# HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC MIDDLE SCHOOL

# PARENTS/STUDENT HANDBOOK

## 2025-2026

HOLY TRINITY
CATHOLIC MIDDLE SCHOOL

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# 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

## Mission Statements

**Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Charlotte** In communion with our families and parishes, we form students to be virtuous disciples of Jesus Christ. Rooted in Scripture, Tradition, and the defined teachings of the Catholic Church, our students pursue excellence of intellect, heart, and soul with salvation as the ultimate goal.

**Holy Trinity** seeks to nurture each student in mind, body, and soul using a Catholic worldview to become a disciple of Christ while igniting curiosity, emboldening virtue, fostering intellectual growth, and shaping compassionate learners who possess a deep sense of responsibility to one another and their community.

## Essential Marks of Catholic Education

Holy Trinity integrates the following essential marks of Catholic education as outlined by the Church:

1. Inspired by a supernatural vision
2. Founded on Christian Anthropology
3. Animated by communion and community
4. Imbued with a Catholic worldview throughout its curriculum
5. Sustained by Gospel witness

*The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools*
Archbishop J. Michael Miller, C.S.B., 2025

## Welcome

The faculty and staff of Holy Trinity Catholic Middle School are delighted to welcome you to the school community. Since its inception in 1995, HTCMS has provided a stimulating and supportive environment for all students centered on our Catholic faith. Our most valuable resources are the people who make up the Holy Trinity family. The students, teachers, parents, administrators, and staff form a team that works together to achieve the goals of a Catholic education. By combining our faith, our determination to achieve academic success, and our dedication to the service of others, we can make the years spent at HTCMS a truly wonderful experience. We wish each of you success in the coming school year!

## Statement of Non-Discrimination Policy to Students and Personnel

Schools in the Diocese of Charlotte, mindful of their primary mission as effective instruments of the educational ministry of the church and witnesses to the love of Christ for all persons, shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, age, physical condition, national or ethnic origin in the employment of personnel and administration of educational policies, tuition assistance, athletic and other school-administered programs.

## Accreditation

**Holy Trinity is fully accredited within the Diocese of Charlotte through Lumen Accreditation and in good standing with The Catholic University of America, effective July 1, 2024.**

## Policy on the Human Body

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that our differences, as male and female, are part of God's design and that our bodies - including our sexuality - are gifts from God. The human person is a union of body and soul, and "each of the two sexes is an image of the power and tenderness of God, with equal dignity though in a different way>" (See Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2335)

Therefore:

• Holy Trinity Catholic Middle School will respect the biological sex of the human person as given by God, revealed at birth, and shall apply all policies and procedures in relation to that person according to that person's God-given biological sex.

• All employees, volunteers, and students shall conduct themselves in accord with their God-given biological sex.

• Holy Trinity will partner with families to educate and form students consistent with the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ and His Church and expect those connected to the school to live and promote a lifestyle in accord with those values - especially in those actions and behaviors which are public.

## Safe Environment Training/Background Checks

The Diocese of Charlotte requires all employees and volunteers who have direct contact with children to complete the Safe Environment Training and have successfully completed a background check through CMG Connect. Registration for both and ongoing certification can be found at https://charlotte.cmgconnect.org/ . If you had prior enrollment in Virtus, your account has been transferred to this new site. Please contact the school for your login information.

### Statement of Changes to Handbook

Realizing that every situation cannot be anticipated, Holy Trinity Catholic Middle School's administration, Mecklenburg Area Catholic Schools, and the Diocese of Charlotte reserves the right to determine consequences for actions and behavior not included in this handbook and policy additions and changes. Additions and changes to this handbook will be posted on PlusPortals during the year.

### Handbook Policy Disclaimer

This handbook is intended to serve as a general guide for students and families for the 2025–2026 school year at Holy Trinity Catholic Middle School. It outlines key policies, procedures, expectations, and resources designed to support a safe, respectful, and academically rigorous environment.

Please note that the contents of this handbook are not exhaustive and are subject to change. Holy Trinity reserves the right to amend, update, or revise policies, procedures, or regulations at any time in response to new circumstances, changes in diocesan guidance, or the evolving needs of the school community.

Any changes or updates will be communicated to families promptly via PlusPortals, official school emails, or written notices. It is the responsibility of families and students to review and stay informed of these updates throughout the school year.

## 2. FAITH FORMATION

### Virtue Formation

Holy Trinity uses the *Education in Virtue* program across all grade levels. Students are taught to practice:

- Theological Virtues: Faith, Hope, Charity
- Cardinal Virtues: Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, Temperance
- Sister Virtues associated with each Cardinal Virtue
    - Prudence: Good Counsel, Good Judgement, Command, Circumspection, Docility, and Foresight
    - Justice: Affability, Courtesy, Generosity, Gratitude, Kindness, Loyalty, Obedience, Patriotism, Prayerfulness, Respect, Responsibility, Sincerity, and Trustworthiness
    - Fortitude: Industriousness, Magnamity, Magnificence, Patience, Perseverance

- Temperance: Honesty, Humility, Meekness, Moderation, Modesty, Orderliness, and Self-Control

**Virtue Education**

At Holy Trinity, virtue education is at the heart of student formation and is intentionally woven into daily life. Students are guided to grow in character and moral integrity through consistent reinforcement of virtues such as respect, responsibility, compassion, honesty, and self-discipline. This formation takes place in several key ways:

- **Homeroom Prayer and Reflection**: Each day begins with prayer and a brief reflection focused on a particular virtue or Gospel value. This helps students center their hearts and minds on how they can live out their faith throughout the day.

- **Discipline Expectations Rooted in Virtue**: Our behavioral expectations are designed not only to maintain a respectful learning environment but also to shape the conscience and moral reasoning of each student. Disciplinary consequences are approached as opportunities for reflection, growth, and reconciliation.

- **Service Opportunities**: Students are encouraged to put virtues into action through age-appropriate service projects both within the school and in the wider community. These experiences are designed to nurture empathy, humility, and a sense of civic and spiritual responsibility.

## 3. SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION AND CONTACT INFO

**Administrative Leadership**

- President: Mr. Kevin Parks - kparks@htcms.net
- Principal: Mr. Bobby Conrad - rjconrad@htcms.net
- Dean of Academics / 8th Grade: Mrs. Theresa Keese - tskeese@htcms.net
- Assistant Principal / 7th Grade: Mr. Kevin Glossner - kglossner@htcms.net
- Assistant Principal / 6th Grade: Mr. Michael Brodowicz -msbrodowicz@htcms.net
- Dean of Students: Mr. Will Stewart - whstewart@htcms.net
- Chaplain: Fr. Michael Debesay - msdebesay@rcdoc.org

### Academic Achievement Team

- Mrs. Katie Ruesch – kwruesch@htcms.net
- Mrs. Beth Husted – bhhusted@htcms.net
- Mrs. Maryanne Jackson – mmjackson@htcms.net
- Mrs. Anne Marie Young - ayoung@htcms.net

### Student Counseling Team

- 6th Grade: Mrs. Nancy Russo – nrusso@htcms.net
- 7th Grade: Mrs. Peggy Wright – pwright@htcms.net
- 8th Grade: Ms. Kate McHugh – kmchugh@htcms.net

### Operations and Key Contacts

- Office Manager: Mrs. Mary Bloch - mdbloch@htcms.net
- Financial Assistant: Mrs. Colleen Duffy - ckduffy@htcms.net
- Registrar: Mrs. Kim Levins - khlevins@htcms.net
- Receptionist: Mrs. Kim Hazel - kmhazel@htcms.net
- Technology Coordinator: Mr. Jon Klish – jdklish@htcms.net
- Advancement Director: Mrs. Lisa Michalski Gilkey – ljmichalski@htcms.net
- Campus Ministry Coordinator: Mr. James Armstrong - jbarmstrong@htcms.net
- Director of Athletics: Mr. Eddie Hull - echull@htcms.net

### Phone Numbers

- Main Office: 704-527-7822
- Health Room: 704-714-3258
- Athletics: 704-714-3263
- After-School Care: 704-370-3268
- Transportation: 704-370-3262

## 4. STUDENT EXPECTATIONS AND CONDUCT

### Philosophy

Holy Trinity expects all students to uphold the highest standards of moral behavior, personal accountability, and respect for our Catholic identity. Disciplinary policies are enforced consistently.

## Parent & Student Support of Policies and Procedures

Parent support for and cooperation with the school is essential for successful student formation. If, in the opinion of the school administration, any such behavior interferes with the teaching and learning processes or the school's ability to promote values consistent with the school's mission, the school may require parents to withdraw their student. Similarly, the school may require parents to withdraw a student whose words or deeds evidence a failure to embrace and support the school's mission.

## Core Behavior Standards

- Obey school and classroom rules
- Respect faculty, staff, peers, and property
- Wear the school uniform as directed
- Refrain from disruptive, dishonest, or defiant behavior
- Exhibit virtue in all interactions

## Discipline Policy Overview

- Misbehavior will be addressed with firm consequences up to and including detentions, suspensions, and possible dismissal.
- Parents will be informed when serious or repeated infractions occur.
- Teachers and administrators collaborate to hold students accountable while maintaining dignity and fairness.

## Progression Of Disciplinary Action

The primary level of discipline at Holy Trinity is administered by the faculty and staff who are working directly with the students. All students are expected to comply with directives given by any administrator, faculty or staff member. Failure to follow directives will result in disciplinary action.

## Levels of Discipline

### 1. Teacher-Managed Behavior

- Minor offenses (e.g., talking out of turn, lack of preparation) will be handled by the classroom teacher.
- Teachers may assign lunch/recess detentions. Parents will be informed but not necessarily prior to the detention being served.
- In problems that are not resolved by the student-teacher contact, the teacher will notify the parents/guardians to make them aware of the situation.
- If the problem(s) continues, it may be referred to the Dean of Students

**2. Administrative Interventions**

- Repeated or more serious infractions (e.g., disrespect, disruption, dishonesty) are referred to the Dean of Students and/or Grade-Level Administrator.
- The Dean of Students and/or Administrator will gather facts and contact the student to discuss the details of the situation. This fact gathering may include consultation with other Administrators.
- In more serious situations the parents/guardians will be contacted, informed of the situation and, if the circumstances warrant, the student may be placed on suspension until the situation is resolved.
- The Dean of Students and/or Grade-Level Administrator may meet with the student and the parents/guardians to discuss the issue and to provide the student the opportunity to present their views and concerns in a constructive setting.

## Parent Concern Resolution Pathway

When parents have a concern regarding their child's education, behavior, or school experience, we encourage the following steps to ensure effective communication and timely resolution:

1. **Start with the Teacher**
   Most concerns can be addressed best by first reaching out to your child's teacher. Teachers have direct knowledge of classroom activities, academic progress, and social interactions. Please contact the teacher via email or phone to discuss your concern.

2. **Contact the Dean of Students and/or Grade-Level Administrator**
   If your concern is not resolved after speaking with the teacher or if it involves broader behavioral or grade-level issues, please reach out to the Dean of Students or the grade-level administrator. They oversee student conduct and academic programs at your child's grade level and can provide additional support and guidance.

3. **Reach out to the Principal**
   For unresolved issues after contacting the teacher and Dean/administrator, or for concerns that are school-wide or require higher-level intervention, please contact the school principal. The principal is responsible for overall school operations and can facilitate solutions or direct you to the appropriate resources.

4. **Contact the School President**
   If you feel your concern still remains unaddressed after working through the previous steps, you may escalate the matter to the School President. The President oversees the entire school community and will review your concern.

## Disciplinary Actions

### Disciplinary Probation

The principal (or his designee) has the authority to temporarily place a student on probation or suspend a student from the school. The principal after conferring with the Superintendent of Schools shall have the authority to expel a student. If the school has a designated chaplain, he is also consulted prior to the expulsion.

The word principal refers to the principal or designee.

**1**. Probation is conditional attendance during a trial period. Probation may, but need not always, precede suspension. It is hoped that, through probation and notifying the student and the parents/guardian, suspension can at times, be avoided. Probation may be imposed by the principal for infractions of school rules, which do not warrant the necessity of removal from school. The following procedures shall be followed:

a) The principal shall conduct an informal investigation of the allegations against
. the student prior to imposition of probationary status.

b) Such investigation shall include, but not necessarily be limited to written or oral notice to the student of the allegations against him or her and an opportunity to respond.

c) Probationary status may be imposed for a period of time up to an academic year.

**2.** Should the student breach the condition imposed for probation, the student may be removed from academic and extracurricular privileges or have more severe penalties, such as suspension, imposed. An investigation similar to that for the formal investigation above shall be made to determine the condition has been breached.

**3.** Written notice of the probation and the reasons therefore shall be kept on file and sent, as soon as is reasonably possible to the student's parents or legal guardians.

**In-School Suspension (ISS)**

- Students are removed from regular classes but remain in school under supervision.
- Assignments must be completed during ISS.

**Out-of-School Suspension (OSS)**

- Students are excluded from school for a defined period (maximum five days).
- Parents are notified in writing and by phone. Missed work must be completed at home.
- OSS may be immediate if the student poses a safety risk.

**Indefinite Suspension**

- Applied in cases requiring further evaluation (e.g., psychological or educational assessment).
- Reinstatement requires a parent meeting and fulfillment of school conditions.

**Disciplinary Dismissal**

- **Forced Withdrawal** – Students who have been forced to withdraw because of disciplinary reasons may reapply after 365 days, provided there is sufficient evidence that the reason for the disciplinary action has been corrected. Such a student, if readmitted, would be placed on probation and may be required to sign a behavioral contract. The student would be subject to immediate expulsion from the school after the first infraction of school rules. Students asked to withdraw must return all school-issued materials and devices, including but not limited to: computer, computer charger and charging block, sports uniforms, and band uniforms.
- **Expulsion** – Students who have been expelled will not be permitted to reapply to Holy Trinity Catholic Middle School at any time. All school-issued materials and devices, including but not limited to: computer, computer charger and charging block, sports uniforms, and band uniforms, must be returned.
- In cases where expulsion is being considered, the Principal will confer with the President and the Diocesan Superintendent to ensure all actions are aligned with school policy and diocesan expectations. This collaborative process provides an added layer of review and discernment before a final decision is made.

## Record-Keeping and Transfers

- Disciplinary actions such as suspension or expulsion are documented.
- Disciplinary infractions may be shared with other diocesan schools.
- Expelled students may not be admitted to any Catholic school in the Diocese of Charlotte.

## Off-Campus Conduct

With the rise of text messaging, e-mails, cell phones, and parties at individual homes, it is necessary to clarify the school's responsibility regarding discipline associated with any problems.

Students who post, share, and/or transmit inappropriate language and/or pictures on cell phones, web-based sites, or other internet-related platforms during school hours or school-sponsored events will be subject to strong disciplinary action. Consequences may include suspension or expulsion.

Holy Trinity Catholic Middle School is responsible for the safety of your child while he/she is in school. In the event there is an incident involving a threat, danger, or illegal activity involving your child while not under the supervision of the school. In these situations, it is the responsibility of the parent to bring the threat, danger, or unlawful activity to the attention of the parents of the child involved and to report it to the proper legal authority. The school should be informed as an indirect party. Off-campus behaviors that lead to on-campus disruption will be secondarily handled at the school level. Students who in any way reflect poorly on the school will be subject to disciplinary action.

## Electronic Device Misconduct

Holy Trinity understands that some families find it necessary to issue a cell phone to their children to communicate. Holy Trinity discourages cell phone usage at school between 7:30AM-3:00PM. Cell phones should be turned off during school hours. Students will place their cell phones and/or smart devices (smart watches) in a secure location inside their homeroom class when they arrive. Students can retrieve their phones at dismissal when leaving their homerooms in the afternoon. Any student with a cell phone on their person during the school day without the school's express permission will not be allowed to bring the phone or smart devices back to school and/or may have further disciplinary consequences.

### Damage or Theft of Personal Electronic Devices

The use and possession of personal electronic devices are discouraged at school. The school is not responsible for damage or theft of these devices at any time.

## 5. ATTENDANCE AND ACADEMICS

### School Day

- School starts at 7:50 AM. Students not in their homeroom by 8:00 AM will be marked tardy.
- All absences require an email to HTCMS-Attend@htcms.net by 8:15 AM.

### Absences

- Absences of 10 or more days will trigger an administrative review.
- Family travel should be scheduled outside of instructional days.

### Make-Up Work

- 1–4 day absences: students will have 1 day per day missed to make up work.
- Long-term assignments due during absence must still be submitted unless otherwise arranged.
- Students returning mid-day must coordinate make-up work promptly.

### Testing Procedures

- Students may not be required to take more than two tests per day. When a third test is assigned, it is the responsibility of the student to inform the teacher that two tests have been scheduled on that day. Additionally, the student is responsible for providing verification of the other two assigned tests **within 24 hours** of the third test assignment. After this process has been completed, the teacher who assigned the third test will either reschedule the test for the whole class or make mutually satisfactory arrangements with the student who has the conflict.

### Prolonged Absences for Health Reasons

Students who have a high level of absenteeism due to health reasons of any kind are expected to continue to submit their work in a timely manner and failure to do so may

result in loss of credit. Additionally, students who must take a prolonged absence from school for health related issues may be asked to withdraw from their semester courses and seek alternative credit options to earn credit.

## Tardiness Policy

Punctuality is an essential part of student responsibility and school success. Tardies disrupt the learning environment and affect not only the student who is late but the entire class. Students are expected to be in their seats and ready to learn when the bell rings. Ongoing tardiness issues will be addressed by the teacher and, if the problem persists, handled by the Dean of Students.

*Note:* Students who are late due to documented appointments or emergencies should bring a note to the front office or email the teacher in advance when possible.

## Early Dismissal

If a student must leave school before the end of the school day for a medical/dental appointment or any valid reason, please follow the following procedure:

Email or send a note with your child the morning of the request for early dismissal.

Have your child present the note to the front office if not emailed htcms-attend@htcms.net. Before the student may leave school, the parent must call into the office at 704-527-7822 in order to have the student released. Parents will meet the students in front of the office building. No child be dismissed to anyone other than his/her parent or a person designated on the Emergency Card on file in our Health Room. If a student is to be dismissed early to someone other than those indicated above, we must have written permission from a parent prior to dismissal. Please remember to include older siblings who may need to pick up students on the emergency card.

Early dismissals must be scheduled for any time prior to 1:50PM. This is the beginning of our last class period and when cars tend to begin arriving and forming for our carpool lines. This allows our last class to go as uninterrupted as possible, and parents to leave campus before the carpool lines make it difficult. If a dismissal is requested for a time after 1:50PM, the student will be asked to come early and wait in the office from 1:50PM onwards.

If students return to school from an appointment, etc. they must come into the office with the parent and be signed back in; students will receive a pass that will admit them to class.

## Visitation Requirements

All parents, volunteers, visitors, vendors, etc. must report to the administrative office and obtain an appropriate pass. Sign out is required as well.

Holy Trinity is not able to allow students from other schools, including former students, to visit our schools while school is in session or to attend student only events.

## Grading Scale

| Middle School Classes | High School Classes |
|---|---|
| A = 90-100 | A+ = 97-100 |
| B = 80-89 | A = 93-96 |
| C= 70-79 | A- = 90-92 |
| D = 65-69 | B+ = 87-89 |
| F = 64 and below | B = 83-86 |
| | B- = 80-82 |
| | C+ = 77-79 |
| | C = 73-76 |
| | C- = 70-72 |
| | D+ = 68-69 |
| | D = 66-67 |
| | D- = 65 |
| | F = 64 and below |

### Report Cards

If tuition and school fees are current, families will receive final report cards via email at the end of school. Quarterly report cards during the year will be published in PlusPortals.

## 6. UNIFORM & APPEARANCE CODE

Holy Trinity Catholic Middle School enforces a strict uniform policy to promote discipline, unity, modesty, and pride in personal appearance. As a Catholic institution, we believe students should reflect respect for themselves, others, and their community through their dress and grooming.

### Purpose of Dress Code

The school uniform eliminates distractions, reduces peer pressure, and reinforces the professional learning environment. Students are expected to arrive and remain in proper uniform from arrival until dismissal unless otherwise authorized.

### General Expectations

- Uniforms must be neat, clean, and properly fitted—no oversized or excessively tight garments.
- Boy shirts must remain tucked in at all times unless otherwise specified.
- Any deviation from the uniform policy must be corrected immediately or may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to detention or removal from class until corrected.

### Uniform Requirements

Please click on the link below to view the Uniform policies by grade level and gender

6th Grade Boys  Uniforms

6th Grade Girls Uniforms

7th Grade Boys Uniforms

7th Grade Girls Uniforms

8th Grade Boys Uniforms

8th Grade Girls Uniforms

### PE Dress Code

- Students scheduled for PE must bring appropriate PE attire
- Athletic shoes and socks are required.
- Students are permitted to wear athletic bottoms and Catholic school-appropriate t-shirts

### Dress Down Day Guidelines

Occasionally, students may be allowed to dress out of uniform. Clothing must be modest and appropriate for a Catholic school:

- Shorts must have a minimum inseam of 5 inches for girls and 7 inches for boys.
- No ripped, torn, or distressed clothing.
- No offensive language or graphics.
- No tank tops, crop tops, or leggings worn as pants.
- Closed-toe shoes must be worn..

*The Holy Trinity administration reserves the right to determine what is considered appropriate in all matters of dress and appearance*.

## 7. STUDENT LIFE & PROGRAMS

At Holy Trinity Catholic Middle School, student life is designed to foster holistic formation—spiritually, intellectually, socially, and physically. All extracurricular activities, programs, and student privileges must align with the Catholic mission of the school and reflect the dignity and responsibility of Christian discipleship.

### Clubs and Organizations

Holy Trinity offers a variety of academic, service, and enrichment clubs. Club offerings vary year to year and are announced at the start of each semester. All club participation is a privilege and requires students to remain in good academic and behavioral standing. Students with disciplinary infractions may be temporarily or permanently removed from club activities.

Examples of clubs may include:

- National Junior Honor Society
- Student Ambassadors
- Chess Club

- Theater Arts
- Respect Life Club
- Battle of the Books
- St. Jerome Book Battle
- Knights of St. Joseph Club
- Little Flowers Club
- Rugby Club
- Mountain Biking Club

## Athletic Participation

HTCMS offers interscholastic athletic programs. Students must meet all eligibility requirements to participate in athletics, including:

- No failing grades in any subject
- Satisfactory conduct with no recent suspensions
- Up-to-date physical and parental consent forms

Sports offerings may include:

- Cross Country
- Volleyball
- Football
- Field Hockey
- Basketball
- Cheerleading
- Baseball
- Soccer
- Track
- Swimming
- Tennis
- Lacrosse
- Softball

Participation in athletics is a privilege—not a right—and may be revoked at any time for academic or behavioral reasons.

### Before and After School Care

HTCMS offers a structured Before and After School Care program for families in need of extended day supervision:

- Before School Care: Opens at 7:00AM in the cafeteria
- After School Care: Operates until 6:00PM on regular school days

All students must be registered in advance to attend. Drop-in care may be allowed if space permits. Behavioral expectations for students in extended care are consistent with school-wide expectations.

### Library Services

The Holy Trinity library supports academic learning and leisure reading. Students visit the library through class or with a signed pass. Proper conduct and care for library materials are required. Lost or damaged books must be replaced or paid for in full.

### Field Trips

Field trips are considered educational extensions of classroom instruction. They are privileges—not entitlements. Participation may be denied for academic or behavioral reasons

- Signed permission slips are required for all trips.
- Students must be in dress uniform unless otherwise stated.
- All school rules, including conduct and dress code, apply off campus.
- Parents attending as chaperones must complete Diocesan Safe Environment training and background checks

## 8. TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATIONS

Holy Trinity Catholic Middle School promotes the responsible use of technology as a tool for learning, creativity, and communication. All students must uphold Catholic values and school policies when using devices or accessing digital resources. Technology is a privilege that can be revoked for inappropriate use.

### Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

All students and parents must sign the Diocesan Acceptable Use Policy annually. Students are expected to:

- Use technology for academic purposes only
- Respect the dignity of others in digital communications
- Report misuse of technology or online harassment to an adult immediately
- Never share passwords or personal information

Violation of the AUP will result in consequences ranging from loss of access to suspension or expulsion depending on severity and frequency.

## Cell Phones and Smart Devices

- Cell phones and smartwatches must be turned off and kept in the students' homeroom from arrival until dismissal.
- Devices, including smartwatches, may only be used with explicit medical documentation and administrative approval
- Unauthorized use will result in confiscation. Repeated offenses may require parent pickup and additional disciplinary action.

## Chromebook Usage

- Each student will be assigned a Chromebook at the beginning of their 6th grade year or upon admittance into the school.
- Chromebooks are not student-owned. Chromebooks are the sole property of Holy Trinity Catholic Middle School and the Diocese of Charlotte. They must be returned in good condition at the end of the 8th grade year or upon withdrawal.
- Students must bring their fully charged Chromebook to school each day.
- Devices should be stored safely when not in use (e.g., in a locker, designated classroom space, or backpack).
- Chromebooks should not be left unattended, especially in hallways, the cafeteria, or outside.
- No food or drink should be near the Chromebook to prevent damage.
- Students may not download, install, or attempt to install games, extensions, software, or applications not approved by the school.
- Any attempt to alter system settings, remove restrictions, access the developer console, or bypass security controls is strictly prohibited.
- These actions violate the school's Acceptable Use Policy and will result in disciplinary action.
- Chromebook settings and software are managed by the school IT department. Students are not permitted to change any system configurations, including background images, user profiles, or managed content.
- If a Chromebook is accidentally or intentionally damaged, families will be responsible for a $50 deductible per incident to cover the cost of repair or replacement.

- Intentional damage, neglect, or repeated incidents may result in loss of device privileges or further disciplinary action.
- Loaner devices may be provided at the discretion of administration and must be returned promptly in good condition at the end of the school day.

## Internet Usage

- The school's internet is filtered and monitored for safety. Chromebooks are monitored and filtered off-campus using *Securly*.
- Students who visit inappropriate sites 10 times in 10 minutes will be banned from using the internet for 10 minutes.
- Bypassing filters or accessing inappropriate websites will result in investigation and potential disciplinary action
- Students must never use school or personal devices to engage in cyberbullying, sexting, harassment, or downloading illegal content.

## Email and PlusPortals

- Students receive an @rcdoc.education email address for school-related communication only. Students will not be able to contact parents or anyone outside of the rcdoc.education domain.
- All communication between students and teachers must remain respectful and professional.
- Parents and students are expected to monitor PlusPortals regularly for updates on grades, behavior, announcements, and assignments.

## Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Digital Tools

- Students may not use AI tools (such as ChatGPT) to complete or generate assignments unless specifically instructed to do so by a teacher.
- Misuse of AI—including plagiarism, cheating, or falsifying content—will result in academic and disciplinary penalties.

## Social Media Conduct

Students are representatives of Holy Trinity Catholic Middle School and the Catholic Church both on and off campus—including in digital spaces. The values of our school community extend beyond the classroom and are expected to be upheld in all online interactions.

Students must uphold the reputation of the school and the Church at all times, including when using social media, texting, gaming platforms, and other digital communication tools. This applies whether students are on school property, at home, or elsewhere.

- Posting, sharing, or engaging with inappropriate, offensive, vulgar, or harmful content—including memes, videos, images, or messages—on social media or any online platform is strictly prohibited.

- This includes content that mocks, bullies, harasses, threatens, or degrades another person, group, or institution, including students, staff, or the Church.

- Students may not use school logos, uniforms, or images of the school in any digital content that does not reflect our mission and values.

- Even if posted off-campus and outside of school hours, content that is brought to the attention of school administration and is found to:

    - Cause disruption to the school environment,

    - Harm another student emotionally or physically,

    - Undermine the integrity of the school's Catholic identity or mission,

    may result in school-based disciplinary consequences.

    Will result in disciplinary action.

Students and families are reminded that freedom of expression does not exempt anyone from accountability when speech or actions violate the dignity and respect we are called to live out as a Catholic school community.

Disciplinary action may include conferences with parents, loss of privileges, counseling referrals, detentions, or more serious administrative consequences depending on the severity of the violation and at the discretion of the school administrators.

## 9. SAFETY & HEALTH

Holy Trinity Catholic Middle School is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and healthy learning environment rooted in the dignity of every person. Students are expected to contribute to a culture of safety through personal responsibility and adherence to all school and Diocesan policies.

## Harassment and Bullying

Sexual harassment and misconduct as it relates to Church personnel is covered by the policy of the diocese concerning ministry- related sexual misconduct by Church personnel. It shall be a violation of this policy for any student to harass an employee, volunteer, or another student. Harassment is verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his/her race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, or disability, or that of his/her relatives, friends, or associates, and that:

1. has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidation, hostile, or offensive environment;

2. has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfacing with an individual's performance; or

3. otherwise adversely affects an individual's opportunities.

Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following: 1) epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, or threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts, that relate to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age or disability; and 2) written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group because of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, or disability and that is circulated within or placed on walls, computer screens, bulletin boards, or elsewhere on premises where the educational program operates. The standard for determining whether verbal or physical conduct relating to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, or disability sufficiently severe or pervasive to create a hostile or abusive environment is whether a reasonable student or person in the same or similar circumstances would find the conduct intimidating, hostile, or abusive. The "reasonable person" standard includes consideration of the perspective of persons of the alleged victim's race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, or disability. It is not necessary to make a showing that the victim was psychologically harmed. Prevention is the best tool for the elimination of harassment. A school has an affirmative duty to maintain an environment free of harassment on any of these bases. Harassing conduct may be challenged even if the complaining person is not specifically the intended target of the conduct.

## Procedures

An employee, volunteer or student who alleges harassment by a student shall file a complaint in writing directly to his or her teacher, immediate supervisor, or principal. The complaint shall describe the perceived violation, name the perpetrator, and identify any

potential witnesses to the incident. Retaliation against a complaint is strictly prohibited. The right to confidentiality, both of the complainant and of the accused, will be respected consistent with legal obligations and with the necessity to investigate allegations of misconduct and to take corrective action when this conduct has occurred. If a person other than the principal receives the complaint, the person shall refer the complaint to the principal. The principal informs the superintendent of schools of the complaint. The principal then investigates the matter to determine if the charges are substantiated, after which a summary of the investigation will be developed. The principal will take the complaints seriously and once received the principal shall institute a prompt, thorough, and as confidential an investigation as the circumstances dictate. At the completion of the investigation, the principal will inform the superintendent of the results of the investigation. A substantiated charge against a student shall subject that student to disciplinary action that may include suspension or expulsion.

## Bullying

Bullying is prohibited at Holy Trinity Catholic Middle School. It must not be tolerated during the school day nor during any school sponsored activities on or off the school grounds. Bullying and intimidation are actions that are contrary to the teaching of Jesus Christ.

## Safe Environment and Supervision

All faculty, staff, volunteers, and chaperones must complete the Diocese of Charlotte's Safe Environment training and background check. Students are supervised in all areas of campus, and no adult may be alone with a student outside of public view.

## Search and Seizure Policy

Lockers, desks, and school-issued devices are school property and may be inspected at any time. School officials may search student belongings, including backpacks or electronic devices, if there is reasonable suspicion of a rule violation.

## Drug, Tobacco, Weapon Policy

Possession of the following items is strictly prohibited and may result in immediate suspension or expulsion:

- Illegal drugs or controlled substances
- Vapes, tobacco, alcohol
- Firearms, knives, or any weapon-like objects (including look-alikes)
- Medication not registered with the front office

### Health and Medication Procedures

- Students who feel ill must request permission to visit the health room. Parents will be notified if early dismissal is necessary.
- Prescription and over-the-counter medications must be turned in to the front office with appropriate medical forms. Students may not carry medications unless pre-authorized (e.g., EpiPens, inhalers).

### Wellness Expectations

- Students with a fever (100.0°F or higher), vomiting, or contagious symptoms must stay home.
- They may return after being symptom-free for 24 hours without medication.

### Emergency Preparedness

- The school conducts regular fire, lockdown, and tornado drills. Emergency plans are reviewed annually.
- In the event of a true emergency, families will be notified through PlusPortals, email, and text alerts.

## 10. PARENT-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

Holy Trinity Catholic Middle School recognizes parents as the primary educators of their children. We view the relationship between home and school as a sacred partnership rooted in mutual respect, shared mission, and consistent communication. Together, we form students into faithful disciples and responsible citizens.

### Parent Communication

- School communication will be issued via PlusPortals, email, text alerts, and daily newsletters. Parents are responsible for checking these channels regularly.
- Teachers and administrators respond to emails within 48 hours during school days. Urgent matters should be directed to the main office.
- Concerns should be addressed respectfully and through the proper chain of command, beginning with the teacher or staff member involved.

## Parent Conduct Expectations

- Parents are expected to model Christian charity in all interactions with staff, students, and other families.
- Public criticism of teachers or the school undermines community unity and may jeopardize a student's continued enrollment.
- Disrespectful, aggressive, or disruptive behavior by parents may result in restricted access to school functions or dismissal from the school community.

## Parent-Teacher Conferences

- Formal conferences are held at least once per year, but parents may request additional meetings as needed.
- Conferences should be scheduled in advance. Drop-in or surprise visits during the school day are not permitted.

## Volunteering and Chaperoning

- All parent volunteers and chaperones must complete Diocesan Safe Environment training and pass a background check.
- Volunteers are expected to respect school rules and student confidentiality.

## Forgotten Items & Messages

- Forgotten lunches, books, or uniforms may be dropped off in the front office. Class disruptions are avoided whenever possible.
- The front office will only deliver **urgent** messages to students during the school day.

## School Closings & Inclement Weather

- Weather-related closures or delays will be communicated via PlusPortals, email, and text alert.

## Partnership Statement

Parents who enroll their children at Holy Trinity commit to supporting the mission, rules, and faith identity of the school. Repeated failure to uphold this partnership—academically, morally, or behaviorally—may result in consequences up to and including disenrollment.

# 11. STUDENT RECORDS & LEGAL POLICIES

Holy Trinity Catholic Middle School maintains accurate and confidential student records in accordance with Diocesan policy, federal regulations, and best practices in Catholic education. Parents have rights and responsibilities related to accessing, updating, and safeguarding their child's educational information.

## FERPA Compliance

Holy Trinity complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Student records are released only:

- With written parental consent
- To school officials with a legitimate educational interest
- In compliance with legal subpoenas or mandates

## Asbestos Management Policy (AHERA Compliance)

In compliance with the **Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA)**, our school is required to inspect all buildings for asbestos-containing building materials (ACBMs) and develop an Asbestos Management Plan if any are found.

We are pleased to inform you that, based on a certified inspection, **no asbestos-containing materials were found in our school buildings**. Therefore, no management plan is required at this time.

As part of our ongoing commitment to health and safety, we maintain documentation of this inspection and asbestos-free certification on file in the main office. This documentation is available for review upon request during regular school hours.

Should future renovations or inspections require further testing, we will continue to follow all federal and state guidelines and will promptly notify families of any changes.

## Student Privacy

Photos, names, or student work will not be published or shared publicly without parental consent, as outlined in the school's media release form.

## Custody Agreements and Legal Documents

- Parents must submit the most recent custody orders or court documents relevant to student safety and access.

- The school must be informed immediately of any changes in custody or legal status.
- The school does not mediate family legal disputes and will follow court-issued orders as submitted.

## Promotion and Retention

- Promotion is based on satisfactory academic performance, attendance, and conduct.
- Students who fail two or more core academic subjects may be required to attend summer school or repeat the grade.
- Decisions regarding promotion or retention are made by the administration and communicated to parents in a timely manner.

## Voluntary Withdrawal Process

- Parents wishing to withdraw their child must submit a written notice to the school office.
- All financial obligations must be fulfilled and all materials (books, uniforms, etc.) returned before records will be released.
- Exit interviews may be requested by administration.

## Homeschooling or Dual Enrollment

- Holy Trinity does not offer dual enrollment with homeschool programs.
- Students enrolled full-time must attend all classes and school activities.
- Part-time or dual enrollment is not permitted, except with prior approval from the Principal in exceptional cases.

*We are grateful to have you as part of our school family. By following the guidelines outlined in this handbook, together we can foster a community built on respect, responsibility, and faith. Thank you for your support in helping us ensure a positive and successful school year for every student. 10/9/25*