

PARENT / STUDENT HANDBOOK

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint parents and students with the policies and practices of Aquinas Academy. The participation by and cooperation of parents and students are vital factors in the development of a successful school program.

To insure the success of the educational program of Aquinas Academy, parents and students are encouraged to consult this handbook and to become familiar with the policies and practices of the school.

PHILOSOPHY

PHILOSOPHY OF THE DIOCESE OF GREENSBURG

The mission of Catholic schools within the Diocese of Greensburg is to create a Catholic Christian learning environment to prepare students for their life's journey. While parents are the first teachers, the task of our schools is to assist parents in fulfilling their responsibility as primary educators of their children. Schools challenge students to develop the Gospel values, academic mastery, spirit of community service, and global perspective that will give their lives passion and purpose.

CATHOLIC IDENTITY

As a Catholic school, our primary purpose is to form students in the values of Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Catholic Church. Catholic schools are distinctive religious education institutions operated as programs of the Catholic Church; they are not private schools but are administered and supported by the parishes of the diocese and the diocese. Attending a Catholic school is a privilege, not a right. While academic excellence and involvement in extracurricular activities, e.g. sports, clubs, etc., are important, fidelity to the Catholic identity of the school is the fundamental priority. We have the responsibility to make certain that Catholic values and moral integrity permeate every facet of the school's program. In all questions involving faith, morals, faith teaching, and Catholic law, the final determination rests with the diocesan bishop. In full partnership with you and your family, we are committed to uphold the principles which underlie our presence in the community as a Catholic school.

AQUINAS ACADEMY PHILOSOPHY

BELIEF STATEMENTS

At Aquinas Academy, WE BELIEVE the following:

1. That our schooling environment is centered on the Gospel and based on the values of our Catholic faith through Jesus Christ;
2. That we are all members of the Family of God, that the Parish is integral to that Family, and that the school's program is an extension of the parish in educating and reinforcing the Family of God;
3. That we exist to assist and support parents and guardians as first teachers and guides in the formation of their children as they experience "the journey of a lifetime;"

4. That Catholic education fulfills its academic purpose while simultaneously promoting a disposition to service, passion for justice, and commitment to God and the church in faith through Jesus Christ;
5. That we respect and recognize the individuality of each student as a gift from God. It is our purpose to guide each student to this realization.

Our goal is to offer an environment that provides opportunities for academic excellence and spiritual, physical, interpersonal, and emotional development.

MISSION STATEMENT

Aquinas Academy is a consolidated Catholic school sponsored by the Diocese of Greensburg and the parishes of the Diocese. We respect and recognize the individuality of each student in a pre-kindergarten through seventh grade structured-curriculum. Aquinas Academy challenges students to develop Gospel values, academic mastery, a spirit of community service and civic awareness, and a global perspective giving their lives passion and purpose. Our goal is to offer an educational process involving students, faculty, and family. Aquinas Academy is a school for the future.

MIDDLE STATES ACCREDITATION

Aquinas Academy is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. Middle States accreditation is an expression of confidence in our school's mission, goals and objectives, performance and resources and a public validation of the quality education that is happening here. The Middle States Accreditation is an on-going process requiring the submission of updated plans every three years. After ten years the school is re-evaluated for continued accreditation. Aquinas Academy is in the process of being accredited in accordance with all of the schools in the Diocese of Greensburg.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following seven principles are the basis of Catholic Social Teaching and are the principles that guide us in all of our interactions:

- We believe in the life and dignity of the human person. Each person is sacred;
- We believe we are called to family, community, and participation. It is our duty to support each other by our actions;
- We believe that we have rights and responsibilities. Every person has the fundamental right to life and responsibility to and for one another;
- We believe that we have an obligation to the poor and vulnerable. We are called to put the rights of others before our own;
- We believe that we are called to care for God's creation. We are all stewards of the earth;
- We believe that solidarity is our call. We are one family regardless of our differences;
- We believe that workers have rights and that work has dignity. Work is a form of participating in God's creation.

AQUINAS ACADEMY GOVERNANCE

The governance of Aquinas Academy consists of the Board of Trust Administrators and the School Advisory Council.

The governance is composed of the pastors of the parishes of Blessed Sacrament Cathedral, Our Lady of Grace, St. Paul, St. Bruno, Holy Cross, Ascension, & Sacred Heart.

The ultimate responsibility for the school rests with this group.

The School Advisory Council is responsible for the mission, vision, business and affairs, and financial stability of Aquinas Academy subject to the limitations set forth by the Board of Trust Administrators. Members of the School Advisory Council include a representative from each parish previously listed.

I. ADMISSIONS

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Priority in admissions to Aquinas Academy shall be as follows:

- current students;
- siblings of students currently attending;
- active, registered parishioners in Region 12 of the Diocese of Greensburg;
- active, registered parishioners of other regions in the Diocese of Greensburg;
- non-parishioners;
- non-Catholics.

Currently enrolled students receive the opportunity to re-register before Open Application in February. If a currently enrolled student does not re-register by the Open Application dates, openings are made available to the next priority level. Siblings of currently enrolled students may apply before Open Application dates. Consideration for the following year is dependent upon the tuition being current. Students whose tuition is not complete from the previous school year by July 15 will be removed from the enrollment list.

The appropriate school application form must be submitted to be considered for enrollment.

Children must be immunized before entering school, as required by state law. No child shall be permitted in school without the following immunizations:

- Four DPT (diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus) The fourth dose must be given after age four;
- Three OPV (oral polio vaccine) or four Salk polio;
- Two MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) given on or after the first birthday;
- Three Hepatitis B;
- One dose of varicella (chicken pox) vaccine or history of disease;
- Any other immunization required by the state of Pennsylvania.

The school adheres to the age requirements of the Greensburg-Salem and Hempfield School Districts. Any child who reaches the age of three by September 1 and is toilet trained may enter the pre-school three year old program. Any child who reaches the age of four by September 1 may enter the pre-school four year old program. Any child who reaches the age of five (5) by the cut-off date of September 1 of the current school year may be admitted to kindergarten unless there is evidence that the child is not ready to begin.

Any child who reaches the age of six (6) by the local public school district cut-off date of September 1 of the current school year may be admitted to the first grade unless there is evidence that the child is not ready to begin.

On the date of registration, the following documents must be presented:

- Completed Application Form;
- Birth certificate--Original, No Copy;
- Initial Guidance Questionnaire;
- Sworn Statement;
- Home Language Survey;
- Permission to Request Records;
- Up-to-date immunization records;
- Verification of residence if living with a person other than a parent;
- Completed Tuition Agreement Payment Preference Form;
- Non-refundable application fee of \$50 per family;
- Custody papers in the case of separation, divorce, or adoption. Legal documentation regarding any change in custody status during the time a child is enrolled in the school with official copies of court orders. The school must maintain copies of custody decrees or other court orders in order to assure compliance with the law.

In the event the child resides with a person other than the parent or legal guardian, a conference with the school principal may be necessary for verification of residence.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act gives full rights to each parent, unless the school has been provided with evidence that there is a court order, state's statute or legally binding document relating to such matters as divorce, separation or custody that specifically revokes these rights. Such an order is to be on file in the school and those persons responsible for the child/children) are to be informed of the circumstances. Every effort is made to keep the non-custodial parent informed of the progress of the child/children through reports, report cards, and parent/teacher conferences.

ADMISSION FROM OTHER SCHOOLS

The transfer into a new school is difficult for any student. Transferring from a public school into a Catholic school has particular challenges. An especially difficult issue is the request occasionally made by parents to transfer a student who has been expelled from another school district. This type of request requires special evaluation. To address these issues, Aquinas Academy adopted the following policies:

Ordinarily, Aquinas Academy will not admit a student who has been expelled for serious reasons from another school district. If requested, the principal may review the circumstances under which the student was expelled and make a prudent judgment about admitting the student. Students will be on probation and asked to sign a contract to assure success in the transition.

Aquinas Academy admits students of any race or national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. We do not discriminate on the basis of race or national or ethnic origin in the administration of our educational policies, admission policies, athletic or other school administered programs. Children who are not Catholic are expected to participate in religion classes and to attend all religious functions of the school. However, non-Catholic students may not participate in the Sacraments of the Catholic Church.

TUITION / ASSISTANCE

The Catholic School is a ministry of the Church of Greensburg and of each local parish. It is a ministry that provides opportunities for children to be influenced each day by the values of the Catholic Church. Concurrently, it promotes academic excellence while aiding parents in their task to develop in their children a deep religious faith.

In an effort to strengthen Catholic schools and ensure the accessibility of a Catholic education to all who desire one, the Diocese of Greensburg has adopted the following tuition policy. All tuition is set at an amount that is equal to the cost of educating each student for each school year. Parents, who wish to be considered for eligibility for tuition assistance, must complete and submit a School Financial Aid Form in accord with the timeline as designated by the Diocese. Diocesan tuition assistance is generated through: The Parish-Supported Financial Aid Fund (PSFA); Diocesan Endowment Funds (DEF); Scholarship Partners Foundation (SPF)/(EITC); Local Financial Aid (LOC) and other important financial sources. Tuition aid is based on need as defined by the Financial Aid Service adopted by the Diocese. Parents may appeal to the Diocese or principal if they are not in agreement with the amount of tuition assistance received.

Prompt payment of tuition is required for the school to operate in a fiscally responsible manner. A late fee will be assessed monthly on all delinquent accounts. Families experiencing difficulties which affect tuition payments must contact the principal or business manager to address their situation.

If a student transfers to another school, tuition may be refunded on a pro-rated basis. Arrangements for any such refund should be made through the school administration.

The school adheres to the following procedures in regard to tuition:

A statement will be sent to those who are delinquent with their tuition payment.

School records, other than health records, will not be forwarded to any new school until all delinquent tuition is paid;

By December 15 (first semester) or May 15 (second semester), families who have delinquent accounts will receive a letter by registered mail stating that by not meeting their financial obligations it is their choice not to continue the education of their children at Aquinas Academy;

Failure to meet the preschool tuition schedule will result in the child not returning to school the following month.

II. CURRICULUM

Aquinas Academy endeavors to provide a well-balanced curriculum through which the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for daily living can be acquired. The students are challenged to develop their full potential with an open, inquiring mind while always realizing a sense of accomplishment. In addition to meeting all the requirements of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the curriculum gives special attention to the integration of Gospel values.

The following courses are included in the Aquinas Academy curriculum:

Reading:	Religion	Science/Health
	Phonics (PK-3)	Social Studies
	Vocabulary	Spanish (6-7)
	Comprehension	Computer Science (K-7)
Mathematics	Literature	Library Science (PK-7)
	Concepts	Music (PK-7)
	Computation	Chorus / Bell Choir (5-7)
	Problem Solving	Art
	Pre-Algebra (7)	Physical Education/Health
	Algebra (7)	Band (Optional)
	English	Spelling/ Penmanship

Opportunities are given within each classroom for remediation and enrichment where as needed for the individual student. Teachers differentiate instruction to fit the needs of their students.

In conjunction with Seton Hill University, Aquinas Academy facilitates an after school tutoring program for grades 3-7. Children are tutored in subjects recommended by their teachers and/or parents/guardians may designate a particular subject.

The religion course is the most important element of the curriculum. Opportunities for prayer, reception of the sacraments and participation in a community of faith are important components of the religion program. The goal of religious instruction is to help each child develop a relationship with God and lead a lifestyle based on the Gospel values.

All students, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, are required to study religion and to participate in the religious activities. However, the initial catechesis for sacraments is the task of the child's parish community. The immediate sacramental preparation takes place at a special time outside of the religion classroom in a family/intergenerational context.

Each year teachers provide parents/guardians with the curriculum handout that pertains to their individual subject requirements. This important type of communication builds a strong partnership between the home and school for the benefit of the student.

SERVICE

The first two Belief Statements in our Aquinas Academy Philosophy are the following:

1. ...our schooling environment is centered on the gospel and based on the values of our Catholic faith through Jesus Christ;
2. ...that we are all members of the Family of God, that the parish is integral to that Family, and that the schooling program is an extension of the parish in education and reinforcing the Family of God.

Because parish is so vital in our lives, we ask that each child in kindergarten through grade seven perform some type of service to his or her parish throughout the year. The following are minimum recommended guidelines for each grade:

Grades	Minutes/Month	Hours/Year
K-1	20	3
2-4	30	4.5
5-6	40	6
7	60	9

We want to emphasize the importance of being a vital part of the parish. This participation starts at a young age. Teachers will talk about this during religion class and help the children come up with their own ideas.

Each grade will engage in other types of service throughout the year. Encourage your child to follow Jesus by being “a person for others.” Many of our children already serve in a multitude of ways just by imitating their parents. **“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served; He came to serve and give His life to redeem many people.” Mark 10:45**

MIDDLE SCHOOL CONCEPT

Recognizing the developmental needs of young adolescents, Aquinas Academy is committed to providing an educational process that promotes academic challenges with a developmentally appropriate teaching/learning process. Middle School Concepts are implemented for the sixth and seventh grade students and consist of varied instructional strategies. The Middle School Program at Aquinas Academy prepares the students well for high school.

LIBRARY MEDIA PROGRAM

The mission of the library media program is to prepare students to think critically, creatively, and independently when locating and evaluating information and technology.

The purpose of the library media programs is to meet the following goals for students and faculty:

- Provide a welcoming, safe and caring environment;
- Provide on-going skills of library use;
- Support the curriculum by working collaboratively with faculty;
- Promote literature appreciation through weekly book exchange, annual Book Fairs and librarian-led book talks;
- Use and appreciate the computer technologies available for informational use and research;
- Encourage everyone to be independent, lifelong learners and users of libraries.

TECHNOLOGY: Smart Boards, MIMIO's, LED Projectors, Netbooks, & iPads

Computer instruction is essential in today's educational process. A computer is a basic tool for teaching logical thinking and problem solving, creative writing, communication, the handling of information, and many other aspects of the curriculum. At Aquinas Academy computers are available in two different labs and the Library Media Center. Formal instruction in the basic skills begins in Kindergarten. Students advance in confidence and competence in various skills through cross-curricular, project based activities.

Technology involves the use of the internet, computers, videos, digital cameras, the overhead projector, and much more. The Diocese of Greensburg has an Acceptable Use Policy. Each school year every parent, student, and faculty member must sign and agree to follow this policy. If the agreement is not signed, the internet, the computers, and any other form of technology may not be used at school.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips relate to the instructional program. Each child participating in a field trip must submit to the school the field trip participation form established by the diocese, signed by the parent. No student may participate unless a signed field trip participation form for the specific event is on file with the principal.

The permission form is to be submitted to the teacher at least three (3) school days before the scheduled trip. Parents may be asked to provide part or all of the costs involved. Usually, bus transportation is used. Occasionally, private cars or vans are used for transportation. Any person volunteering to provide private passenger transportation must submit a signed volunteer- driver information sheet to the principal for each vehicle used.

Participation in field trips is a privilege. To the discretion of the Principal and teacher, students may be denied participation if they fail to meet academic or behavioral requirements of the school. Students who do not participate in field trips will be provided alternative assignments during the period of the field trip to be completed in school under supervision.

Each driver and/or chaperone will be given a copy of the approved itinerary, including the routes to be followed and a summary of their responsibilities.

BAND

Band instruction is available for a monthly fee for interested students in grades 4 - 7. The fee is announced at the beginning of the school year. The instruments are rented with the option to buy. Small group lessons are provided one period a week and practice is held once a week. The periods are rotated so the same classes are not missed. However, it remains the responsibility of the student to make up missed work. A meeting is held each year for interested parents.

HOMEWORK

Homework is essential for the full scholastic development of the child. Children are expected to do a reasonable amount of home study, and it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to supervise this work, being careful, however, not to do the homework for a child.

Homework may consist of written work, reading, study for review, memorization, or work on special projects. Some assignments are long range and are not meant to be completed in a single evening. A parent can assist students with home assignments in the following ways:

1. Provide a quiet spot away from the television, telephone, or other distracting elements;
2. Check to see what was accomplished during the designated study time regarding completeness, neatness, correctness;
3. Be willing to listen to reading, spelling, and math facts and to explain procedures, but never do the assignment;
4. Consult homework on line or with the teacher if the child uses the excuse "no homework" too often.

If a child cannot complete an assignment, the parent/guardian should inform the teacher by written note stating the reason. Arrangements should be made as soon as possible to make up incomplete assignments. It is recommended that the children spend fifteen minutes in homework, study, or reading for each grade in school for example:

Grade K	→	15 minutes;
Grades 1 – 2	→	20 - 30 minutes;
Grades 3 – 4	→	30 - 45 minutes;
Grades 5 – 7	→	45 – 75 minutes;

If you child cannot work for an extended period, the time can be broken into smaller periods, such as before and after dinner.

Each student in grades 2 – 7 is required to maintain an Aquinas Academy Student Planner. This planner remains the primary source for recording and checking homework assignments. Additionally, a homework chart is available in each classroom as a resource to every student. Another homework resource is available at the Aquinas Academy Teacher websites. To access homework assignments on the teacher websites, log on to www.aquinasacademy.org and click on the Teacher's name.

Absentee Homework Requirements

All students are responsible for the following when absent from school:

1. Obtaining all assignments;
2. Making up all assignments and tests missed during an absence from school;
3. Turning completed assignments to the teacher at the time designated.

With prior written or verbal notice, classroom work will be given in advance. Regular assignments are posted on the school website. A student may take textbooks when absent unless the text is for classroom use only.

Ordinarily, homework should not be requested until after a child is absent for two consecutive days. To obtain homework and materials on the third day a student is absent, it is necessary to notify the school office before 8:30 AM. Homework may be picked up at or after 3:15 PM in the school office or sent home with a designated person.

If you wish your child's homework to be sent home with another student, please make those arrangements with the particular student. That student must go after the end-of-day prayers and announcements to the office to obtain the other student's homework. Homework is due when a student returns to school. It is the student's responsibility to obtain the assignments and return them completed to the teacher at the time designated.

STUDY SKILLS

A parent can help his/her child be aware of skills and techniques that make learning easier and more enjoyable. The following are student guidelines for achieving good study habits:

1. Come to class prepared with pencil, paper, and other necessary materials;
2. Be an active participant in class. Listen well and take part in class;
3. Ask questions to clarify problems;
4. Plan your day and schedule time for homework;
5. Use what is learned and apply it to new situations;
6. Strive to do the very best work possible. Just “getting by” is not a worthwhile goal.

Teachers will discuss grade appropriate expectations as well as behavioral expectations during the Annual Open House in the first quarter of the school year.

TESTING

In grades Kindergarten to three, DIBELS benchmark testing is conducted three times throughout the school year to check for their progression of literacy skills.

Standardized tests, textbook tests, and teacher-made tests are administered to students throughout the year. These assessments require students to synthesize information, apply what they have learned and demonstrate their understanding of what has been taught.

Aquinas Academy follows the standardized testing program established by the Diocesan Office of Catholic Schools. Grades three, five, and seven are administered the Otis-Lennon Cognitive Test. Grades three through seven are administered the Stanford Achievement Test.

III. STUDENT SERVICES

HEALTH SERVICES

The local public school districts provide limited health services to Aquinas Academy through the school nurse. Usually, a school nurse, provided by Greensburg Salem School District, comes to Aquinas Academy once a week. Health testing and screening are administered to the student in accordance with the policies and procedures set by the local public school districts and the state of Pennsylvania.

The school nurse schedules the following:

- Hearing Examinations (K, 1, 2, 3, 7 and any students in other grade levels who have a history of ear or hearing problems);
- Vision Examination (all grade levels);
- Height and Weight (all grade levels);
- Physical Examinations (K or 1 and 6);
- Scoliosis (Curved Spine) Evaluations (6 and 7);
- Dental Examinations (K, 1, 3, and 7).

The school nurse must have on record any severe disability or handicap of a child such as asthma, allergies, diabetes, epilepsy, seizures of any type, etc., in order to be better prepared to deal with any emergencies that may arise.

Recommendations of the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention for admittance to school are listed below. Also, please review the information regarding "Head Lice" that follows the PA Department of Health information.

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

WWW.pacode.com/secure/data/028/chapter27/chap27toc.html#27.71

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES IN CHILDREN AND STAFF ATTENDING SCHOOLS AND CHILD CARE GROUP SETTINGS

§ 27.71. Exclusion of children, and staff having contact with children, for specified diseases and infectious conditions.

A person in charge of a public, private, parochial, Sunday or other school or college shall exclude from school a child, or a staff person, including a volunteer, who has contact with children, who is suspected by a physician or the school nurse of having any of the communicable diseases, infections or conditions. Readmission shall be contingent upon the school nurse, or in the absence of the school nurse, a physician, verifying that the criteria for readmission have been satisfied. The diseases, the periods of exclusion and the criteria for readmission are as follows:

1. **Diphtheria.** Two weeks from the onset or until appropriate negative culture tests.
2. **Measles.** Four days from the onset of rash. Exclusion may also be ordered by the Department as specified in § 27.160 (relating to special requirements for measles).
3. **Mumps.** Nine days from the onset or until subsidence of swelling.
4. **Pertussis.** Three weeks from the onset or 5 days from institution of appropriate antimicrobial therapy.
5. **Rubella.** Four days from the onset of rash.
6. **Chickenpox.** Five days from the appearance of the first crop of vesicles, or when all the lesions have dried and crusted, whichever is sooner.
7. **Respiratory streptococcal infections** including scarlet fever. At least 10 days from the onset if no physician is in attendance or 24 hours after institution of appropriate antimicrobial therapy.
8. **Infectious conjunctivitis** (pink eye). Until judged not infective; that is, without a discharge.
9. **Ringworm.** The person shall be allowed to return to school, child care or other group setting immediately after the first treatment, if body lesions are covered. Neither scalp nor body lesions that are dried need to be covered.
10. **Impetigo contagiosa.** Twenty-four hours after the institution of appropriate treatment.
11. **Pediculosis capitis.** The person shall be allowed to return to either the school, child care or other group setting immediately after first treatment. The person shall be reexamined for infestation by the school nurse, or other health care practitioner, 7 days post-treatment.
12. **Pediculosis corpora.** After completion of appropriate treatment.
13. **Scabies.** After completion of appropriate treatment.
14. **Trachoma.** Twenty-four hours after institution of appropriate treatment.
15. **Tuberculosis.** Following a minimum of 2 weeks adequate chemotherapy and three consecutive negative morning sputum smears, if obtainable. In addition, a note from the attending physician that the person is noncommunicable shall be submitted prior to readmission.
16. **Neisseria meningitidis.** Until judged noninfective after a course of rifampin or other drug which is effective against the nasopharyngeal carriage state of this disease, or until otherwise shown to be noninfective.

Source

The provisions of this § 27.71 amended January 25, 2002, effective January 26, 2002, 32 Pa.B. 491. Immediately preceding text appears at serial pages (243670) to (243671).

Notes of Decisions

Exclusion; Removal

A student who was excluded from school due to head lice was not “removed” for disciplinary reasons as contemplated by Federal regulations, was not denied free appropriate public education and was not entitled to compensatory education. *Souderton Area School District v. Elisabeth S.*, 820 A.2d 863 (Pa. Cmwlth. 2003).

Cross References

This section cited in 28 Pa. Code § 27.76 (relating to exclusion and readmission of children, and staff having contact with children, in child care group settings).

IF YOUR CHILD ACQUIRES HEAD LICE...

Don't panic. Anyone can get head lice. It has nothing to do with cleanliness, nor does it reflect on you as a parent. The problem is easily eliminated. Simply follow these instructions.

1. Examine your child's head to be sure you know what the nits look like. They are tiny grayish-white eggs attached to the hair, near the scalp, especially behind the ears and at the nape of the neck.
2. Check all other family members to see if they are infested. Any family member with evidence of head lice must also be treated.
3. Use an effective head lice treatment. Your pharmacist can recommend an effective pediculicide product. When used as directed, it will be very effective in killing head lice.
4. Remove the nits (lice eggs). Because no pediculicide product kills all the eggs, it is very important to remove all traces of the nits to prevent re-infestation. A special comb for this task is usually provided with any lice treatment product. You may want to ask your pharmacist about an enzyme rinse that releases the nits from the hair, making it quick and easy to comb out.
5. Wash all clothes, bed linens and towels in hot water and dry on hot cycle for at least 20 minutes. Items that cannot be safely washed, such as stuffed animals, should be dry cleaned or stored outside the home for a minimum of two weeks.
6. Clean combs and brushes in hot, soapy water. Water should be at least 130 degrees and it is advisable to let combs and brushes soak in the hot water for 10 minutes.
7. Vacuum everywhere to make sure your home is free of lice. Vacuum carpets, pillows, mattresses, upholstered furniture--anything that might hold lice. Do a thorough job and discard the vacuum bag promptly.
8. Head lice survive only on humans and do not affect family pets. To eliminate head lice and nits from your home, follow the directions above. Doing a thorough job will prevent their spread.

ACCIDENT AND INJURY

In case of an emergency concerning the health of a student, the school nurse and/or school principal or designee shall be immediately notified. The school nurse shall be primarily responsible for rendering medical assistance. If the parent, guardian, or person designated on the student's emergency card cannot be timely reached, the school nurse or school principal or designee shall decide whether hospitalization or further treatment at a medical facility is necessary.

The school office will maintain a Family Emergency/Illness Card for each student. The Family Emergency/Illness Card will be sent home in the first family envelope. It should be printed neatly and returned to school within the first three days of school. It is important for your child's safety and comfort, as well as the effective operation of the office, that emergency information needed to locate parents is available for each child and that this information is kept up-to-date by parents.

In the case of illness during school hours, the principal or designee may send a child home after a parent or guardian has been notified and transportation arrangements have been made. Children are not permitted to call their parent/guardian or dismiss themselves. A parent/guardian must pick up the child in the school office and sign him/her out.

Parents of children who have any type of physical disorder should contact the principal, school nurse, or teachers to make them aware of the problem. All cases of head lice should be reported at once.

ILLNESS

It is often difficult to decide if you should keep a child complaining of illness home. One objective sign is an elevated temperature. It is recommended that a child be kept home from school until the temperature has remained normal below (100 degrees) for 24 hours. Another consideration is whether the child is too sick to profit from instruction. If a child has the sniffles and would be up and around the home, school is appropriate. If the child is so ill, he/she just wants to stay in bed, home is the place to be!

MEDICATION POLICY

Whenever possible, medicine is to be given at home, and parents are to request the physician to adjust the schedule for administration so that it can be given before and after school hours. The Diocese has established guidelines regarding the administration of medication during school hours:

- All medications for students must be delivered to the school office by a responsible adult along with a physician's written request for distribution by school personnel;
- Medication brought to school must be in a container labeled by a pharmacist or doctor;
- The label must include the student's name, the name of the physician, date of prescription, dosage, and frequency of administration;
- Parents must sign an Indemnity Agreement which has been prepared by the Legal Office and distributed through the school office;
- **MEDICATION IS NOT PERMITTED TO BE ON A CHILD'S PERSON AT ANY TIME** including inhalers and all over-the-counter medication such as Tylenol and cough drops.

ASBESTOS NOTICE

Pursuant to the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Act (AHERA), our school was inspected by a certified AHERA inspector. A Management Plan was developed and submitted to the State of Pennsylvania Department of Education. A copy of our Asbestos Inspection Report and Management Plan is on file in the administration office of our school. The school is re-inspected by a certified AHERA Inspector every year.

ACT 89 SPEECH THERAPY

Aquinas Academy speech therapy services are offered to students who reveal a need for remediation of speech and language. Students are seen individually or in a group, usually for ½ hour sessions once a week during the school day. The initial screening occurs in September, although children may be referred any time during the school year. If a child fails the screening test, appropriate diagnostic tests are given to determine the reality and etiology of problem and provide therapy focus. If it is determined that a child would benefit from therapy, a permission letter is sent home before a child is evaluated. An additional permission form will be sent home to continue therapy if the child is still in need after their first year of services.

Students are tested upon teacher and/or parent recommendation by the speech therapist. Parents are consulted about their child's participation in the program. If parent or guardian does not give permission for the therapy, the child will not be entitled to this advantage.

ACT 89 GUIDANCE

Guidance services are funded through Pennsylvania Act 89 and allocated by Westmoreland County Intermediate Unit VII. The I.U. contracts with Catapult Learning, a part of Education Inc. to provide a certified guidance counselor to the school. Guidance services may include, but are not limited to, whole class participation for help in study skills, career interests, social concerns, school problems, and much more. Classroom teachers are involved in deciding appropriate topics according to diocesan curriculum guidelines.

Counseling services for individual students or small groups are provided for specific needs based upon teacher and/or parent referrals. Students must be referred each school year. Parents will be notified and written consent will be obtained before ongoing sessions and/or educational screenings are scheduled. Children may be seen once by the counselor before obtaining parental permission.

The Act 89 Guidance Counselor employed by Catapult Learning is available to the students, parents, and faculty.

ACT 89 AUXILIARY MATH & READING SERVICES

Auxiliary math services are funded through Pennsylvania Act 89 and allocated by Westmoreland County Intermediate Unit. The I.U. contracts with Catapult Learning to provide a certified teacher to the school for auxiliary instruction time. Math services may include, but are not limited to, reinforcement, skill practice, problem solving, etc. These services are coordinated with the classroom teacher based on the student's classroom performance. The program is flexible and allows every student this opportunity.

Written parental consent is necessary for those students who are recommended by the classroom teacher or principal to be seen on a weekly basis throughout the school year. An initial assessment will be done to determine a student's skill levels.

Progress Assessment Reports will be distributed along with school report cards. The Catapult Math Teacher is available for conferences with parents and school faculty.

TITLE I READING & MATH

Based on the results of standardized tests, teacher observation and recommendation, students are eligible for Title I reading reinforcement as provided by both Hempfield & Greensburg Salem School District.

Written parental consent is necessary for those students who are recommended by the classroom teacher or principal to be seen on a weekly basis throughout the school year. An initial assessment will be done to determine a student's skill levels. Progress Assessment Reports will be distributed along with school report cards.

PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING

Psychological testing is available by parent request or at the recommendation of the teacher in consultation with the principal. Parents are referred to their residing school district for the initial evaluation. Generally, testing is done to discover the cause of learning problems. Results are formally reported to parents, principal and teachers along with a list of recommendations made by the psychologist. THIS INFORMATION IS KEPT CONFIDENTIAL and not shared with anyone without parent permission. Re-evaluation is completed by the non-public school psychologist within the Westmoreland County Intermediate Unit.

BULLYING PREVENTION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Aquinas Academy has a bullying prevention and conflict resolution program to help the students develop peacemaking skills, both to further their own social development and to uphold the Christian atmosphere of Aquinas Academy. Students are trained in communication and conflict resolution skills and meet periodically to practice these skills, using common situations which may be encountered. Students are also trained in how to handle a bully and what to do if they are bullied by someone.

The teachers have taken workshops in bullying prevention and in conflict resolution in order to help their students solve problems peacefully. In addition to this, various programs are incorporated into the school to enhance the bullying prevention program.

TRANSPORTATION

It is important that we know the ordinary means by which each child arrives and departs daily. A note is to be sent when a change is necessary. For reasons of safety and insurance, each child is to ride his/her assigned bus unless special permission is given. In the event of a change in transportation for any given day(s), a child must have a written note from a parent/guardian signed by the principal.

Transportation to and from school is the responsibility of the parents. If children live more than 1-1/2 miles from school, transportation will be provided by the public school district in which the student resides. Questions concerning bus transportation should be addressed to the public school district in which the student resides.

Students are expected to behave properly on the bus. The safety of all is the prime consideration. A lack of cooperation with safety rules established by the local public school district or the transportation provider may result in suspension from riding the bus as determined by the public school transportation policy. It may also result in disciplinary action against the student by Aquinas Academy.

ARRANGEMENTS CONCERNING TRANSPORTATION AND AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES MUST BE MADE BEFORE THE CHILD LEAVES HOME IN THE MORNING.

If the school does not receive a phone call or a note in advance, the child will not be permitted to change dismissal plans. Email messaging does not guarantee that acknowledgement of a change.

LUNCH PROGRAM

Aquinas Academy participates in the national school lunch program implemented by Nutrition Group. Hot lunches may be purchased at the school cafeteria. A la carte items are available to students in grades kindergarten through seven. Snacks are available to all students.

Families may take advantage of the reduced cost or free school lunch program by filing the appropriate application. Applications will be reviewed according to Federal guidelines. Rules for acceptance and participation in the reduced cost or free program are the same for each student without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, handicap, or religion.

Families will receive a menu each month. The prices of milk and lunches are published in the first Electronic Newsletter (ENEWS) and on the monthly cafeteria menu. Parents/Students may pay in advance or pay daily for lunch. Milk may be purchased daily or weekly. Families who qualify may take advantage of the reduced cost or free school lunch program. In order for this, families must fill out the appropriate application form given in the first monthly envelope.

FORGOTTEN LUNCHES

If a child forgets his or her lunch, the following procedure is in place. The child will receive a hot lunch in the cafeteria. The child's name is recorded in a book by the cafeteria personnel, and the child receives written notification to reimburse the cafeteria service as soon as possible.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION EXTENSION PROGRAM (PEP)

At lunch time, a Physical Education Extension Program (PEP) exists for Kindergarten through Grade 7 that provides an opportunity for daily physical exercise according to the recommendations of the American Heart Association. The program includes the use of our playground for grades K – 5 and a variety of exercises and activities to invigorate all of our students physically. Students are closely monitored by the designated teachers during each PEP period. At the end of the exercise period, the students cool down by sitting quietly and talking to one another.

PEP RULES

Observe the following rules during PEP time:

1. Enter the gym quietly and sit on the side bench in the gym;
2. Use the rest room before or after the lunch/PEP period not during the Lunch/PEP period;
3. Place lunch bags, etc. in the assigned space;
4. Listen closely to and follow all directions;
5. Stay in the group assigned;
6. Keep voices low at all times;
7. Stop playing at once when the whistle sounds and walk quietly to the station assigned;
8. Take responsibility of the proper organizing of equipment;

9. Walk to the line assigned when going to the cafeteria after PEP or going to meet the homeroom teacher;
10. Re-enter the building only for an emergency if outside;
11. Treat others respectfully at all times / practice good sportsmanship at all times;
12. Report any problems or difficulties to the supervisor immediately.

VIOLATION OF PEP/RECESS AND CAFETERIA RULES

Infractions of PEP rules may result in the following:

1. Lunch time detention;
2. Lunch time detention and conduct referral;
3. After-school detention and/or removal from PEP for an extended period of time.

ATHLETIC PROGRAM/EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Aquinas Academy Athletic Program provides extra-curricular activities for students to participate at a competitive level under the Diocesan CYO guidelines and W.P.I.A.L. Middle School through Greensburg Central Catholic. The student will be expected to maintain acceptable academic achievement in relationship to his/her ability. The student will be expected to maintain standard behavior throughout the school day. Serious offenses, as described in this Handbook will be handled on an individual basis at the discretion of the principal. Any student absent from school on a particular day may not attend practice or play in a game that day. Parents will be contacted if students do not meet the above expectations. Aquinas Academy will follow all Diocesan and W.P.I.A.L. policies pertaining to the athletic program.

ATHLETIC PROGRAMS OFFERED

- | | |
|----------|---|
| Fall - | Diocesan Girls Basketball – Grades 3 –7 |
| Winter - | Diocesan Boys Basketball -- Grades 3 – 7
Aquinas Intramural Basketball -- Boys & Girls, Grades 1 – 3
Aquinas Intramural Bowling – Boys & Girls, Grades K - 7
Diocesan Spirit Team -- Ongoing |
| Spring - | Diocesan Girls Volleyball -- Grades 4 - 7
Aquinas Intramural Golf -- Boys & Girls, Grades 6, & 7 |

IV. PARENTS

COMMUNICATION

Open communication among parents, teachers and administrators is important for a student’s progress and for maintaining a healthy school climate. Attempts should be made to solve problems at the appropriate level. Only when this is proven unsuccessful should the building principal be contacted.

If a problem occurs in the classroom, the parent is to contact the teacher in order to discuss the problem. If a satisfactory solution cannot be reached, the parent will inform the teacher that the principal will be contacted. Hopefully, the parent, teacher, and principal will then arrive at a satisfactory solution. If the problem remains unsolved, then the parent has recourse to the pastor who is chairperson of the Board of Trust Administrators.

A parent may make an appointment to speak with a teacher by sending a note, voice mail, email, or by calling the school office. Parents should expect the teachers the opportunity to return their request once their school day is over. Because of the interruption in the teaching-learning process, spontaneous visits to the classroom are highly discouraged.

HOMEROOM PARENTS

The homeroom parent acts as a liaison between the teacher and the parents. This parent will organize the four parties throughout the year and other activities as requested by the homeroom teacher. The homeroom parent must see that different parents chair each party and that all parents who volunteer have an opportunity to help throughout the year. The homeroom parent or designated volunteer is responsible for setting up a telephone relay for the families who have children in that homeroom should an emergency arise.

CLASSROOM PARTIES AND BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Two parties and two breakfasts are held throughout the year: Halloween/All Saints Day, Advent, Valentine Day, and Peace Day. The homeroom parent collects a fee of ten dollars for the year at the beginning of the school year. This money is used for all of the above mentioned parties/breakfasts and for an end-of-the-year celebration. No other money may be collected throughout the year without a written request that must be approved by the principal.

Student may bring a birthday treat to share with their classmates. Please check with your child's homeroom teacher for an appropriate time to bring in the birthday treat.

Gum, Lollipops, Peanut Products and Balloons may not to be given as treats anytime throughout the school year. Please check with a grade level teacher for further information.

PARTY INVITATIONS

Invitations to home parties may not be distributed through school unless every student in the class is invited. If the party is only for boys or girls, then all boys or girls in the class must be invited for invitations to be distributed through school. A child or parent may not invite all the boys in the child's homeroom and only a few in the other homeroom. If that is the case, the invitations must be mailed.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT/VOLUNTEERS

Aquinas Academy has a high level of parent involvement directed by a volunteer team. The work of the team is managed by committees for Fundraising Activities, Student Activities, Programs, Social Activities, Membership, and Homeroom Parents for various functions. All parents and guardians are highly encouraged to volunteer for one activity yearly.

A Volunteer Opportunity Form will be sent home in the first family envelope. Those who volunteer regularly must have Act 33 and Act 34 clearances. All volunteers must sign in and sign out at the school office when they come into the school building when school is in session.

PARENT TUITION ASSISTANCE THROUGH FUNDRAISERS

Aquinas Academy offers a SCRIP Program and Market Day throughout the school year to help parents reduce their tuition costs. Please contact the school office for options.

NON-CUSTODIAL / PARTIAL CUSTODIAL PARENTS

A monthly family envelope containing important information goes home at the end of every month with the student. For a fee to cover postage, Aquinas Academy will mail the monthly family envelope to your home. Call the school office to make arrangements.

V. REGULATIONS

ATTENDANCE

The Aquinas Academy has the right to dis-enroll any student based upon excessive, unexcused tardiness or absenteeism. For instance, not providing proper medical documentation as defined in our Student / Parent Handbook.

Children of compulsory-school age, up to age seventeen (17), are required by law to attend an approved educational institution, unless legally excused pursuant to Diocesan Policy. The school recognizes a number of specific reasons for which a child may be excused from school for all or part of a school day including, but not limited to:

1. Observance of religious holidays;
2. Receipt of religious instruction;
3. Educational trips not sponsored by the school;
4. Attending medical or dental appointments which cannot be arranged after school hours;
5. Illness or other urgent reasons of an emergency nature.

For all legal excuses, the student will be marked absent but excused.

Unexcused or unlawful absences include, but are not limited to:

1. Truancy;
2. Parental neglect;
3. Illegal employment;
4. Pupils who run away from home;
5. Shopping;
6. Trips not approved in advance.

For all legal absences, the child will be marked absent but excused. After fifteen (15) legal written excused absences occur indicating chronic absenteeism, the student will be required to present excuses provided by a physician only. If chronic absenteeism occurs and no physician's excuse is provided, parent/guardians will be reported to local magistrate for a hearing.

For all illegal absences, the child will be marked absent, unexcused/illegal. After five (5) unexcused or illegal absences, a letter of warning is sent to parent/guardians. If excuses are not provided and/or continued unexcused absences occur, the parent/guardian will be reported to the local magistrate for a hearing and possible fine.

REPORTING ABSENCES BY PHONE

For the safety of your child, parents/guardians must call to report their child/children absent or tardy before 8:00 AM. Use only the designated line according to the following directions:

1. Dial 724. 834.7940 Ext 2;
2. Listen to and follow prerecorded directions;
3. Speak slowly when leaving information;
4. State the name of the student;
5. State if your child is absent or tardy;
6. State reason why student is absent or tardy.

WRITTEN EXCUSES

Upon returning to school in the event of an absence, a student must bring a written excuse from his/her parent or guardian the first day after an absence. The excuse must contain the following information:

1. Date of the note;
2. Name and grade of the student;
3. Date of the absence or tardiness;
4. Cause of absence or tardiness;
5. Signature of parent or guardian.

Ordinarily, students who are absent from school, may not participate in any after school or evening school-sponsored events such as band or sports programs. If absenteeism becomes chronic, parents may be requested to provide a medical excuse for each absence.

TARDINESS

A student is tardy if he/she is not in the classroom for the opening exercises at 8:20 AM. The student must report to the office before going to his or her homeroom. He/she must sign in the tardy book and receive a late pass in order to enter the classroom. The late pass must be presented to the homeroom teacher and/or the current class teacher. Any student who is tardy will be required to submit a note of explanation signed by a parent or guardian to the homeroom teacher.

Three unexcused tardy occurrences within one month will result in after-school or lunch detention in grades 4-7. In grades K-3, the teacher will send a note home with the child. If the child has three the next month, s/he will have lunch detention or after-school detention.

Repeated cases of tardiness will be brought to the attention of the principal, and the homeroom teacher will notify the parents/guardians to arrange a conference. The teacher is responsible for recording tardiness in the Power School attendance, on the student's report to parents, and on the permanent record card.

If a student misses one or more classes, the late assignment policy under homework applies.

Any student arriving after 11:30 AM will be considered ½ day absent in the morning.

Any student leaving before 11:30 AM will be considered a ½ day absent in the afternoon.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

CAR RIDER ARRIVAL

All students need to arrive by 8:15 AM on Pennsylvania Avenue. If you use the drop-off line in the morning, you must observe the following rules:

1. Come to the drop-off area only between 7:45 to 8:15 AM.
2. Drive slowly and carefully at all times. This is for the safety of your child as well as his/her classmates;
3. Arrive no earlier than 7:45 AM as there is no supervision. A teacher will open the Pennsylvania Avenue door no earlier than 7:45 AM;
4. Use the gym side/curb side only to drop-off. This is for the safety of the children;
5. Pulling up beside an already parked car is prohibited. Never allow a child to exit from a car that is "temporarily" double-parked;
6. Pull all the way up to the drop-off area by the curb. Do not wait until you are first in line to drop off. Seven cars can drop off at the same time;
7. Wait until the car in front of you moves and then immediately pull away;
8. Pull away quickly when the cars in your row move so others can pull up immediately;
9. Let your child walk to the cafeteria door without waiting for her/him to do so as a teacher is there to meet all the children;
10. Park your car by the street curb if your child cannot open and close the car door safely, or if you wish to walk your child into school.

The doors to the cafeteria on Pennsylvania Avenue will be locked promptly at 8:15 AM. If you arrive after that time, you will have to drop off your child at the breezeway security door located on the parking lot side of the red brick building through the Garden of the Good Shepherd and ring the buzzer.

CAR RIDER DISMISSAL

Afternoon pick-up is from 2:50 to 3:10 PM. You must observe the following rules:

1. Parents/guardians of car riders are not to come to the door to pick up children;
2. Post car number in the windshield daily. This makes it easier and faster to load cars;
3. Drive slowly and carefully at all times;
4. Form two lines in the school entrance in front of the gym and a third line on Pennsylvania Avenue curbside by the stone wall only. You may only use the third lane if you have a door with curb access. Do not get out to let children in the driver door. Please remain in the lane you chose. Please do not double park on Pennsylvania Avenue;
5. Pull all the way up so that at least 12 cars may be loaded at a time. Pull up close to the car in front of you;
6. Dismissal of the first batch of cars will be directed by a teacher. Never pull away from the curb until a staff member directs you to move. Always stay in your lane;
7. Pull up as close as possible after the first batch is dismissed;
8. Stay in your cars. If you are the lead car and your child is not present, you will be asked to pull off to the side of the school;
9. Double parking on Pennsylvania Avenue is prohibited.

Your cooperation will assist us in the safe and prompt dismissal of your children. If you are late picking up your child, the child will wait outside the office until you arrive. Please come to the Main Street parking lot, go to the security door and ring the buzzer to identify yourself. Your child will be sent out to you.

CAR NUMBERS

Every family will receive a car number the first week of school. This number must be displayed in the windshield whenever you pick up a child in the car rider line.

WALKER DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE WALKERS

Dismissal begins at 2:50 PM.

Parents are to wait for the teachers to dismiss the students.

Students will only be dismissed from the cafeteria door by the gym lobby.

MAIN STREET WALKERS

Dismissal is at 2:45 PM.

BUS DISMISSAL

2:45 Mini Busses/Vans and taxicabs.

2:55 Bus riders report to bus rooms.

As each bus is called, the bus room teacher escorts the students on that bus to Main Street to board the bus.

DISMISSAL CHANGES

All dismissal procedures must be arranged before your child leaves for school. If the procedure is different than normal, send a note to your child's homeroom teacher stating the exact change. **IF A CHILD DOES NOT HAVE A NOTE, DISMISSAL PROCEDURE WILL NOT BE CHANGED.** The office is not responsible for dismissal arrangements.

EARLY DISMISSAL

A student may be dismissed from school early only with the approval of the principal or his/her designee after a note is sent to school by the student's parent/guardian. Students will not be released into the care of any person who is not authorized in writing for such purpose, or on the basis of an invalidated telephone call. The authorized adult must come to the office to pick up the child and sign the child out in the early dismissal book. If a student leaves before 11:30 AM, he/she will be marked a ½ day absent in the afternoon.

APPOINTMENTS

If possible, physician and dental appointments should be arranged for days when school is not in session. However, if a child must have an early dismissal, he or she must have a written note to be presented to the homeroom teacher during morning homeroom period. Approved notes will be returned to the student who is then to present the note in the office when leaving school. Students must report out and in through the office. Parents or an authorized adult must meet the child at the office and sign him or her out at the authorized time. Students who arrive after 11:30 AM will be marked as ½ day absent in the morning. Students who leave school before 11:30 AM will be marked ½ day absent in the afternoon.

DRESS CODE

Students in Grades 1-7 must wear uniforms starting the first day of school. Your cooperation is essential in adhering to the dress code. Referrals for dress code violations will be sent home as needed. Continued violations will result in a parent conference as per the details of the regulations set forth in this handbook.

Boys – Uniform

- Navy blue uniform pants must be worn at the waistline in all grades and with a belt (black, blue, or brown ONLY) in grades 2-7;
- No faded pants, baggy pants, or cargo pants may be worn;
- Clean shaven - no facial hair permitted.

Girls – Uniform

- Uniform navy and white plaid split bib or shift-jumper (grades 1-3);
- Uniform navy and white plaid skirt or kilt (grades 4-7);
- The hemline must be mid-knee (mid knee in front and back);
- Grade four girls may continue wearing the jumper;
- Uniform white or powder blue Peter Pan collar blouses (grades 1-3);
- Uniform navy slacks;
- Tights may worn in place of socks;
- Make-up is not permitted.

Boys and Girls -- Uniform

- Solid white undershirt or Aquinas Academy t-shirt only permitted under uniform shirt;
- Uniform solid white or powder blue oxford, polo, or turtleneck/short or long sleeve shirts with collar (grades 1-7); NO LOGOS other than Aquinas Academy;
- Shirttail tucked in at all times;
- Banded shirts are permitted and encouraged to be purchased from Schoolbelles
- Socks must be worn at all times;
- Navy blue uniform right above the knee walking shorts may be worn during the following months: August, September, October, April, May, and June;
- Shorts must be right above the knee in the front and back;
- Solid navy, red, or white sweaters (cardigan/v-neck/crewneck/sleeveless vest); NO LOGOS other than Aquinas Academy.
- Aquinas Academy sweatshirt and fleece ONLY may be worn;
- Hooded sweatshirts or sweaters may NOT be worn in the classroom during the day.
- Dress shoes with rubber soles or clean, neat athletic shoes are permitted;
- Boots of any type may not be worn in school; crocs, mules (backless shoes), sandals, shoes with laces (must be tied)
- Scout uniforms may be worn on meeting days or during Scout Week;
- Hats must be removed upon entering the building;
- Excessive jewelry is not permitted;
- Over-sized clothing is not permitted;
- Only ear piercing is acceptable;
- For safety, only small earrings are permitted - no dangling earrings;
- Tattoos are unacceptable.

It is to the teacher's discretion if any additional items not listed in the handbook are distracting to the instruction taking place at the school.

The official uniform company is: Schoolbelles—www.schoolbelles.com
255 Mount Nebo Pointe Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15237
Phone: 412.630.8480 1.888.637.3037

PHYSICAL EDUCATION UNIFORM

Students in grades K-7 must wear the Aquinas gym uniform which consists of the following:

- Uniform navy blue right above the knee length (front and back) uniform shorts;
- Uniform navy blue sweat pants;
- Clean, neat sneakers;
- Aquinas Academy T-shirt always tucked in the shorts or sweatpants;
- P.E. uniform may be worn by Students in Grades K-7 in place of the regular uniform on P.E. day;
- Small earrings only are permitted to be worn during P. E.;
- P.E. uniform is not a substitute for the regular uniform in grades 6-7.

In all cases, the administration and staff reserve the right to determine and curtail unacceptable articles of dress and hair style. Deliberate infraction of the dress code will result in disciplinary action.

HAIR CODE

The following hair code is in effect for all students:

- Hair styles are to be simple and neat;
- Boys' hair must be completely above the collar of the shirt;
- Hair should not obstruct vision;
- Bleached or colored hair is not permitted. Mild natural tone highlights in accord with the student's natural hair color are permitted;
- Hair that violates this code will result in the student not being able to represent the school publicly on the playground, gym, field trips, etc.

DRESS-UP/DRESS-DOWN DAYS

On designated dress-up days and dress down days, students' dress must reflect the spirit and philosophy of the school which promotes the Gospel message. In view of that and out of respect for others, **the following items are unacceptable:**

- Tight-fitting and immodestly revealing clothing is not permitted;
- Mini-skirts and tops/dresses with off-the-shoulder or low neckline styles;
- Clothing that is ripped, torn, ragged, or dirty;
- Short shorts, spandex shorts, tank tops, midriff tops or short tops;
- T-shirts with rock band advertising, slang, violent pictures, etc.;
- Oversized clothing;
- Skinny jeans or Yoga pants.

A single abuse of this privilege may result in a dress code referral. **THREE** referrals will result in a detention.

DISCIPLINE AND CODE OF CONDUCT

Aquinas Academy faculty and staff are committed to teach and model Gospel values which help our students live their lives as a reflection of Christ. Our philosophy calls us to recognize and respect the dignity of each individual and offer a positive, Christ-centered, safe learning environment based on the Social Teachings of the Catholic Church.

Discipline is essential to learning and the key both to good conduct and to respecting the rights of others. The purpose of the discipline code is to foster the growth of self-discipline, enabling students to eventually assume responsibility for their own actions, develop self-control, and accept responsibility and consequences for inappropriate behavior.

All members of the faculty and staff share the responsibility to model appropriate behaviors, to support the structure necessary for learning self-discipline, and to maintain these standards throughout the school community.

The faculty and staff shall have the right to exercise the same authority as to student conduct and behavior as do the parents or guardians of the student. Student responsibilities include regular school attendance, conscientious effort and classroom work, and conformance to school rules and regulations. Most importantly, students share with the administration, faculty, and staff the responsibility to develop a climate within the school that is conducive to wholesome learning and living.

No student has the right to interfere with the education of other students. It is the responsibility of each student to respect the rights of teachers, students, administrators, and all others who are involved in the educational process. Students should express their ideas and opinions in a respectful manner so as not to offend or slander others. The Principal of the school has the final decision regarding any severe consequences that must be implemented in order to bring resolve to any given situation.

Conduct: A student may be dis-enrolled at any time at the discretion of the administration consistent with but not limited to the following content. The administration may choose not to accept a student for enrollment for reasons consistent with but not limited to the following content as well.

Student Code of Conduct: The Aquinas Academy has the right to dis-enroll any student based upon conduct that is not consistent with our philosophy, mission statement, goals, objectives and code of conduct delineated in our handbooks and policy. This could include but is not limited to criminal arrest and conviction at the local, state, or federal level. As a nonpublic school, we have the right to consider all conduct internal or external to the school. For instance, a student may be dis-enrolled for conduct that is not consistent with our philosophy, mission statement, goals, and objectives and code of conduct whether the action or incident occurs at the school, school event, or within the community at large.

Academic Apathy: The Aquinas Academy has the right to dis-enroll any student based upon lack of effort in the classroom such as failure to display appropriate classroom behaviors necessary for academic success. This may include but is not limited to completion of homework and class assignments, failure to come to class properly prepared, and/or behaviors that impede or disrupt the academic or social environment of other students.

Financial: The Aquinas Academy has the right to dis-enroll any student based on noncompliance with the diocesan and school tuition policy.

As the Aquinas Academy is a private, nonpublic institution, the administration reserves the right to terminate enrollment of a student for any reason at any time. Any disciplinary policies and procedures are simply guidelines that the school generally follows. These guidelines do not impede this right by administration to terminate the enrollment of a student for any reason at any time.

Family Code of Conduct: The Aquinas Academy has the right to dis-enroll any student based upon the student's family member, extended or immediate, causing disruption in the school community in any way. This would include a family member having conduct that is considered by the administration to be a detriment to the educational environment or school community. The administration will consider all disruptive or detrimental conduct that is not consistent with our philosophy, mission statement, goals, objectives, and code of conduct.

Students will follow rules according to grade level guidelines. Periodically, the teachers will discuss these rules with the students. **Discipline will take place according to teacher discretion:**

GRADES PK – 3

Verbal warning and/or time out;
No Recess / PEP
Teacher/parent communication;
Principal/teacher/child conference;

GRADES 4 – 7 CONDUCT REFERRALS

Some of the infractions a student may receive a conduct referral for are the following:

- Failure to observe school rules;
- Rude/discourteous behavior;
- Running in the halls/classroom;
- Excessive talking/loudness;
- Disrespect to authority figures;
- Inappropriate behavior;
- Annoying classmates;
- Dress code violations;
- Hitting another student;
- Late to school/class;
- Eating candy/food other than at lunch time;
- Chewing Gum.

Students are expected to comply with all aspects of this policy.

Each conduct referral sent home requires a parent/guardian signature and the referral must be returned to school the following day. Failure to return the conduct referral may result in immediate in-school or after-school detention.

When a student has accumulated three conduct referrals, that student will be responsible for serving detention. A conduct referral requiring a parent/guardian signature will be sent home giving notice of the date and time the student will serve detention. Failure to return the form the following day may result in the student not attending class until a parent/guardian can be notified.

DETENTION

After school detention will be held from 3:00 PM until 4:00 PM on the assigned day.

IMMEDIATE DETENTION

A student may receive immediate detention for the following infractions:

- Blatant disrespect for faculty/staff/volunteers/students;
- Violation of hands off policy
- Swearing, foul and obscene language or gestures;
- Destruction of school/parish property;
- Failure to obey a direct order;
- Going to an unsupervised area;
- Stealing, cheating, lying;
- Misbehavior during a fire drill;
- Misbehavior in church;
- Violation of cell phone policy.
- Other conduct judged by the principal, faculty, or staff to be unacceptable;

A form requiring a parent/guardian signature will be sent home the day the immediate detention is issued. This form must be returned the following day.

SUSPENSION

In the event of a serious act of misbehavior or repeated acts of misbehavior, a student may serve either an in-school or out-of-school suspension. If misconduct continues, a student may be asked to leave the school. These decisions rest with the administration and may be necessary for the benefit of the total program.

Some of the causes for suspension are the following:

- Consistent noncompliance with any of the school rules;
- Possession of tobacco, alcohol, or drugs on school grounds, during field trips, at school functions or on the school bus;
- Leaving the school grounds without permission;
- Vandalism of school or student property or any property used by the school;
- Destruction of school/parish property;
- Theft;
- Fighting;
- Continued instances of bullying;
- Truancy;
- Commission of three (3) major offenses;
- Reception of five detentions within one report card period and for any subsequent detentions that report period;
- Engaging in conduct judged by the principal as seriously contrary to the purpose of Catholic education, the goals of the school, the physical or spiritual welfare of the students or members of the school community.

Suspensions are ordinarily held in school, and the student is not marked absent. If the offense is extremely serious, out-of-school suspension may occur. Usually, the length of out-of-school suspension does not exceed three days. The student will be required to complete any class work missed.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

SUSPENSION

A letter is sent home explaining the reason for suspension and setting an appointment for a conference with the parent(s), principal, and teacher/s if deemed necessary. This conference may be waived if the parties concerned feel that communication prior to the suspension makes the conference unnecessary. The administrator will decide if the suspension will be a home suspension or an in-school suspension.

When a student has an in-school suspension, the parent may be asked to pay a substitute teacher who will monitor the student throughout the day. In addition to the suspension, students may lose the privilege of attending special school-sponsored events at the discretion of the teachers, principal, and pastor.

EXPULSION

Expulsion is a severe punishment and will only be applied as a last resort and after serious deliberation. Every attempt will be made during earlier offenses to provide guidance and counseling to student and parents under the direction of the principal and or counselor.

A student may be expelled for the following reasons:

- Chronic undesirable conduct detrimental to the physical and/or moral well-being of self or other students as evidenced by an accumulation of three (3) suspensions;
- A single serious incident, event, or situation involving disregard for or a clear violation of a school rule or regulation, such as possessing a weapon on school property;
- Continued malicious disobedience or disrespect for school authority;
- Possession, use, or transporting of any weapon or look-alike weapon;
- Possession, use, sale, and/or conveyance of any controlled substance, tobacco, drug, look-alike drug, alcohol, or anabolic steroid;
- Assault/battery of student/teacher/administrator/employee of the school;
- Bomb threats;
- False alarms;
- Use of vulgar or obscene language;
- Fighting;
- Disrespect toward the school in word or action;
- Continued refusal by parents/students to comply with school policies;
- Conduct judged by the principal as seriously contrary to the purpose of Catholic education, the goals of the school, the physical or spiritual welfare of the students or members of the school community.

The foregoing listings establishing reasons for disciplinary action are not all-inclusive. It remains the duty of the principal, faculty and staff to deal appropriately and proportionately with individual instances of attitude or conduct which may occur.

In areas where a specific Diocesan policy exists, such as violating the Diocesan Drug and Alcohol Abuse Policy, those policies apply.

In the case of expulsion, the following procedure shall be used:

- A time of suspension will first be imposed during which there will be private consultations of parents with principal, guidance counselor and/or teachers;
- The final decision concerning expulsion will rest with the principal. Before any such administrative decision, the principal must consult with the person, appropriate local authorities, and the Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Greensburg;
- A written report of the expulsion will be submitted to the Catholic Schools Office;
- The parent/guardian may, within five (5) school days of the decision of the principal to expel the student, appeal to the Superintendent of Catholic schools, whose decision will be final.

EMERGENCY CLOSING OF SCHOOL OR DELAY

Sometimes it becomes necessary to cancel or delay school due to inclement weather (snow, heavy winds...). Aquinas Academy will determine its own designated cancellation. Therefore, always listen or watch carefully for Aquinas Academy, Greensburg as there is also an Aquinas Academy in Gibsonia.

There are a number of ways this information can be obtained. Parents and guardians are directed to tune into the following radio stations: WTAE (1250), KDKA (1020), or WHJB (620); television station: WTAE (4), WPXI (11), or KDKA (2); or website www.wpxi.com regarding school delays, closings, and early dismissals. If there is no report regarding Aquinas Academy, Greensburg, you may assume that school is in session.

Parents, guardians, and students are directed not to call the school for such information. Any announcement applies to the total school, preschool through grade seven.

Announcements regarding other home school districts affect transportation to or from Aquinas Academy.

(e.g. If Mt. Pleasant has a two-hour delay and Aquinas Academy does not, students from Mt. Pleasant who ride the bus would not be picked up at the regular time but at the delay time. If Mt. Pleasant is closed and Aquinas Academy is open, there would be no bus transportation for Aquinas Academy students living in the Mt. Pleasant area. Parents are expected to provide their own transportation.)

Due to the number of incoming calls from districts and carriers, it is impossible to notify parents regarding each carrier's departure time. Parents/guardians are asked not to call the school for such information but to listen to the radio or TV stations when bad weather occurs. Please refer to Aquinas Academy's website for up-to-date information regarding school closings and delays at www.aquinasacademy.org or you can call the school at 724-834-7940 and press one (1).

POWER SCHOOL / SCHOOL MESSENGER

Aquinas Academy, in partnership with the Diocese of Greensburg, uses the Power School student management system to assist in the administration of our school. During the 2013-2014 school year, we will also utilize a student, parent, and staff notification system called School Messenger.

This component of School Messenger will replace the Power Announcement System that we have been using to send you information regarding upcoming events and school news. In addition to the previous alerts, the new system will send you alerts regarding all of the following information:

- School Delays & Closings (will still be televised through WTAE, WPXI, & KDKA)
- Tardy and absenteeism (Still call the school in the event of a tardy or absence)
- School News (Quarterly News & Alerts)
- Upcoming events (Happenings in and around the school)

Notification emails will be sent to your preferred default email address. In addition to your email address, you are encouraged to maintain the way in which you are contacted in the event of the previously listed announcements that are corresponded through School Messenger by setting and managing your preferences throughout the school year.

EMERGENCY DISMISSAL

Cancellation of school takes place only during extraordinary circumstances such as extreme weather, equipment failure, or public crisis. If we ever have a situation that occurs where we have to close early, the district or Aquinas Academy will announce the early dismissal over the radio and Emergency Phone Chain through School Messenger (will call the numbers you designated as default).

If a certain district closes early, those Aquinas Academy students will be released when their transportation arrives. If you do not want your child to go home the normal way during an early emergency dismissal, it is imperative that we have accurate information regarding your child/children's transportation home in the school office. On the back of the Family Emergency/Illness Card is the emergency dismissal information for your child/children. Aquinas Academy will follow this information for all emergency dismissals. Phone calls at these times are not possible. Be very specific in your instructions for dismissal. Also, please go over these instructions with your child/children in order to avoid confusion.

TIME SCHEDULES

Because of transportation restrictions, the time schedule will be adjusted to coincide with any revisions by the public school districts in which Aquinas Academy is located. The school will adhere to the following schedule to the extent possible:

7:45	School Doors Open Walkers/Car Riders -Cafeteria on Pennsylvania Avenue Stay in cafeteria until 8:00 Bus Riders Only-Main Street Report to assigned rooms
8:00-8:20	Students Report to Homerooms
8:20	Beginning Day Prayer, Salute to the Flag, Announcements
8:30	Class periods begin Pre-school students report
11:00	AM Pre-school Dismissal
11:30	Half-day Kindergarten Dismissal

11:30	Lunch Grades K, 1 ,2, 3
12:15	Lunch Grades 4, 5, 6, 7
12:30	PM Pre-school students report
1:00	Class periods continue
2:30	End of Day Return to Homerooms
2:35	Prayers & Announcements
2:45	K-7 Dismissal

VISITORS

Anyone entering the building must first report to the office to receive a visitor pass and sign the visitor book. For reasons of safety, the school principal must know who is in the building.

Any person not following this procedure may be asked to leave the building and may be subject to future exclusion from the building. All visitors upon leaving the building must return to the office and sign out. Adults helping with lunch time supervision must sign the visitor book in the school office. Visitor passes are available in the office and must be worn while supervising.

Lunches, shoes, books, etc. may not be taken directly to the classroom. Any such transaction to child or teacher must be made through the school office. This practice helps to eliminate interruptions for the teachers and the students during class hours. Any student who needs to be dismissed early for medical or health reasons, must be met by the parent or guardian in the school office and follow sign-out procedures.

CAFETERIA RULES

The school cafeteria is operated as a service to pupils and teachers. Students may purchase a lunch, ala carte items, or may bring a lunch from home. All students will eat in the cafeteria.

All students are expected to obey the following rules of the cafeteria:

- Walk at all times;
- Wait in line to purchase lunch;
- Handle only food you intend to purchase;
- Sit in assigned area;
- Eat as if in the home of a special dignitary;
- Chew with mouth closed;
- Speak with mouth empty of food;
- Talk in a soft voice;
- Eat food in the cafeteria not outside or elsewhere in the school;
- Clean the table space and chair when finished eating;
- Stay at seat until dismissed by a supervisor;
- Pour left over milk or other beverages in the container provided;
- Put empty cartons and other disposable items in the trash container provided;
- Remain in the cafeteria until dismissed by a supervisor;
- Keep all cans, bottles, or carbonated beverages at home;
- Bring only a packed lunch as no fast food is permitted to be delivered to school (e.g. McDonald's);
- Practice good manners at all times in the cafeteria.

BUS RIDER CONDUCT

Students are not permitted to eat or drink on the bus. No animals of any kind are allowed on the bus. Misdemeanors will be handled by the bus driver and reported to the principal. Disciplinary action will take place by the principal after two (2) conduct referrals are received from the bus driver. Persistent and serious offenses will result in suspension from riding the bus and a conference will be held with the parents/guardians. If bus information is needed, contact the Department of Transportation for the school district in which you reside.

BUS SAFETY RULES

All students riding a bus to and/or from school must observe the following rules:

- Obey the bus driver;
- Stay in your seat;
- Wear your seat belt.
- Speak in a quiet voice;
- Never push, shove, or play around;
- Keep hands, head, and all objects inside bus;
- No fighting;
- Do not throw objects inside or outside the bus.

CHEATING

Cheating is a serious compromise of a student's integrity and will not be tolerated. If cheating is discovered, the student's work will be confiscated. A failing grade will automatically be recorded for the work and parents will be notified. A second offense may result in suspension from school.

TELEPHONE

It is important that the school telephone be available for office calls. Children may use the school telephone only with permission of the principal, in an emergency, and only for school related business. Students may not call for forgotten homework or PE clothes either in the school office or on their personal cell phone. Teachers and children will not be called from the classroom to receive a telephone call. A message for the child or teacher may be given to the secretary. Arrangements concerning transportation and after-school activities are to be made before the child leaves home in the morning.

Students are permitted to have cell phones. However, they must be turned off during the entire school day and must be kept in the student's backpack. A violation of this policy will result in immediate detention and the cell phone will be retained at the school office until it is retrieved by the student's parent/guardian.

BACKPACKS/BOOK BAGS

Students must have a backpack or book bag to carry books to and from school. No attachments of any kind will be permitted to hang from the back packs or book bags for safety reasons.

LOCKERS

Students may go to their lockers and/or desks in the morning, before and after lunch, and at dismissal. The school reserves the right to inspect lockers if circumstances arise which seem to warrant such action.

POSSESSION OF WEAPONS

Any student found to be in possession of a weapon will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion, and reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency for criminal prosecution under the Pennsylvania Crime Code, 18 Pa. C.S. §912. Weapon is defined as including, but not limited to, any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nun-chuck stick, firearm, shotgun, rifle and any other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury, or any object which looks like any such weapon or is intended for such use. Each classroom has a set of scissors. No student is permitted to have scissors in school at any time.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY

A student who, on school grounds during a school session or anywhere at a school-sponsored activity, does sell, use, possess, or aide in the procurement of tobacco, alcohol, narcotics, or restricted drugs, including but not limited to, marijuana or anabolic steroids or other material purported to be such restricted drugs, or look-alike drugs, shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

The parent or guardian of the student will be contacted immediately in the event of any such occurrence. A recommendation will be made to the parents that the student be taken to a physician or health care provider for a complete examination, and parents will be requested to notify the school of the results of any such examination. The principal shall also give immediate notice to the police of the incident for possible legal action and for the purpose of identification of the substance.

HANDS-OFF POLICY

Anyone who pushes, shoves, hits, kicks, or touches another student in a way that could cause harm will receive detention after school from 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM in grades two through eight. In kindergarten and grade one, the teacher involved will have a conference with the student as well as call the child's parent/guardian. The second offense will require loss of PEP and eating lunch in the office. There will be no exceptions made to this policy.

It is important to know that the principal has the right to evaluate any situation and impose in-school or out-of-school suspension if necessary. Our students deserve a safe environment free of harm and threats.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Students are forbidden to possess iPods, cyber-toys, laser pointers, or other electronic signaling devices on school grounds, on school buses, or at any school activity or game, whether on or off school grounds. Students who have health problems or have family members with health problems requiring such devices must register the device with the school administration.

POLICY ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT

It is the policy of the Diocese of Greensburg and Aquinas Academy that students enjoy a learning environment free from all forms of discrimination including sexual harassment. All form of sexual harassment in any learning area, activity area or any other place under the permanent or temporary control of Aquinas Academy toward any student is strictly prohibited.

Any student who feels that he or she is or has been a victim of sexual harassment may bring the matter to the immediate attention of any faculty member, administrator, the counselor who will in turn bring it to the attention of the principal. All reports of alleged sexual harassment will be investigated in as confidential a manner as possible. Upon completion of such investigation, the parent/s or guardian/s of the student will be advised of the findings, recommendations and conclusions as to the accuracy of the charges alleged. In all cases where the investigation has verified the allegations and a decision has been made to take disciplinary action against the accused, the referring student and his or her parent or guardian will be advised of such action.

In the event that it is determined that a student has intentionally falsely accused another student or school employee in engaging in sexual harassment, the student may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

TECHNOLOGY ETHICS POLICY

The administration and the technology committee have established a policy to insure that our technology equipment and Internet accounts are being used for ethical, lawful, and educational purposes. It must be signed by the parent/guardian and the student and returned to school as soon as possible. The student may not use any technology equipment in the school until the signed policy is returned. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in disciplinary action, suspension of Internet access, restitution, and/or prosecution under state and federal laws where applicable. Parents/guardians and students must sign the policy to indicate agreement to follow it. Students may not use any technology equipment in the school until the policy is signed and returned to school. Some of the topics are as follows:

1. Tampering with, vandalism to, or unauthorized use of computers, or other electronic equipment (printer, cabling, drives, monitors, keyboard, mouse, VCR's, televisions, graphing calculators, cameras, etc.) or software or associated documentation is prohibited;
2. All use of the Internet during school hours must be for instructional or educational purposes;
3. Internet accounts are to be used only by the authorized user;
4. To safeguard your privacy, do not reveal personal information such as your name, address, or phone number to other Internet users;
5. The use of the Internet for personal and private business is prohibited;
6. The use of the Internet for political lobbying is prohibited;
7. The use of the Internet to copy copyrighted materials is prohibited;
8. The use of the Internet to play games is prohibited unless they are used for educational purposes;
9. The use of the Internet for product advertisement is prohibited;
10. The use of the Internet to access pornographic material is prohibited;
11. The use of threatening, obscene, or harassing remarks is prohibited;
12. The Electronic Communications Privacy Act places electronic mail in the same category as messages delivered by the U.S. Postal Service. Therefore, do not tamper, interfere, or intercept another user's correspondence;
13. All communications and information accessible via the network should assumed to be private property.

EXPECTATIONS

As a matter of safety, students are expected to behave in the following manner:

Before school

1. Arrive between 7:45 and 8:15 AM;
2. Gather in the designated area;
3. Engage in quiet conversation;
4. Line up quietly when called.

In school

1. Walk quietly through the halls;
2. No running, loud talking, pushing or shoving;
3. Keep to the right when changing classes;
4. Use proper language at all times;
5. Follow the dress code for school days and dress up/down days;
6. Respect school property and the property of other students;
7. Bring a note from your parent if your mode of school transportation changes.

In the classroom

1. Follow the classroom rules of each teacher;
2. Be responsible for submitting homework on time and making up assignments missed within a reasonable amount of time;
3. Have a respectful attitude toward teachers and one another;
4. Be responsible for appropriate supplies;
5. Be honest in all communications;
6. Use computers and school equipment appropriately;
7. Do not chew gum;
8. Do not remain in or enter a classroom at any time without a teacher or designated adult present.

After school

1. Follow dismissal procedures;
2. Do not run or play games on the school grounds;
3. Leave the school grounds immediately when dismissed.

At athletic events and assemblies

1. Practice good sportsmanship as spectators and participants;
2. Show respect towards coaches, referees, and visiting teams;
3. Maintain an appropriate silence during special performances.

Outside school

1. Behave responsibly off school property
(If the principal is made aware of misconduct off school property of a child recognized to be a student at Aquinas Academy, parents will be notified; however, it is important to note that the school is not responsible for students' actions that occur off school grounds. The principal will forward disciplinary notices given by public school bus drivers to parents to support the disciplinary report of the bus driver.)

VI. GENERAL INFORMATION

E-NEWS

Our Electronic news is our use of technology to help further build our correspondence to our families regarding what is going on in and around our school. You will read about your child's classroom activities, academics, and happenings throughout each quarter of the school year.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

Each family will receive a copy of the school calendar for the year designating free days, teacher in-service days and days of early dismissal. The school must adhere to state and diocesan guidelines concerning hours of instruction and number of days in session, and provisions for teacher in-service and staff development. If it is necessary to deviate from this yearly calendar at any time, advance notice will be sent to families in the Electronic Newsletter, the monthly calendar, Aquinas Alerts, or School Messenger.

In addition to the yearly calendar, every family will receive a calendar of monthly activities and a Newsletter. These are sent home in a family envelope. The envelope is to be signed and dated by the parent/guardian and returned to school the following day. Please do not send notes or money to school in the family envelope.

REPORT CARDS

Report cards showing the student's progress are issued four times a year in accordance with the dates established on the official school calendar. Proficiency is demonstrated by the child's knowledge and understanding of subject matter on tests, in class discussion, daily work, class/group/individual research and projects, and homework. The official diocesan report card shall be utilized unless otherwise approved by the Superintendent of Catholic Schools.

Parent/teacher conferences shall be used in conjunction with the report card as a means of evaluating progress. The principal will establish a procedure for the scheduling of parent/teacher conferences. At least one (1) such conference shall be held for each student during the school year.

POWERSCHOOL / PROGRESS REPORTS

A student's progress can be monitored online through the PowerSchool website, which can be accessed on our school website or directly at www.powerschool.org. This website allows parents access to grades, assignments, and attendance. This access eliminates the need for paper progress reports to be sent home. If you do not have computer access to monitor your child's progress, a written request for progress reports to be sent home in lieu of PowerSchool must be submitted to the subject teacher.

In the event that PowerSchool is not feasible, progress reports are sent home to parents of students in grades four through eight who are in danger of receiving a grade of D or E in any subject and/or if a teacher believes a student is not working to potential. Progress reports are issued to alert parents or guardians that their child/ren is/are not performing satisfactorily. Parents may request a conference at this time. In grades kindergarten through three, teachers will inform parents if a child is having difficulty and/or if a teacher believes a student is not working to potential by calling or sending a note home.

SCHOOL PROPERTY

Textbooks are the property of the school. All textbooks must be kept neatly covered. If a book is lost or damaged, the full replacement price is to be paid by the student. When damage or defacement of school property occurs through deliberate abuse, carelessness, or neglect, the cost of repair or replacement will be charged to the person(s) responsible.

LOST AND FOUND

The school is not responsible for money or valuable items brought to school by students. Such items are the responsibility of the student and should not be brought to school. Money sent to school should be placed in a sealed envelope marked with the student's name, room number, amount, and the purpose for which the money is to be used.

Lost items that are labeled are returned to the owner. Please make sure your child's art box, lunch box, hats, sweaters, jackets, etc. have his/her name on them. Lost items of value, such as watches, glasses, keys, jewelry, etc., are turned into the office. Other lost-and-found articles are placed in a container just outside the nurse's office. Students can check the box for items they may have lost. At the end of each school year, we dispose of unclaimed items.

STUDENT RECORDS

The collection and maintenance of information about students which is essential to promoting student welfare and accomplishing the educational objectives of the school shall be in accordance with state and federal law. The permanent record card, approved by the diocese, will be maintained in the school office. Guidance records will be kept either in the principal's office or the guidance office. Information will be collected only with prior and informed consent of the parent or guardian.

Student records, in accordance with state and federal law, are made available only to the child's parent or guardian and to staff who have need for access to the information, or with consent of the parent, or as otherwise provided by law. A parent or guardian wishing to review the records of his or her child should make such request for review in writing twenty-four (24) hours in advance. Student record information will not be disseminated by telephone.

In the absence of a court order to the contrary, a non-custodial parent will be given access to the academic records and the other school-related information regarding his/her child. If there is a court order specifying responsibility of the custodial parent or otherwise limiting or eliminating the rights of a non-custodial parent with regard to a child's education, the custodial parent shall provide the school with an official copy of the court order. All other requests for student information will be referred to the Superintendent of Catholic Schools for approval.

RIGHTS OF NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS

The Family Educational rights and Privacy Act gives full rights to each parent, unless the school has been provided with evidence that there is a court order, state's statute or legally binding document relating to such matters as divorce, separation or custody that specifically revokes these rights. Such an order is to be on file in the school and those persons responsible for the child(ren) are to be informed of the circumstances. Every effort is made to keep the non-custodial parent apprised of the progress of the child(ren) through reports, report cards and parent/teacher conferences.

INSURANCE

A school insurance plan is offered through the Diocese of Greensburg. Information is sent home early in September of each school year. Claim forms covering student injuries may be obtained from the school office. Parents file claims directly with the insurance company.

LOAN OF TEXTBOOKS

In order for Aquinas Academy to receive textbooks through Government programs, every family must fill out the Certificate of Individual Request for Loan of Textbooks form. Every family must sign this form each year. This form is sent home in the first family envelope.

NEWSPAPER PHOTOGRAPHS / VIDEO

At various times throughout the year we are approached by local or regional multi-media (newspapers, radio, television, etc.) to take photographs or video tape our students participating in school events. This is an excellent opportunity to promote Aquinas Academy and our many achievements.

Parents/guardians are expected to fill out a Promotional Activity Release Form for every child they have enrolled in school. This form designates whether the parent/guardian gives or does not give permission for their child to be photographed or video taped. This form is kept on file at the school office for as long as your child is a student of Aquinas Academy.

SECURITY

All doors to the school will be locked during school hours. Parents/guardians and visitors should ring the buzzer at the security door located through the Garden of Good Shepherd by the Breezeway. Wait until the office acknowledges you, **state your name** and reason you wish to enter the school.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

Every student will periodically be taught by a substitute teacher. The most common reason for using substitute teachers occurs when the regular teacher is ill. However, substitutes are also used when regular teachers are on leave for personal business, professional training, or family emergency. Students are expected to be extra courteous to substitute teachers. Any misconduct in the classroom will be dealt with immediately.

Our school uses only highly skilled professionals as substitute teachers. Parents need not be concerned about the presence of a substitute in their child's class.

SAFETY DRILLS

Fire drills will be held on a regular basis, without prior announcement. To ensure safety, students are to move quickly, quietly and in order according to the fire exit directions posted in each classroom.

Lockdown and evacuation drills will be held periodically throughout the school year. Students are to remain quiet and follow teacher directions during drills.

Immediate evacuation of the building and notification of authorities are the standard procedures. The school staff, teachers, and administrators are well prepared for a variety of emergency situations, including bomb threats. Parents should feel confident concerning all emergency procedures at the school. A severe weather alert drill is held once a year.

UNAUTHORIZED ARTICLES

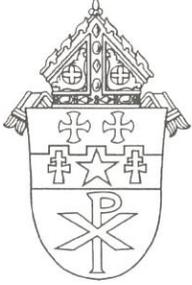
Common sense and consideration is the best guide in determining whether or not to bring personal possessions to school. In general, students should not bring toys or unusual items to school unless they are intended for a specific purpose in the classroom.

VALUABLES

The school administrators and staff cannot be responsible for valuables which students bring to school. It is recommended that students leave all valuables at home. If special circumstances make it necessary for a student to bring substantial cash or other important possessions to school, these items can be safeguarded by registering them and leaving them at the main office.

VANDALISM

Our school and school equipment is public property. Willfully damaging or destroying this property is cause for immediate suspension and possible expulsion. The school requires that vandal damage be paid for before a student is allowed to return to class. If students accidentally cause damage, they should report it to their teacher immediately, so that the damage is not misconstrued as vandalism.



OFFICE FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS DIOCESE OF GREENSBURG

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Tuition Policy

(Established January 2011 – Revised January 2013)

Tuition Policy

The Office for Catholic Schools has coordinated a tuition policy to be utilized by the Catholic schools within the Diocese of Greensburg. This policy has been established to ensure that the tuition procedures and guidelines are consistent and fair among families with children attending Catholic schools within the Diocese. This policy has been implemented through the Office for Catholic Schools, under the approval of the Superintendent of Catholic Schools. The Office for Catholic Schools reserves the right to adjust this policy and coinciding procedures as deemed necessary.

Establishing Tuition

The applicable school administration works with the Office for Catholic Schools to establish a tuition rate that is representative of the school budget needs. The tuition rate is also a product of the communities and families that we serve. Tuition is not the only revenue source to fund the Catholic school education. The school revenues also include Diocesan contributions, Parish supported financial aid, business partnerships and local fundraising.

Tuition Planning and Payment Schedule

Schools establish and announce their tuition rate for the following the school year. Tuition rates are established based on budgetary needs and enrollment.

End of January – beginning of February – Catholic schools open their application process for the upcoming school year and FACTS application forms are available for parents/guardians to submit for financial aid. If families have applied to FACTS by March 15, and the student attends the school during the upcoming school year, the FACTS application fee will be deducted from the student's tuition.

End of May – Once parents/guardians have completed their financial aid (FACTS) application process and this information has been verified, tuition award letters are disseminated by the school to parents/guardians noting the tuition amount with any scholarships and financial aid awards.

June 30 – Last date for returning families to apply for financial aid. New families apply for financial aid upon enrollment.

July 10 – Last date for returning the Tuition Payment Contract. No financial aid or admission is guaranteed following this date.

Options for payment:

- One lump sum payment by <school to insert date of choice> of the upcoming school year.
- Two equal payments – First payment due by <school to insert date of choice> of the upcoming school year and the second payment due by <school to insert date of choice> of the current school year.
- Monthly payment plan on FACTS that will bring the balance to zero by June 30 or earlier of the school year completed in June.
- Any of the above options, but paid through a credit card if available. If a credit card payment method is chosen, an additional service fee may be charged, and this service fee will be announced on an annual basis.
- No cash will be accepted for payment. Payment must be made by check, money order or credit card.
- An approved (by school administration) combination of the above options.

- The chosen method for payment must be indicated on the Tuition Payment Agreement, and signed and returned by the parents/guardians.

*One of the above options must be chosen for payment.

If a hardship may exist, the parents/guardians may ask for a meeting with the school administration to request an adjustment to the amount of tuition to be paid. Such a request is approved on a case by case basis by an administrative review team or school administration.

Tuition Payment in Default

If a payment is not made, for whatever reason, the following process will be followed:

- a) The parents/guardians will be notified in writing of the payment not being received.
- b) The parents/guardians will be given 20 calendar days to bring the account to current status or meet with school administration to have an adjusted payment contract approved (not a guarantee).
- c) If the account is not brought to current status, and an adjusted payment contract is not agreed upon and approved by school administration, the student enrollment will cease after the 20th day.

The parents/guardians must agree to the following:

- To pay all amounts due under the tuition payment agreement/policy. If another person is responsible to pay any part of the amount due for the child(ren), and she/he fails to pay when due, the parents/guardians must agree to pay all amounts due immediately upon notification by the school;
- To pay for the entire semester if the child(ren) leave before that semester is completed;
- To abide by the student-parent handbook and know that if the child(ren) violates any portion of the student-parent handbook and/or is removed or expelled from school for any reason consistent with the student-parent handbook or Office for Catholic Schools policy, then the parents/guardians are not entitled to a proportionate refund of tuition. In addition, the parents/guardians are legally responsible for paying any tuition owed at the time the child(ren) stopped attending the school.
- To be legally responsible for paying the tuition described above within the tuition payment agreement and at the applicable timeframes. The school may take any action available and consistent with applicable law in order to collect unpaid tuition owed by the parents/guardians including but not limited to withholding academic transcripts.

Transfer of Students with Past Balance

No students will be accepted at any Catholic school within the Diocese of Greensburg if they are carrying a past due balance from any other Catholic school within the Diocese of Greensburg.