects/photos is maintained in the communications office.

## **Use of Facilities**

We are proud of the beautiful facilities on the Cotter Schools campuses. All students and staff are responsible for keeping Cotter and all campuses clean and litter free.

- **Office and Phones:** Students are permitted in the Main Offices of each building only for specific business. The office phones are for school business but with permission students may use them to call parents.
- **Faculty Lounges:** The Faculty Lounges are reserved for the faculty and staff. Out of courtesy, students are asked to knock at the door and wait for a faculty member to answer. Students are not permitted to enter the Faculty Lounges.
- **Elevators:** Students are not permitted to use the elevators. Students who need to use the elevator for medical reasons can obtain a pass from the building's Main Office. A student's use of the telephone in any elevator is a serious violation and unacceptable behavior.
- **Lavatories:** Anyone misusing the lavatories is subject to disciplinary action.
- **Postings/Hall Signs:** The Activities Director or the building Principal must approve any signs or postings in the school buildings.
- **Lockers:** Each student in grades 1-12 is assigned a locker, which is the property of Cotter Schools. Although the student has responsibility for locker contents, the school has the right of assignment and has the right to inspect lockers at any time. The Activities Director or the building Principal must approve any signs/postings on the outside of locker doors. Allowable signs/postings on the outside of lockers will include only postings in support of school sponsored competitions or events. Cotter is not responsible for lost and stolen articles.
- **Destruction of Property or Theft:** If a student is found destroying or stealing any school or personal property at Cotter, that person must make financial remuneration and work restitution. The administration will determine if that student should be dismissed from Cotter. Students will be held financially responsible for lost/damaged books and equipment.

- **Skateboards/Rollerblades/Scooters:** Skateboards, roller blades, and scooters are not allowed in the building or on school grounds. Special permission must be obtained by contacting the building Principal or designee.

## **Criminal Background Check Policy**

A part of our safe environment requirement for the Diocese of Winona includes the completion of a criminal background check. Minnesota law requires that all Minnesota schools (public and non-public) notify family and guardians each year about the school's criminal background check policy. Minnesota Laws, ch.275, sec.1 § 123B.03, Subd. 1(e).

At the beginning of each school year or when a student enrolls, a school hiring authority must notify family and guardians about the school hiring authority's policy requiring criminal history background check on employees and other individuals who provide services to the school, and identify the positions subject to a background check and the extent of the hiring authority's discretion in requiring a background check. The school hiring authority may include the notice in the student handbook, a school policy guide, or other similar communication.

In addition to required criminal background checks for all Cotter employees, all Cotter volunteers that have regular contact with students, whether supervised or unsupervised, need to pass a criminal background check before any contact with students may take place. This means a criminal background check is needed for all persons acting as chaperones for student activities and school related trips/events.

## **Weapons Policy**

Cotter Schools strictly prohibits the carrying or possession of weapons, including firearms for which a permit has been issued, and "look-alike" weapons, on school properties (before, during or after school), on school buses, in school vehicles, or at school-sponsored activities. This prohibition applies to employees, students, staff, and the public. In addition, Cotter Schools' employees may not carry or possess weapons, including firearms for which a permit has been issued, while acting within the course and scope of employment away from school property. For purposes of this policy, the term "weapon" means any object, device, or instrument designed as a weapon or through its use is capable of threatening or producing bodily harm.

## **Visitors Policy**

For the safety of our schools, the doors of the school buildings will be locked during school hours. Please use the intercom system for access into the building. On arrival, please stop in the school office to sign in and receive your Visitor Badge for use while on our campus. Visitors intending to visit classrooms during school hours are expected to receive permission from the building's school office and notify teachers prior to your visit. When delivering items or messages to a child in a classroom, please stop by the school's office to sign in.

## **School Closings**

The decision to close school due to inclement weather is directed by District #861. In the event of a school closure or early dismissal from school, families and students will be notified via email, text alert, and website postings. Local radio stations will also announce weather-related school closure information.

## **Severe Weather**

The school will be alerted by an announcement over the PA system of an approaching severe storm or tornado. Teachers should lead the students to the basement. Students should form single rows and sit behind each other. The students may return to their classrooms when an "all clear" signal is given. Throughout this procedure, teachers should maintain student silence. Teachers are to move with their students and remain with them at all times. All staff members should also move to the basement. All persons are to avoid outside walls, windows, and doors.

## **Emergency Response Plan**

Cotter Schools' Emergency Response Plan is detailed in the *Emergency Response Manual* (red three-ring binder) found in every office and classroom. This plan is to be used in case of a special emergency situation where people may need to stay where they are and remain calm or quickly evacuate and move to a safe place. Our first responsibility is for the safety of the students. When the situation has been cleared, an administrator will say, "ALL CLEAR" and give the present date and time. This announcement indicates a return to normal activities. Avoiding panic in the first few minutes of a crisis is imperative. It is each staff member's responsibility to know, understand, and follow the plan. If the situation should attract any media, refer them to the President. Maps detailing floor plans, emergency exits and locations of fire extinguishers and AEDs (automated external defibrillator) are posted in every office and classroom.

## **Fire Drills**

The following procedures should be followed to ensure the safety of all students, teachers and staff in the clearing of the building as quickly as possible in the event of a fire drill or fire:

1. All persons should use the exits specified in each room.
2. Fire drills should be conducted in a quiet and orderly manner. Students and staff should walk silently and at a brisk pace.
3. Teachers and staff must shut windows in rooms and close the doors.
4. One member of the staff should check all lavatories, computer labs, etc., to ascertain if all students are out.
5. The last person out of the building should close the school doors.
6. Teachers should take attendance when their students are outside.
7. All persons should move back into the building after the fire alarm stops and the return signal is given.

Fire drills at regular intervals are required by law and are an important safety precaution. Please use prescribed routes, moving as quickly as possible. Silence must be maintained in a fire drill so that verbal directions can be heard. Walk away from the building to a safe distance.

## **Sexual Harassment**

### I. The Policy

Cotter Schools strives to maintain learning and working environment that is free of sexual harassment. No employee or student of the school shall be subjected to sexual harassment. It shall be a violation of this policy for any member of the Cotter Schools staff to sexually harass another faculty/staff member or student as defined in Section II below. It shall also be a violation of this policy for students to sexually harass other students or faculty/staff as defined in Section II.

### II. Definition

- A. Sexual harassment means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:
  - submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term of condition of a person's employment or advancement or of a student's participation in school programs or activities;
  - submission to or rejection of such conduct by an employee or student is used as the basis for decisions affecting the employee or the student;
  - such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee or student's performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or learning environment.
- B. Sexual harassment, as set forth in Section II-A, may include, but is not limited to the following: verbal harassment or abuse, pressure for sexual activity, repeated remarks to a person with sexual or demeaning implications, unwelcome touching, suggesting or demanding sexual involvement, etc.



### III. Procedures

- A. Any student who alleges sexual harassment by a staff member or another student should report directly to any staff member. This will not affect the student's status in any way.
- B. The right to confidentiality, both of the complainant and the accused, will be respected consistent with the school's legal obligations and with the necessity to investigate allegations of misconduct and to take corrective action when this conduct has occurred.

### IV. Sanctions

- A. A substantiated charge against a student in the school shall subject that student to disciplinary action, which may include suspension or expulsion.

## **Bullying and Retaliation Policy**

Cotter Schools is a Catholic school founded on and directed by the Christian principle of respect for the fundamental human dignity of each person. In addition, Cotter Schools affirms and supports the Diocese of Winona-Rochester Bullying Prevention Program as found on the Diocesan website. Therefore, bullying, as defined below, retaliation, and disrespect will not be tolerated at Cotter Schools. For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions shall apply; whenever the term “Bullying” is used it is to denote either Bullying or Cyber-Bullying.

**Definition of Bullying:** “Bullying” is the repeated use by one or more aggressors of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, that is objectively offensive, is directed at a targeted person or persons, and that:

- Causes physical or emotional harm to the Targeted student(s) and results in clearly identifiable physical symptoms, or that places the Targeted student(s) in reasonable fear of such harm;
- Causes damage to the Targeted Student(s)’ property;
- Places the Targeted Student(s) in reasonable fear of harm or of damage to their property;
- Creates a Hostile Environment at school for the Targeted Student(s);
- Infringes on the rights of the Targeted Student(s) at school, including defamation and invasion of privacy; or
- Materially and substantially disrupts the education process and/or the orderly operation of the school.

“Cyber-Bullying” means Bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, photographs, data or intelligence of any nature, including a post on a social network Internet website or forum, transmitted through a computer, cell phone, or other electronic device. “Targeted Student” is the student against whom Bullying or Retaliation has been perpetrated.

“Aggressor” denotes the person (student, teacher, or staff) who engages in Bullying or Retaliation. “Hostile Environment” means a situation in which Bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, isolation/exclusion, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to materially and substantially alter the conditions of the education of students. “Retaliation” means any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against any person who reports Bullying, provides information during an investigation of Bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about Bullying. “School” means the physical property of Cotter Schools, its equipment and buildings, as well as equipment and property used or rented as a part of school sponsored events.

**Prohibited Behavior:** Cotter Schools expressly prohibits bullying in all forms, either by an individual or group of aggressors. Bullying, including cyber-bullying, is prohibited:

- On school grounds owned, leased, or used by Cotter Schools;
- At any school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds;
- On, in, or near a school bus or any other vehicle owned, leased, or used by Cotter Schools;
- Through the use of technology or electronic devices owned, leased, or used by a school.

**Reporting:** Any student, staff, volunteer, or visitor of Cotter Schools who witnesses or becomes aware of any instance of Bullying or Retaliation should report it immediately to an administrator or teacher. Any teacher or staff member who is informed of a situation of Bullying or Retaliation must report the information to the building Principal or President immediately. Any parent or guardian who is aware of any instance of Bullying against their child or another child is asked to report the instance to School administration. Reports may be made confidentially and anonymously. However, anonymous reporting makes investigation and corroboration difficult. No disciplinary action may be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report. False accusations of Bullying are absolutely prohibited and may result in disciplinary action.

**Retaliation:** Retaliation against a Targeted Student, a witness of Bullying, a person who makes a good faith report of Bullying, and/or anyone who provides information during the investigation of an allegation of Bullying, is expressly prohibited.

**Investigation:** The school takes all reports of Bullying or Retaliation very seriously. The following procedures will be followed:

1. Upon receipt of a report of Bullying, the building Principal will inform the President that a report has been made.
2. Within three school days of receiving the report, the building Principal and/or designee will conduct an investigation of the allegations. If three days is not feasible, the Targeted Student will be provided a timeline for when the investigation will commence.

3. Parents of all students involved, both as a Targeted Student and/or an Aggressor, will be notified of the reported allegations at the commencement of the investigation. They will be given information pertinent to their child only and will be given a timeline for the investigation.
4. Names of all persons involved will remain confidential throughout the investigation.
5. If deemed necessary, the investigation may be reported to local law enforcement.
6. The building Principal or designee will inform the President of all actions taken in the investigation.
7. All questions regarding the investigation should be directed to the President.
8. Cotter Schools reserves the sole discretion to determine the scope and adequacy of the investigation.
9. Upon conclusion of the investigation, if any disciplinary consequences are warranted, they will be effective immediately.
10. All students and parents initially contacted about the investigation will be informed of its conclusion, though not the disciplinary consequences for anyone other than their child.

**Disciplinary Consequences:** Any student, staff member, volunteer, coach, or administrator who violates this policy shall be subject to disciplinary consequences in accordance with the school's disciplinary policy. The school retains the sole discretion to determine whether Bullying or Retaliation or Disrespect have occurred and what the consequences should be. Depending on the specific circumstances and information gained through the investigation, the disciplinary consequences imposed by the school could include:

- Immediate suspension or expulsion, with the accompanying extracurricular consequences mandated by the Activities Department;
- Remedial action or restorative consequences, including but not limited to meeting with the school counselor;
- Restorative practices, such as letters of apology, restitution for damage, etc.
- Mandatory cooperation with law enforcement, if needed.

Consequences will be adapted as necessary in an age-appropriate way. If the family feels that the actions or consequences have been unfair or inappropriate, an appeal to the President of Cotter Schools for a review may be appropriate.

Diocese of Winona-Rochester [Gender Identity Policy](#)

THANK YOU!

*We greatly appreciate your trust in allowing us to partner with you to educate your children in a Christ-centered environment. Please contact us at any time if you have any questions about your child's learning experience at Cotter Schools.*

## **IV. Cotter EduCare and Preschool**

### **ST. MARY'S CAMPUS**

#### **Statement of Goals and Purpose**

The purpose of the Cotter Early Childhood Center (CECC) is to provide a Christian oriented program in early childhood education for children 16 months through Pre-K 4. CECC invites and encourages children to think creatively, to use all of their senses, and to become involved in every facet of learning. The Program will provide a curriculum in which children will be able to develop intellectually, emotionally, socially, physically, and spiritually.

The CECC is a non-profit child care center and preschool program. The program is part of a non-profit school setting. It is located on the St. Mary's School Campus. the south end of the building, and is licensed by the State of Minnesota, Department of Human Services, Division of Licensing for 150 children, 28 toddlers and 122 preschool/school age, not to exceed 40 school age.

#### **Objectives of Cotter Early Childhood Center (CECC)**

All children enrolled (toddlers and preschool) will be involved in:

- We provide planned activities or themes in the areas of religion, science, sensory, music and movement, social studies, fine and gross motor, art and language.
- We provide experiences to enhance emotional, intellectual, social, physical, and spiritual growth and well-being.
- We provide an atmosphere in which children establish a positive self-concept, learn to accept themselves, explore their environments, and learn as part of a group, and encourage communication skills.
- We provide activities to enhance the child's self-concept by encouraging positive behavior and emphasize each child's inherent worth.
- We provide a Christian atmosphere which encourages spiritual development in all children.
- We provide nutritious meals and snacks.
- We assist in obtaining social work services for families and individuals in need of such services.
- We provide opportunities for parent involvement, as well as volunteer opportunities.

- We establish and maintain a supportive relationship with all family and staff members.
- We are aware of the potential for child abuse and neglect and make appropriate referrals.

### **Days, Hours and Fees**

The CECC school year begins the first day Cotter Schools begins and ends on the last day of the Cotter Schools calendar. Children may be enrolled in the CECC for a full day, half day, or on a drop-in basis for child care. The fee is an hourly rate or a full-time rate with a minimum of one-hour charge per day. EduCare charges are on a weekly basis. The CECC child care is open Monday through Friday, 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and is closed for major holidays including Thanksgiving and the Friday after, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Good Friday and Easter Monday, Memorial Day, Fourth of July and Labor Day. For the welfare of your child and others in the CECC, all children must be picked up promptly, NO LATER THAN 5:30 p.m. A \$1.00 charge per child per minute will be made, if not picked up before 5:30 p.m. The \$1.00 per minute late charge applies to ALL circumstances.

During the course of the school year when a Teacher-in-Service or Parent-Teacher Conference Day is planned, the CECC will remain open for child care, if there is a sufficient number of children. In order to be in session for non-regular school days, we need to know from parents in advance whether or not their children will attend. A virtual sign-up sheet will be made available for those particular days.

Children may also enroll in the CECC to attend a ½ day or a full day preschool class. The fee for preschool is a tuition rate, depending upon the number of days of attendance. The tuition fee is paid monthly during the school year (August-May).

In the event of snow or severe weather, announcements about the CECC will be sent via text, email, and posted on the Cotter Schools website ([www.cotterschools.org](http://www.cotterschools.org)). The CECC will remain open on snow days; however, if severe weather would endanger the safe arrival of the CECC staff, the CECC will be closed.

The CECC will close when a blizzard warning is issued for our area. If the CECC is already in session when the warning is issued, parents will be notified via text alert and email to pick up their child(ren) as soon as possible. The CECC staff will remain on-site until all the children have been picked up.

## **Pre-K Arrival/Departure**

Parents of St. Mary's Campus are asked to drop off and pick up children in the west parking lot (playground area). It is too dangerous for children to cross Broadway. Pre-K and EduCare hours as well as drop off and pick up times will be provided in detail in a separate communication prior to the start of the school year.

## **Enrollment**

To enroll a child, the parent will complete the necessary registration information and discuss the program for the child with the CECC director. This conference is necessary prior to enrollment. This meeting will give us an idea of the child's development, play preferences, likes, dislikes and general behavior, allowing us to provide your child with the best possible care. It is important to let the child become familiar with the CECC room so that he/she will feel comfortable on the first day.

Based on the pre-enrollment interview and assessment of each individual child's needs, we will not agree to serve any child whose needs are so extensive that we do not have the staff or resources to meet those needs. If we are unable to make such a determination prior to enrollment, we may accept the child conditionally.

## **Special Services**

Children who have special needs are eligible to receive special education services from the local school district. Upon identification of such a condition, the family will be informed of the special need and the services available to remedy those needs.

## **Dismissal and Appeal Policy**

A child who is not yet ready for a group experience or whose presence may cause harm to herself/himself or others may be dismissed after a conference with the family. We will work closely with the family to see if the problem(s) can be resolved. If a child's behavior and attitude continues to be disruptive to the group or to the welfare of other children, we reserve the right to ask the family to withdraw their child from the CECC. An appeal may be made to the Director of CECC or to the President of Cotter Schools.

## **Withdrawal from the Cotter Early Childhood Center**

If you plan to withdraw your child from the CECC, you will need to give a two week notice to the Director. You will be billed for the two weeks.

### **Illness**

Families will be notified immediately when a child becomes ill while under the care of CECC. The child will be removed from the classroom until a family arrives. Arrangements should be made for someone to pick up the child. In the event we are unable to reach the family, we will contact those persons identified as “Emergency Contacts”, as listed on the enrollment forms. Supervision, cot rest, and first aid will be provided as needed until the family or designated person arrives.

In the event your child is diagnosed with a communicable (contagious) disease, please notify the CECC personnel within 24 hours.

An illness log for children will be kept on file. Parents will be notified of any outbreak of a communicable or infectious disease.

### **Medication**

Only prescription medications or medication that has been recommended by a physician in writing, may be administered at the CECC. If you want the staff to administer medication to your child, you must fill out a medication permission form, and a family signature and a health care provider signature are required.

Medication bottles must show the child’s name, dosage, route, and frequency of administration, physician’s name and date. Medication brought to the CECC must be in its original container.

Sunscreen, insect repellent and diapering products require family permission and will be administered according to manufacturer’s instructions, unless written instructions from a health care provider are presented.

### **Health Care Summary**

The CECC also requires all children to have a Health Care Summary on file within thirty (30) days of admission. The Health Care Summary needs to be completed and signed by the child’s health care provider, and must include the date of the child’s most recent physical exam. The Health Care Summary must be updated whenever a child moves to a new age group.

## **Nutrition**

Healthy and nutritious meals are a priority at CECC. The lunch meal for the CECC is provided by Cotter Schools. The lunch meal will comply with the USDA requirements, providing one-third of the child's daily nutritional needs.

A child in attendance at the CECC for five to ten hours per day, will be served one meal (lunch) and two snacks (a.m. and p.m.).

Snacks are provided to all children in attendance at the CECC. Snack is served twice each day, a.m. and p.m. Our center follows the USDA guidelines for snacks, serving 1% milk and one of the following: fruit, vegetable, protein (dairy, meat) or whole wheat product (breads, cereals, crackers). The classroom teacher may also supplement with additional snack items. The snacks are served in single use, disposable cups or packages.

The CECC classrooms serve 1% milk in reusable plastic cups. The cups are delivered to the classrooms each day. A clean cup is used for each snack (a.m. and p.m.). The cups are returned to the kitchen each afternoon. The cups are put through the dishwasher and sanitized by the kitchen staff.

## **Behavior Guidance Policies and Procedures**

Each child will be provided with a positive model of acceptable behavior through instruction and interaction with Cotter Early Childhood Center (CECC) teachers and staff. Teachers will role model quiet tones of voices, reinforce to children the knowledge of inside hurts and outside hurts when interacting with other children, and provide examples of how to show respect and kindness towards others.

Discipline procedures are developmentally appropriate to each child's age. Redirection and distraction, talking to the child, pointing out what was not acceptable and why. These alternatives are implemented first before a last resort; separation from the group.

A child, or group of children, will be redirected to another interest area in the room and/or to work with other children. if a conflict should arise. This alternative will be implemented first before a last resort; separation from the group.

Role playing acceptable behavior can be cited as an example to reduce problem behavior. The use of printed material (picture books and story cards) can also teach children about acceptable



behavior. Involving older children in making classroom rules and routines may help reinforce acceptable behavior and reduce problems.

As stated above, children's understanding of acceptable behavior may help or reduce dangerous situations. If, however, unacceptable behavior occurs, the staff will remove any harmful objects near the child, as well as the other children in the room, to avoid injuries. If a child is kicking and may be dangerous to a staff member or a child, the staff member may gently hold the child (bear hug) in a manner to control the child's dangerous body movement, and also protect themselves and the other children. Children's unacceptable behavior is acted upon immediately and appropriate actions are determined relevant to the incident and the child's age.

### **Unacceptable Behavior**

When possible, the Director will act as the increased staff and observe and record behavior of the child and staff response to unacceptable behavior. When the Director is unavailable, the Lead Teacher will act in his or her capacity.

When unacceptable behavior has come to this point, the unacceptable behavior documented will be shared with the family on a daily basis, when possible. The Director, family and teacher will develop an Individualized Child Care Program Plan to identify the problem behavior and create action steps to manage it. Suggestions and questions will be addressed on a daily basis by both the teacher and family. Other staff members who work directly with the child will be made aware of the Individualized Child Care Program Plan and also offer feedback to the teacher and family on a daily basis.

### **Corporal Punishment**

No child shall be subjected to corporal punishment. Corporal punishment includes, but is not limited to, rough handling, hair pulling, kicking, hitting, shoving, ear pulling, biting, shaking, spanking, pinching or slapping.

No child shall be subjected to emotional stress. Emotional stress includes, but is not limited to, name calling, ostracism, shaming, making derogatory remarks about the child or the child's family, and using language that threatens, humiliates, or frightens the child.

No child shall be separated from the group, except in instances as outlined above.

No child shall be punished for lapses in toilet training.

Food, water, light, warmth, clothing or medical care cannot be withheld from a child as a punishment for unacceptable behavior.

The use of physical restraint, other than to physically hold a child when containment is necessary to protect a child or others from harm, is prohibited. The use of mechanical restraints, such as tying, are prohibited.

### **Separation from the Group**

No child will be separated from the group, until less intrusive measures, as previously outlined have been tried and were ineffective.

In the event a child's behavior threatens their own well-being or that of another child in the classroom, they will be separated from the group. A child who requires separation from the group must:

1. Remain within an unenclosed part of the classroom where the child can be continuously seen and heard by a program staff person
2. Be returned to the group upon the contingency that the child has stopped or brought the behavior that precipitated the separation under control; and
3. Be returned to the group as soon as the behavior that precipitated the separation abates or stops.

Children between the ages of 6 weeks and 16 months must not be separated from the group as a means of behavior guidance. Our program is not currently licensed to serve this age group.

All separations from the group are recorded on a separate form. The form is kept in a daily log file, and a copy put in the CECC file. The separation form includes:

1. The child's name
2. The staff person's name
3. Time of the separation
4. Date of the separation
5. Information indicating what less intrusive methods were used to guide the child's behavior before the separation occurred; and,
6. How the child's behavior continued to threaten the well-being of the child or the children in the classroom.

Family is notified if the child was separated from the group three or more times in one day. The family notification shall be indicated on the daily log.

Family is notified if the child was separated from the group five or more times in one week, or eight or more times in two weeks. Once this occurs, the staff and family will meet to develop a behavior guidance plan (ICCIP). Family notification shall be indicated on the daily log.

## **Policy for Toys in the Environment**

Toys are provided for the children and should not be brought from home. Security toys such as blankets, teddy bears, etc. will be allowed. However, they will be placed in the child's personal storage area until nap time. No pillows are allowed.

## **Family Involvement**

Families are invited to visit the CECC at any time during the hours of operation. The children really enjoy it when the family shows an interest in what they are doing while at the Center.

Our monthly newsletter will inform you of upcoming events as well as highlights of the children's activities and special messages for family. Family input is valued and necessary in order to keep the CECC a vibrant and exciting place to be. Please share your ideas with the Director.

It is important to keep us up to date on any changes in the home that will affect your child's day, such as a change in your schedule, birth or death of a family member, a separation or divorce, etc. We will be better able to meet your child's needs if we are aware of what is happening in the family. Information shared is kept confidential.

Family is encouraged to participate in current and future family activities within the Cotter Schools system.

## **Child Care Concerns**

If at any time you have concerns about your child's care while at the CECC, you are encouraged to contact the Director of the CECC or the President of Cotter Schools. You also have the option of contacting the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of Licensing, and voice your concerns. The phone number for the DHS, Division of Licensing is 651-431-6500. The phone number is also on our License, which is posted in the St. Mary's School Office, and on the "Parent Info" board located in the CECC hallway and check-in area.

## **Additional Policies**

The following policies are available to family at the time of enrollment:

Nap and Rest Policy  
Grievance Policy  
Risk Reduction Plan  
Maltreatment of Minors  
Emergency Preparedness Plan

## **V. Cotter Elementary School**

### **GRADES K-6 / ST. LUKE HALL**

#### **Academic Program**

**Curricular Offerings:** At all levels, K-6, Religion, reading, language arts, math, science, social studies, art, music, physical education. Instrumental band lessons are available for students in grades 5-6.

The band instructor will provide information about renting instruments and participating in this program.

The Legislature of the State of Minnesota provides for the distribution of educational aids, namely textbooks, standardized tests and individualized instructional materials so that every school pupil in the State will share equitably in education benefits. Parents must sign a consent form on behalf of the child in order for Cotter Schools to receive these funds. These forms are distributed at the beginning of the school year.

#### **Yearly Academic Progress**

Report cards will be distributed every quarter (four times per year). Family/teacher conferences are offered in October and February to check on academic and social-emotional progress.

#### **Grading System**

Kindergarten uses a standards based skills assessment. Grades 1-4 use a report card with a Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory assessment, which includes + and -. Grades 5-6 use a traditional grading system, A-F.

#### **Counseling Services**

A school counselor is available to provide small group and individual counseling to help students navigate behavioral and social-emotional learning issues.

#### **Faith Experiences**

Rooted in our Catholic tradition, liturgy and prayer are foundational to life at Cotter Schools. We gather regularly for prayer and the Celebration of the Eucharist in order to deepen our relationship with God and strengthen our bonds as a community of faith. Students in St. Luke's Hall gather weekly for the Celebration of the Eucharist. These celebrations are open to the whole Cotter community. We love having family and friends of the school join us for these celebrations. Prayer occurs in our classrooms on a daily basis. Each semester, students in grades 2-6 participate in a Reconciliation Service with the opportunity for individual confessions.

## **Attendance/Absences**

Daily participation in class is vital for academic success. Absence from daily class activity is a barrier to learning. Student attendance is tracked in our online FACTS Student Information System. Each teacher is expected to maintain accurate attendance records. In the event of absence, parents/guardians are asked to inform the school office in their child's building in the morning either by phone or written communication. This will ensure the safety of children as well as keep the school informed. Before returning to school after illness, children should be ready to participate in school activities.

Make-up work, as assigned by the teacher, is required after a child has been absent. It is the child's family's responsibility to request make-up work. In the event of a planned trip, requests for homework should be made at least one week in advance. The student will be given homework that the teacher knows they will be assigning for that time frame. All other missed work will be given when the student returns to school. All makeup work will be given an appropriate due date by the student's teacher.

Appointments with dentists, doctors, etc. should be scheduled for after-school hours or during vacations if at all possible to reduce the amount of time a student is absent from class.

Tardiness is reported to the school office first. It is then noted on the attendance register and dealt with by the classroom teacher. For serious or repeated tardiness or absences, referral will be made to the administration for action.

## **Discipline**

School discipline is not simply the responsibility of the teachers and staff in the school building, but rather, is a concerted effort of all those working in the school, the home and the greater community who come in contact with our students. Students attending Cotter Schools are expected to exhibit appropriate behavior at all times. For clarification of expected behaviors, see the sections in this Handbook regarding "Code of Conduct" (p. 7) and "Use of Facilities" (p. 13). Each teacher will develop a set of rules for his/her classroom. These rules will be communicated to families at the beginning of the school year.

While some rules may vary due to grade level, building, or specific classroom situation, the following general rules will apply:

Students are expected to:

- Be respectful to all adults and other students
- Be responsible for their behavior and learning
- Not interfere with the rights of other students to learn
- Cooperate and follow all classroom directions and procedures
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to themselves
- Take care of classroom and school property
- Follow playground rules

- Behave appropriately during Mass and other times of prayer
- Be safe at all times

On the playground, students are expected to:

- Listen and respond respectfully and immediately to supervisors
- Remain on the playground at all times unless they have permission to leave from the supervisor
- Use respectful and appropriate language
- Use balls and playground equipment safely
- Not pick up or throw rocks, sticks, mulch, dirt, snowballs, etc.
- Report injuries to the supervisor immediately

**Behavior Consequences:** When a student violates a classroom or school rule, a consequence is appropriate. Minor offenses will be handled by the classroom teacher according to his/her discipline plan. Consequences may include, but are not limited to, verbal correction and redirection, change of seating, conference with the student or students involved, family notification or temporary loss of classroom privileges.

**In-School Suspension/Suspension/Expulsion Policy:** A student may be suspended or expelled by the principal for serious and/or repeated violations of school rules and policies. The principal in such an instance will take the following action: (1) Notify the student of the violation that will result in suspension or expulsion; (2) Notify the family/guardians of the student of the violation that will result in suspension or expulsion; and (3) Schedule a conference with the parents/guardians, student, and principal and teacher, if necessary, to discuss the incident.

In cases of gross misconduct, the principal has the authority to immediately suspend or expel a student and will follow such action with appropriate steps as listed above. Gross misconduct is defined to include, but is not limited to, conduct which creates a substantial and unjustifiable risk of harm to another person or serious damage to the property of the school or another person, or conduct which substantially impairs the discipline and order of the school environment.

**Probation Policy:** If academic or disciplinary probationary provisions are necessary, the conditions of probation will be set forth in writing and signed by the student, his parents and the administration. Unsatisfactory compliance with the terms of probation may result in dismissal.

### **Cell Phone and Personal Device Policy**

Cotter Schools K-6 students do not need personal electronic devices for schoolwork. Students are asked to leave all electronic devices, including cell phones and smart watches, at home. Main Office staff in each of our buildings can receive and communicate messages between students and parents during the school day should the need arise.

## **Athletics and Activities**

The co-curricular programming for students in Grades 5-6 include the following:

- Fall volleyball for Grades 5-6 girls
- Fall soccer skills for Grades 5-6 boys and girls
- Winter season basketball for Grades 5-6 boys and girls
- Spring Softball skills for Grades 5-6 girls
- Spring Baseball skills for Grades 5-6 boys
- Fitness Club for Grades 5-6 boys and girls
- Speech Club

## **Arrival/Departure**

The school day for grades K-6 is from 7:45am – 2:15pm.

- Parents of children attending St. Luke Hall - Arrival and Departure protocols will be provided via a separate communication in August, 2023.

Students who walk or bike to school should arrive between 7:25 a.m. and 7:40 a.m. Supervision is provided for students starting at 7:05 a.m. at St. Luke Hall. Students are not allowed on the playground before school. K-6 classes begin at 7:45 a.m. Lunch hour is staggered commencing at 10:50 a.m.

## **After-Care**

Cotter Schools has programs available for after school care. The St. Luke's After Care is located in St. Luke Hall and runs from 2:15 p.m. until 5:30 p.m.

## **Accident or Injury**

Every accident during school time, or at any event sponsored by the school, will be reported immediately to the person in charge and/or to the school office. Families will be contacted about the incident at the discretion of the school.

## **Birthdays**

Birthday treats, which are shared with a class, must be packaged. This is a requirement of the Health Department. Your cooperation is appreciated. Each child's birthday is a special celebration, and Cotter Schools teachers and students enjoy sharing in the joy of this celebration.

## **Field Trips**

Field trips are a part of the learning program. Field trips are a privilege, not a right. Students may be denied participation if they fail to meet academic or behavioral requirements. Prior to each field trip, a permission form will be sent home. Family consent is required for a child to participate in a field trip.

## **School Supplies**

A school supply list is provided during the spring or summer outlining the required supplies in each grade. [Grade level supply lists](#) are posted on the Cotter Schools website. Supplies may need to be replenished during the school year. Area merchants may also post the supply lists.

## **Volunteers**

Cotter Schools seek volunteers to fill certain needs of our school programs. Primary areas of service needed include: Lunchroom helpers - wiping down tables and chairs and Playground supervisors - supervising children during their recess time. Volunteers shall be screened for their suitability to work with children in an educational setting and must meet any and all requirements of the Diocese and local school. All Volunteers must stop in the school office to register. All volunteers must follow the volunteer requirements established by the Diocese of Winona-Rochester. Virtus Training and Criminal Background Checks are required of all volunteers working directly with students.



**IV. Cotter Junior High School / Grades 7-8 / St. Teresa Hall  
Cotter High School / Grades 9-12 / St. Joseph Hall**

**School Day Hours**

The school day hours for Grades 7-12 are 8:45 a.m. – 3:15 p.m. Doors will be unlocked at 7:15 a.m. and all 7-12 students who arrive prior to 8:15 a.m. must enter the St. Joseph building and utilize the WNB lounge and ARC areas only. Grades 7-8 students are not allowed to enter the St. Teresa building until 8:15 a.m.

**Academic Programs**

**ACADEMIC PROGRAM - GRADES 7-8**

**Academic Requirements:** To qualify for a certificate of completion from Cotter Junior High School, each student must complete the required number credits of academic study. Each incoming student is required to take one year of band or choir. (Please refer to the Academic Course Catalog found on our website).

**GRADE 7**

Language Arts  
Life Science/Design and Modeling  
Mathematics  
Geography  
Religion  
Art (one semester), Physical Education (one semester)  
Electives: (Choose two) Band, Choir, Spanish 1A or Learning Center

**GRADE 8**

Language Arts  
Earth Science/Automation & Robotics  
Mathematics  
American History  
Religion  
Physical Education & Health & Wellness  
Electives: (Chose two) Band, C.A.D., Choir, Spanish 1B or Learning Center

**ACADEMIC PROGRAM - GRADES 9-12**

**Freshman Program**

- English 9 1.0 Credit
- Intro to Chem & Physics 1.0 Credit
- Mathematics 1.0 Credit
- Visual/Performing Art \* 1.0 Credit
- Religion 9 1.0 Credit
- World Civilization 1.0 Credit
- World Language 1.0 Credit
- Community Service 20 Hours

**Sophomore Program**

- Biology or AP Biology 1.0 Credit
- Health Education 0.5 Credit
- Mathematics 1.0 Credit
- Religion 10 1.0 Credit
- Human Geography  
or AP Human Geography 0.5 Credit
- World Language 1.0 Credit
- Written Com/Oral Com 1.0 Credit
- Elective – required 1.0 Credit
- Community Service 20 Hours

### **Junior Program**

- Chemistry, Physics or AP Physics 1.0 Credit
- Religion 11 1.0 Credit
- Mathematics (required through Alg. 2) 1.0 Credit
- Research Writing/American Literature or AP Language & Composition 1.0 Credit
- U.S. History or AP U.S. History 1.0 Credit
- Electives - required 2.0 Credit
- Community Service 20 Hours

### **Senior Program**

- Economics/Political Science or AP U.S. Government & Politics 1.0 Credit
- Literature & Composition or AP Literature & Composition 1.0 Credit
- Religion 12 1.0 Credit
- Electives - required 4.0 Credits
- Community Service 20 Hours

\*It is possible to take 2 credits per year of Visual/Performing Arts all 4 years by rearranging this schedule. In this case, students will need to earn P.E. credit through the Two Sports Rule.

\*\*Physical Education - 0.5 credit is required to fulfill graduation requirements. Students may take a P.E. course or satisfy the requirement by participating in two complete sports seasons at Cotter or another pre-approved athletic activity before senior year.

**Cotter High School Graduation Requirements** (Please refer to our Academic Course Catalog found on our website). To be eligible for a diploma from Cotter High School, each student must complete the required credits of academic studies and hours/experiences of Community Service. See Program Scheduling and listings under each department in the Course Catalog for specific courses required for graduation.

English	4.0 Credits
Health	0.5 Credit
Mathematics (including Algebra 2)	3.0 Credits
Physical Education	0.5 Credit
Religion	4.0 Credits
Science	3.0 Credits
Social Studies	3.5 Credits
Visual & Performing Arts	1.0 Credit
*World Language	2.0 Credits

**Credits required to graduate:** 24 Credits

\*World Language – For international students, if English is not your first language, a third world language is not required for college.

### **Service Requirement Policy:**

Service is a part of who we are as a Catholic Christian school community. We are each called to serve the marginalized, the forgotten, the refugee, the lost. Therefore, service is an expectation of all of our students, faculty and staff at Cotter. All Cotter High School students are expected to complete ten (10) hours of community service per semester for a minimum of 20 hours, with at least one hour in service to the local or global community. Cotter Junior High School students are expected to complete five (5) hours of community service per semester for a minimum of 10 hours,

with at least one hour in service to the local or global community. Service opportunities not offered through Cotter should be approved ahead of time by the Campus Ministry department. All hours are to be submitted through the web platform, [Helper Helper](#). Students not completing the service requirement for both semesters will not be allowed to register for the following school year until service hours are completed. Cotter Seniors will not graduate without completing the required service hours. More specifics can be found at [cotterschools.org/serving](http://cotterschools.org/serving)

**Grading System - Grades 7-12:**

Grade	Percent	Honor Points
A	93-100	4.00
A-	90-92	3.67
<hr/>		
B+	87-89	3.33
B	83-86	3.00
B-	80-82	2.67
<hr/>		
C+	77-79	2.33
C	73-76	2.00
C-	70-72	1.67
<hr/>		
D+	67-69	1.33
D	63-66	1.00
D-	60-62	0.67
<hr/>		
F	00-59	0.00

**Academic Honors Points and Grade Point Average (GPA):** A completed semester, generally two quarter grades and a semester examination grade, will receive .5 credits and will be awarded honor points as listed above. The sum of honor points, divided by the number of credits that have been attempted, determines the student’s grade point average (GPA).

**Report Cards:** Report cards are issued four times a year at the end of each quarter. Report cards are available to family/guardians on our school website, accessed through FACTS. The report card includes a letter grade, attendance record, and teacher comments.

**Semester Examinations:** Comprehensive semester examinations are given, and depending on the course, are 10-20% of the semester grade. The semester examination grade will appear on the report card and will be averaged with the quarter grades. The averaged marks will appear as a semester grade. The semester grade will appear on the student’s official transcript as well.

**Progress Reports:** The Progress Report is a supplemental evaluation, in addition to the report cards, and is issued by email weekly. The purpose of the mid-quarter progress report is to indicate to both student and family those subject areas in which the student is doing well and/or areas that

need immediate attention and improvement. Grades for all students are available to family/guardians through FACTS.

**Failure Notices:** The subject teacher will notify the family of a student's anticipated failure in a particular course. This may be done through a telephone call, e-mail, mid-quarter progress report, or letter, any time before grades are reported.

**Full-time Student Status:** To be considered a full-time student, seven (7) courses are required each semester. For some students this may include an Academic Resource Hour, PSEO classes, or other classes approved by the Principal or Academic Advisors. It is the student's responsibility to contact an academic advisor if he/she does not have seven courses including the required courses for his/her grade level as listed in the course catalog. Those taking Post-Secondary Enrollment Option (PSEO) courses must carry the equivalent of three to four Cotter High School credits each semester.

**Valedictorian/ Salutatorian:** Each year, students are recognized for having the top cumulative GPA in their graduating class. A combination of cumulative GPA and reviewing the degree of difficulty of coursework is used to determine Valedictorian and Salutatorian. The following classes will carry additional consideration in determining the overall top academic award recipients:

- Advanced placement courses taken at Cotter
- Honors courses taken at Cotter
- Post-secondary enrollment options (PSEO) courses taken while enrolled at Cotter (contingent on course review by academic advisor)

## **Academic Policies**

**Academic Honesty - Grades 7-12:** It is expected that students will be honest when completing assignments and examinations that are to be completed individually. When students need assistance to do their homework due to lack of understanding, students are encouraged to meet with his/her teacher before or after school, or seek assistance in the Learning Center. Students also might find it convenient to receive help from their friends; however, it is important that the concepts of the material be addressed rather than having the homework completed for them. Cheating has no place in a student's life; it is unfair to the entire Cotter community. Cheating on a test or homework is dishonest and will result in "no credit" for the test or homework. Plagiarism is also cheating. Plagiarism is taking the ideas, concepts, facts, and/or words of another and using them as one's own. Plagiarism will not be tolerated at Cotter and any form of it will adversely affect a student's grade and result in disciplinary action. The entire staff is authorized to report infractions of this policy. The teacher and or/the Principal will notify the family when a student violates this policy.

**Academic Accountability – Grades 7-12:** As students move through their high school years, it is imperative that they begin to take ownership of their own educational opportunities. One of the primary means of achieving competence and understanding of academic material is a faithful

completion of assigned homework activities. When a student skips these exercises, they routinely fall behind their classmates in the comprehension of the subject matter being presented in class and frequently are at a disadvantage when that material is tested. Omitting homework is a serious handicap to academic success. An immediate response to late assignments will translate into an improved performance in the classroom as the student stays up to date with the material, and that the students will develop a sense of accountability for their academic progress.

**Flexible Learning Days (Snow Days – online learning at home) – Grades 7-12:** In an effort to maximize student learning opportunities, Cotter Schools will utilize Flexible Learning Days when school is canceled due to bad weather or other unforeseen reasons. Beginning on the third cancellation day of the present academic year, a flexible learning day will be implemented, and students will be required to complete work for their classes online. Teachers will have required classwork, assignments, and/or other necessary information posted in FACTS/Renweb or Google Classroom by 9:00 a.m. Teachers will be available to answer questions and provide feedback through email, Google Classroom, Google Hangouts, and other preferred methods from 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Students are responsible for coursework assigned during Flexible Learning Days. As a result of utilizing Flexible Learning Days, no additional days will need to be added to the calendar at the end of the school year, and more importantly, students will continue to learn valuable content and skills even though the building is closed.

**Religion Classes:** All students are required to take a religion class every semester they attend Cotter. “English Language Learners” (ELL) may request approval to take grade level religion courses on a pass/fail basis as long as he/she is in an “English as a Second Language” (ESL) English class.

**Course Schedule Changes Policy:** Student choice and participation in course selection enhances engagement and learning. Course selections and resulting enrollment directly impact faculty hiring. Arbitrary changes after course selection and subsequent enrollment are difficult to administer. After students make their course selections and schedules have been processed, changing classes is very difficult. Prior thought and planning on the part of students and parents are necessary as this information determines what classes are offered and staffed.

Students will receive their schedule for the upcoming school year by mid-July. Students have up until the first week of school to request any course selection changes. Requests during the summer months can be made, but communication about accepted changes will not be made until August. After the first week of school any course changes will be determined by the administration and driven primarily by the student’s ability; meaning that if the student is able to perform in the course, the student should remain in the course he/she initially requested.

**Dropping a Class:** It is important that students commit to the course work they are selecting at the time of registration. In rare instances, it may be necessary to drop a class. If a student wishes to drop a semester or year-long elective course, he/she may do so up until the end of the first week of the class, replacing it with another elective class. No student will be able to drop a class without replacing it with another elective class.

**Grading Policy:** A passing final grade will grant .5 credit per semester. A student will not receive credit for the course, if they earn a failing grade in 2 of the 3 consecutive reporting periods (quarter, quarter, semester exam) that make up the semester grade.

**Repeating a Course:** Credit may not be received twice for the same course with the exception of band or chorus. Courses that a student fails will remain on the school transcript and affect the GPA since it is included as an attempted course. If a student registers for a course that has already been assigned credit, the credit for the initial course will be removed. Credit will be given at the completion of the second attempt. The original grade on the school transcript remains a part of the school record.

**On-line courses and make-up courses:** Students are required to take Cotter's required courses in-house. If a student fails a course, the student may work with the Administrative Team to identify and gain approval for remedial options. The student may repeat the course by taking an approved on-line course or enrolling at the Winona Area Learning Center for summer school if the course is available. Elective courses may also be taken on-line if the course is not available at Cotter. Counselors have information on application procedures for these programs.

**Academic Review:** Students who are on academic probation or who have failed two or more courses are not making satisfactory progress toward graduation. The Administrative Team will review any student who fails two or more courses in one quarter. A student who fails three courses in one semester will be put on probation for the following semester. If at the end of the following semester a student receives passing grades in the 3 failed courses, the probationary status will end. If a student fails two or more courses at the end of the academic year, he/she may be academically dismissed from Cotter High School.

**Credit for Make-up Work:** Students are expected to make-up all classwork and homework assignments during an excused or unexcused absence. It is the students' responsibility to inquire about the missed assignments as soon as they have returned from their absences.

**Incomplete Grades:** If a student receives an "incomplete" (I) at the end of a quarter, he/she will be given two weeks to complete assignments and tests. After two weeks, the "incomplete" will convert to a failing grade unless the required assignments and tests are completed.

**Transfer credit policy for credits earned in the United States:** When a student transfers to Cotter, all high school level courses will be averaged into their Cotter grade point average (GPA). GPAs will be calculated according to our grading system.

**Transfer credit policy for credits earned outside the United States:** Courses in math, English, religion, science, world language, social studies, native language studies, computer science, physical education, health, science, and visual/performing art are accepted as transfer courses. Courses are entered on the transcript with a P for Pass, provided a grade of C or better is earned. No credit will be awarded for a letter grade of D or F. The grade point average will begin when the student earns credit at Cotter or a previous school in the United States.

**College credit:** A student may take advanced courses through a variety of programs that, upon successful completion, have potential to be awarded credit when they enroll in college. Please note - all required courses must be taken at Cotter unless an exception is granted by the administration. Courses taken off-campus must not conflict with the student's course schedule at Cotter. A student's course load may not exceed that of a regular full-time student, which is three to four credits per semester. One postsecondary semester credit will be granted .25 credits at Cotter.

**Tuition Payments & Credits:** Cotter does not provide credit for classes until a student's tuition agreement has been fulfilled. If a student transfers to another school, the tuition agreement must be reconciled before credit is granted. In addition, the tuition agreement must be paid in full prior to graduation.

## **Counseling & Academic Support Services**

**Cotter Schools Counseling Center:** The Counseling Center provides emotional, social, and problem-solving support. Along with the students, we involve parents, teachers, and administrators in collaboration to support the specific needs of each student. The Counselors are available to all students for individual appointments.

**Academic Advising Office:** The Academic Advising Office follows each student's academic progress, develops a 4-year plan for each student's time at Cotter, makes sure students have the required courses for graduation, provides help with course selection, provides assistance with college planning and college applications, and assists in career exploration and guidance. The Academic Advising page on the school website has many helpful links for both parents and students to use in planning for post-secondary education. Parents are welcome to visit, call, or email the Advisors for information or assistance.

### **The Learning Center – Grades 7-8**

The purpose of the Learning Center is to help support students with their academic studies. A teacher, family, or student may make referrals to help support students with their academic studies. Helping students find their strengths and helping them to succeed is the main goal of the Learning Center.

### **Academic Resource Center – Grades 9-12**

The Academic Resource Center contains a collection of print and non-print materials including books, on-line informational databases, videos, general interest magazines and daily newspapers. Students are encouraged to visit the Academic Resource Center to study, access information, or read before school 7:45-8:45 a.m. Monday through Friday.

During class time, students wishing to use the Academic Resource Center must present a pass from their classroom teacher to the Academic Resource teacher. Passes may be limited if there is a class scheduled in this space at the time desired. Food and beverages are also not allowed.

Most books in the Academic Resource Center may be checked out for two weeks and may be renewed. There are no fines for overdue materials, but students are reminded that these materials are shared by the entire Cotter community and should be promptly returned for others to use. Students are expected to pay the replacement cost of lost or damaged materials.

## **Study Halls**

At times, study halls are scheduled during Flex or 8th Period to provide students with an opportunity to use their time appropriately and support their academic learning. Students are responsible to the teacher assigned to their Flex. This teacher is tasked with providing academic support as needed to the students in the study hall. Attendance and behavior policies for study halls are the same as for academic classes.

The following guidelines are designed to assist students in developing proper study habits:

- Study halls are to be taken seriously. Attendance policies for study halls are the same as for classes.
- Study halls are a time for study either independently or with others.
- Students may sign out from the study hall. Prearranged passes are required to go to other rooms; the Academic Advising Office, the Counselor, music lessons or other student services.

## **Faith Experiences**

Rooted in our Catholic tradition, liturgy and prayer are foundational to life at Cotter Schools. We gather regularly for prayer and the Celebration of the Eucharist in order to deepen our relationship with God and strengthen our bonds as a community of faith. We gather as a whole school community, on average, once a month for the Celebration of the Eucharist. These celebrations are open to the whole Cotter community. We love having family and friends of the school join us for these celebrations. Weekly opportunities are also offered for daily mass and other all-school prayer experiences. Prayer occurs in our classrooms on a daily basis. Each semester, students participate in a Reconciliation Service with the opportunity for individual confessions. Each grade (7-12) participates in an annual grade-specific retreat.

## **Attendance Policies**

Daily participation in each class is vital for academic success. Absence from any class can be detrimental to learning and create adverse effects on academic standing and grades for the courses. Absence from daily class activity is a barrier to learning.

**Assemblies and school functions:** All assemblies are considered part of the total education program. Attendance at Mass, prayer services, assemblies, homerooms, and pep fests is considered the same as attendance at any class. If a student is absent from such an event, the result will extend from detention to out of school suspension, depending on the circumstances.



**Closed campus policy – lunch:** Leaving the campus without permission during the school day will result in detention. There is no open campus during lunch for anyone. The administration reserves the right to enact penalties on a case-by-case basis depending on the circumstances of the event.

**Absences:** Families are expected to call the Main Office at 453-5001 before 9:00 a.m. the day that a student is absent. Students are responsible for contacting their teachers and completing make-up in a timely manner. For shared-time classes at Winona Senior High School, students are accountable for attendance and compliance with class regulations at Winona Senior High School. Only explicit, written permission from the office exempts students from shared-time classes for Cotter activities.

**Long-term absence (major illness, surgery or hospitalization):** If a student is expected to be absent for more than 10 days for medical reasons, parents must contact the Principal and the Counseling Office for the procedure to obtain District 861 Homebound Instruction. This will be done with the understanding that major physical or emotional illness takes precedence over academic affairs. In some cases, Cotter Schools may provide an alternative academic plan for students that may include withdrawing the student from some classes. Student participation in co-curricular activities would be limited or not allowed. The school requires documentation from a qualified professional for all long-term absences. This information should include dates the doctor was seen, as well as the medical opinion supporting restrictions from participating in or attending school.

**Foreseen absence and vacation:** Families are strongly urged not to schedule appointments or family vacations that conflict with the schedule of regular school days. If a student has a foreseen absence, he/she is asked to present a note to this effect, signed by his/her family to the Principal. The student will need to pick up a “Foreseen Absence Form” from the Main Office to be signed by his/her teachers and then the student will return this form to the Main Office. It is requested that this be done at least two (2) days prior to the foreseen absence. It is the student’s responsibility, prior to leaving, to make arrangements with the teacher to complete work. Teachers may ask the student to turn in his/her work before leaving.

**Unexcused absence:** An unexcused absence is a "skipped" class which will result in making up class time as directed by the principal. Teacher discretion will be used to determine whether a student receives credit for assigned work missed due to unexcused absences. The main office will assign the student consequences for the infraction.

**Tardy:** A student arriving to class unexcused (without a pass) after the bell rings is late and will receive a white card. Three (3) unexcused tardies to the same class or study hall per quarter results in a detention. Any subsequent tardy will result in additional detentions being assigned. After the 5th tardy to class, additional consequences may be assigned. This will be enforced on a quarter basis.

**College visitation:** These are foreseen absence days; therefore, the same procedure noted above is to be followed.

## **Disciplinary Actions**

When a student has been disrespectful of another student or has violated Cotter Schools behavioral expectations, the following guidelines and discipline may be imposed:

- For serious or repeated offenses, the student will be referred to the Principal.
- A written statement will be made by the Principal and placed in the student's file.
- A student may be subject to detention(s), in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or adhering to a behavior contract upon consultation with the Principal, the President, and/or the Administrative Team.
- Students holding leadership positions (i.e. student council, captaincy of athletic teams, class officer, drum major, etc.) may be pulled from their leadership position for one calendar year for disruptive behavior.
- Parents will be notified when a student is suspended from school.
- Any student, who engages in any form of violence, whether physical, sexual, verbal or written, is subject to immediate suspension or expulsion from school.

When a student's behavior infraction involves a teacher or staff member, the following will serve as guidelines:

- The student and the teacher or staff member will meet with an administrator to discuss and resolve the issue.
- Failure to respond in a positive manner will cause the student to be referred to the Principal for further disciplinary action.
- A written record of the referral will be made by the teacher or staff member and the Principal and placed in the student's file.
- A student may be subject to detention(s), in-school suspension or out-of-school suspension, upon consultation with the Principal and/or The Administrative Team.
- Any student who has repeat offenses regarding disrespect to school personnel may be dismissed from school upon consultation with the Administrative Team.
- Students holding leadership positions (i.e. student council, captaincy of athletic teams, class officer, drum major, etc.) may be pulled from their leadership position for one calendar year for disruptive behavior.

To ensure that matters are addressed immediately and given proper attention, the following consequences and disciplinary actions may occur when a student is in violation of Cotter Schools policies:

- Written warning to the student and parent
- School detention
- Removal from class
- Suspension from an athletic or other co-curricular practice, competition or activity
- Referral to a law enforcement agency if appropriate
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension
- Expulsion/Dismissal from class or school for the remainder of the school year

**Detention:** A detention may be assigned for violations of behavioral expectations or school policies. A "Discipline Notice" regarding the incident of infraction will be mailed, emailed or a call placed to the student's home.

The white card system for behavioral violations will be utilized. Infractions will be documented. Once a student has received three white cards, he/she will serve a detention. Detentions are assigned for offenses which include, but are not limited to: tardiness, dress code violations, unexcused absences, lunchroom violations, technological inappropriateness, disrespect, etc.

A student may serve detention in one of two ways: (1) individual administrators or teachers may choose to have a student serve detention after school in their classroom, or (2) a teacher may refer a student to the Principal who will assign an after-school detention day and time. Detentions run from 3:20-4:00 for students in grades 7-12. If involved in extracurriculars, the detention will be served even if a student will be late for an extracurricular practice. Coaches will be communicated with.

**In-school suspension:** Flagrant or repeated violations of school policies or behavioral expectations warrant suspension. Family will be notified that their child has been suspended. The suspended student should bring his or her lunch and books for all classes to the Main Office. He/she will remain there under supervision, each day of suspension (up to three (3) school days) and is accountable for completing all assignments. He/she will receive up to one-half (50%) credit for all class work. Assessments will not be penalized. Suspensions are unexcused absences.

**Out-of-school suspension:** The guidelines for out-of-school suspension are set by the State of Minnesota which include flagrant or dangerous violations of school guidelines. Family will be notified and a plan for re-admittance will be set forth in writing and signed by the student, his/her parents and a representative from the Administration. No credit is given for missed work. Suspensions are unexcused absences.

**Probation:** Cotter reserves the right to place students on academic or disciplinary probation. If academic or disciplinary probationary provisions are necessary, the conditions of probation will be set forth in writing and signed by the student, his/her parents and a representative from the Administration. Unsatisfactory compliance with the terms of probation results in dismissal.

**Dismissal:** When disruptive behavior, attitudes or values contrary to the values and goals of Cotter continue and efforts at remediation fail, dismissal will be imposed.

## **Alcohol and Drugs**

**Penalties for use of alcohol and/or drugs:** If a student is found at Cotter or at any Cotter activity in possession of or under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs or chemicals (this includes, but is not limited to, smoking, vaping, and use of tobacco or nicotine products including electronic cigarettes and personal vaporizers), he/she will be suspended from school immediately by the Administration according to the following guidelines:

- First Offense: Three (3) class days of in-school suspension (out-of-school suspension may be used in some circumstances, to be determined by the administration).
- Second Offense: Five (5) days of in-school suspension with a chemical assessment and satisfactory follow through within a reasonable time from date of infraction, not to exceed 30 calendar days. Failure to do so will result in dismissal from school (out-of-school suspension may be used in some circumstances, to be determined by the Administration).
- Third Offense: Expulsion from school.
- If a student is found at Cotter or at any Cotter activity selling illegal drugs or chemicals, he or she will be immediately dismissed from Cotter.
- The Administration reserves the right to enact penalties not otherwise specified above.

**Dealing with chemical dependency:** Cotter High School recognizes that chemical dependency (the inability of an individual to control his/her use of alcohol or other chemicals thereby reducing physical, mental, emotional, or social awareness and impairing a student's scholastic achievement) is an illness often preceded by misuse and abuse. Because Cotter wishes to intervene early in the process, the administration is committed to contacting family/ guardians of any student manifesting signs of chemical misuse or abuse to both educate and aid the student should he/she need help. If a student accepts referral and/or treatment, that fact will be taken into account, as it would be for any illness. However, any student who consumes or sells drugs is jeopardizing his or her standing at Cotter. Cotter Schools works cooperatively with law enforcement officials and community agencies in handling students who consume or sell drugs. The school will follow law enforcement guidelines/regulations regarding the reporting of chemical use.

### **Cell Phone and Personal Electronic Device Use**

**Cotter Students (Grades 7-12):** High School students will need a laptop or Chromebook for school work but will not need other personal electronic devices for school work. It is preferred that students leave electronic devices, such as cell phones and iPads at home. Students may bring cell phones and other electronic devices to school at their own risk.

All grades 7-12 students are expected to follow the following guidelines:

- All cell phones must be powered off between the hours of 8:15 a.m. and 3:15 p.m. Students must have their cell phones and other electronic devices powered off and stored in their lockers during this time, including during passing time and lunch. Students may need headphones for classroom activities, but they should be stored away until requested.
- Cell phone use of any kind is not permitted in locker rooms or bathrooms at any time.
- Inappropriate use of social media outside of school hours and/or off campus may result in disciplinary action at school.
- Students may not record or take photos of other students or staff without their permission.
- Recording or taking photos of classmates or using social media apps with the intent to bully, intimidate, tease, make fun of, harass or belittle them is not permitted. These actions are hurtful and diminish the quality of the learning environment and the educational

opportunities afforded to all students. Students who engage in these harmful practices will face disciplinary action.

Consequences for students using cell phones inappropriately or during unapproved times:

- First Offense - The phone is confiscated by the teacher and kept until the end of the day.
- Second Offense - The phone is turned into the main office. The student receives a white card and may pick up the phone at the end of the day.
- Third Offense - The phone is confiscated and turned into the main office. The parent is called and must come to school to collect the phone. The student receives a red card and must turn in the phone to the school secretary each morning for the next five days. The phone may be collected by the student each day after school.
- Fourth Offense - The phone is confiscated and turned into the main office. The parents must have a conference with the principal before the phone is returned. The student is not allowed to bring the phone to school for the following two weeks. Additional consequences may be applied following the conference.

The secretary in the main office can receive and communicate important messages between students and parents during the school day should the need arise. The main office phone number is 507-453-5000. The secretary in the building's main office will receive and communicate messages between students and family during the school day should the need arise.

### **Athletics and Activities – Participant Guidelines** (GRADES 7-12)

The best school program for junior high school and high school students is a balanced one with time for studies and activities. Multiple kinds of student activities are available at Cotter to meet individual interests and abilities. The student who participates in an activity can learn the important lessons of how to get along and work with others, to share, to sacrifice, and to grow into a well-rounded person. Cotter encourages its students to participate in student activities.

#### **Girls Interscholastic Athletic Competition: (Category I)**

Basketball	Cross Country
Nordic Skiing (Co-op with WSHS)	Gymnastics (Co-op with WSHS)
Hockey (Co-op with WSHS)	Soccer
Softball	Swimming/Diving (Co-op with WSHS)
Tennis	Track
Volleyball	

#### **Boys Interscholastic Competition (Category I):**

Baseball	Basketball
Cross Country	Nordic Skiing (Co-op with WSHS)
Football	Wrestling (Co-op with WSHS)
Hockey (Co-op with WSHS)	Soccer
Swimming /Diving (Co-op with WSHS)	Tennis
Track	

**Organizations and Activities (Category II activities) may include the following:**

Service Ministry Trips	Show Choir / Show Choir Band
Chess Club	Marching Band
Speech and Debate Team	Pep Band
Winter Color guard	Strength Team
Drama/Musical	Student Council
Summer Marching Band	Cotter Chronicle - eNewspaper
Jazz Band	Literary Magazine
Yearbook	Students Promoting Awareness (SPA)
Math Team	Mock Trial
Music Listening	Parmies
National Honor Society	Debate

**Sportsmanship:** Students are expected to demonstrate good sportsmanship as spectators during extracurricular activities. Failure to do so may result in suspension from participating on a current team or organization or a future team or organization. No artificial noisemakers are allowed. Signs may be used with approval by the administration.

**Eligibility for Activities:** Participating in Cotter activities and athletics gives students an opportunity to represent the entire Cotter community. Whether it is a student's intention or not, his/her actions at all times reflect upon Cotter. Therefore, students are to conduct themselves in a manner that will leave a positive impression on themselves, the school and the Cotter community whenever they participate in activities or athletics. Student eligibility guidelines are set forth in the bylaws of the *Official Handbook of the Minnesota State High School League*. Cotter Schools guidelines apply as well.

**Athletic Eligibility – Transfer Student:** At Cotter, we treasure the opportunities provided for our students and are willing to work with individual families to meet their goals within the parameters of our policies and vision. If a family feels that its goals are not being met and elect to transfer to a different educational institution, the following policy will be applied.

Students who transfer from Cotter Schools after the start of Grade 9 are faced with eligibility policies as designated by the Minnesota State High School League (please view MSHSL Bylaw 111 for more information). If a student utilizing the Minnesota Statute 124D.03 Enrollment Options Program, and who transfers without a corresponding change of residence by the student's parents, elects to retain full eligibility for varsity competition for one (1) calendar year at Cotter, after which time the student shall become fully eligible at the school to which the student has open enrolled, they will incur a financial obligation to Cotter Schools. As a tuition-based educational institution, those students who elect to do so must have, or obtain, good financial standing with Cotter Schools and pay 50% of tuition, for the year in which they are to retain eligibility, upfront and prior to the start of participation in athletics.

**Academic Policy for Participation in Extracurricular Activities:** Student progress is reviewed weekly by administration and a progress report is sent out to each student and family. If a student

receives one or more failing grades, the student and family are contacted and a one-week warning is given to bring the grade(s) back up to passing. If the student is failing the class the 2nd week and no improvement is notable, the student will become ineligible to play or participate according to administrative decisions. If a student receives one or more failing grades at the end of the QUARTER and/or the SEMESTER while participating in an extra-curricular activity, the student will become ineligible to play or participate in his/her current or next extra-curricular activity(ies) for approximately 10 percent of their current season, or 10% of the next season if they are currently inactive, based on the maximum games allowed by the Minnesota State High School League or as indicated by the administration.

The student will be allowed to practice during the time that they have a failing grade. However, academic improvement is primary, and it is possible that a student may need to be excused from daily participation in order to improve academically. A student who is ineligible may not participate in any inter school competition (including scrimmages), and he/she will NOT be excused from class for participation in ineligible activities. A student who receives a failing grade on weekly progress reports will have a warning issued and a reminder of the academic policy communicated to his/her family and coaches/advisers. Penalties will apply throughout the entire academic school year and will not carry over to the following academic year.

A student who falls into the above categories may have his/her situation reviewed by the administration. A teacher who is concerned with a student's academic performance due to participation in extra-curricular activities may present his/her concerns to be reviewed by the administration. The administration reserves the right to investigate any extenuating circumstances and to restrict/restore eligibility as appropriate.

Enforcement of the eligibility policy will be put into effect within a reasonable amount of time from when reports are viewed to allow for proper communication with students and/or families. A first offense, failing grade at quarter or semester, will result in the following immediate ineligibility of the current or next extra-curricular activity (based on maximum number of contests):

Club/Activity	1 public appearance
Baseball	2 games (20)
Basketball	3 games (26)
Cross Country	1 meet (10)
Football	1 game (9)
Soccer	2 games (16)
Softball	2 games (20)
Tennis	3 matches (16 dates/28 matches)
Track & Field	1 meet (14)
Volleyball	2 matches (17)

Penalties only apply to those clubs/activities that are not an extension of a course where a grade is affected by participation in the activity. i.e., math team, speech team, etc.

**Behavior Expectations for Students Involved in Extracurriculars:** Cotter Schools believes in the philosophy that participation in our extracurricular program is a privilege, not a right. This privilege is granted to students who uphold the ideals of Christian leadership, display good citizenship, abide by the law, rules and regulations of the school community and the Minnesota State High School League where applicable, and commit themselves to academic success. Participants in extracurricular activities represent more than themselves when they compete or perform. People often judge our community by the conduct and attitude displayed by athletes or performers, whether the students are in or out of school. Therefore, students involved in extracurriculars are expected to maintain a high standard of conduct. Cotter Schools along with the Minnesota State High School League recognizes that the use of mood-altering chemicals by high school students is *illegal*.

All Cotter Students who participate in the extra-curricular program must commit to the following standards of behavior:

- Stay chemically free (including alcohol and tobacco) through the entire calendar year.
- Exhibit conduct that is consistent with good sportsmanship.
- Treat self and all others (including students, coaches, officials, fans and teachers) with respect.
- The use, possession or sale of mood-altering chemicals, or your attendance at an unlawful event that involves the use of mood-altering chemicals is considered a violation of expected behavior. Attendance at an unlawful event includes being at a party where under-aged mood-altering chemicals are being consumed illegally.
- See *Code of Conduct –Student/Parent* form as found on the Cotter Athletic website ([www.cotterschools.org](http://www.cotterschools.org)).

**Category I: Athletic Activities – Penalties:** Cotter Schools will abide by the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) rules re: penalties and violations concerning the use of mood-altering chemicals. See *MSHSL Eligibility Brochure* as found on the Cotter Athletic website ([www.cotterschools.org](http://www.cotterschools.org)). In addition, if a student is in attendance, but not consuming, the loss of eligibility will be for the next two (2) weeks of a season in which the student is a participant or the next two (2) contests, whichever is greater. All subsequent violations regarding attendance will follow the guidelines established by the MSHSL.

Enforcement of these rules requires a respect for the rights and integrity of the student. It is not the responsibility of the school authorities to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that an infraction has occurred and to then impose the penalty. Rather, it is the responsibility of school authority to confront the student with the charge and the corresponding responsibility of the student to acknowledge the action, if it has occurred.

Students dismissed from Category I or II activities will also be ineligible for any of the following: end of the season/activity awards, end of the year school sponsored awards, Homecoming Court, Winterfest Court, Student Council, Class Office, and National Honor Society Office for one calendar year.



Cotter students who participate in a cooperative activity with WSHS will be subject to the WSHS policies and penalties.

**Category II: Activities – Penalties:** During the season of practice or participation in Music, Speech, One- Act Play or school productions, a student shall not use mood-altering chemicals (including tobacco, alcohol, and illegal drugs, etc.). It is not a violation for a student to be in possession of a legally defined drug specifically prescribed for the student's own use by his/her doctor.

A. First Violation

Penalty: After the confirmation of the first violation, the student shall lose eligibility for the next three weeks or the next two public appearances in which the student is a participant, whichever is greater. Before a student regains eligibility, he or she must meet with a Cotter counselor to discuss the infraction. The counselor must provide written confirmation to the Activities Director before eligibility is regained. If the counselor recommends an outside chemical assessment, the student will be required to schedule the appointment before being eligible.

Miscellaneous: If a student comes forth and contacts the Activities Director, Principal, or President within 48 hours of the time of the drug and/or alcohol infraction of the first violation, the penalty MAY be reduced upon review by administration.

B. Second Violation

Penalty: After the confirmation of the second violation, the student shall lose eligibility for the next six weeks or three public appearances in which the student is a participant, whichever is greater.

Miscellaneous: Before being readmitted to activities following suspension for the second violation, the student shall show evidence in writing that he/she has received a chemical assessment from an outside chemical dependency professional unless the administration waives this requirement. After the second violation the student must undergo a drug and alcohol assessment within two weeks of meeting with the administration. Failure to participate in the evaluation will likely result in dismissal from the school.

C. Third Violation

Penalty: The penalty for a third violation will result in the exclusion from the entire extracurricular program for the remainder of the student's high school career. In this scenario, the student's standing as a Cotter student may also be jeopardized. The administration will review the student's record.

**Participation in Co-Curricular Activities Policy:** Co-curricular activities are a significant part of the overall school experience for students. For the sake of the students and their team, students need to be at their best. Absence from school during the day directly affects after school performance. In order to be eligible to participate in any co-curricular game, meet, performance, or school sponsored event, students must be in school *the entire day*. Students who

are absent for any portion of a school day may not participate in any performance event. Exceptions to the rule are granted on an individual basis for such events as funerals or family emergencies. In the event that a student has a medical appointment during the day, a signed note must be presented to the Main Office and an early dismissal pass must be obtained **before** the school day begins. If the medical appointment is at the beginning of the school day, the student must inform the office the day before and present a signed doctor's note upon arriving at school after the appointment. If a student does not present a note from the medical professional, that student will forfeit participation in the next scheduled activity.

**Cotter High School Dance Policy:** All dances should be coordinated through the Student Council advisor and the Activities Director. The Homecoming and Winterfest Dances will run from 8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. Attendees need to be at the dance no later than 8:30 p.m. Attendees may leave the dance any time after 10:00 p.m. There will be NO re-admittance to the dance once a student leaves. If parents want to be informed if their children leave before the end of the dance, they can leave a message at the school prior to the dance and this can be passed on to the chaperones. If anyone is asked to leave the dance by the chaperones, family will be notified at that time. Anyone under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be held at the dance by the chaperones. The family or dorm staff will be called and asked to come to the dance to pick the student up. Playlists for dances are subject to review by Administration. Attendees when dancing should not pack into a group where people are not able to exit or enter. All dance movements, activities and behaviors must be respectful and appropriate. Administration reserves the right to enact penalties for those engaging in inappropriate dance behaviors.

**Student Cars and Parking Policy:** Student drivers must be aware of their own safety as well as that of others at all times. Students may drive to and from Winona Senior High School for shared-time classes. They may also drive to SMU, WSU, and MSSETC for PSEO classes. At times, it may be necessary for a student to drive to an appointment during school hours. If so, the student must notify the high school Main Office by means of a signed parental note before school begins. Daily on-campus parking is available in the John Nett Rec Center parking lot. Inappropriate parking, excessive speed, or careless or reckless driving will not be tolerated. This policy includes all areas around campus including Cotter Fields and St. Mary's Church.