

## **Parent's Role in Education**

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We at Owensboro Catholic Middle School consider it a privilege to work with parents in the education of children because we believe parents are the primary educators of their children. Therefore, it is your right and your duty to become the primary role models for the development of your child's life – spiritually, intellectually, physically, emotionally. Your choice of Owensboro Catholic Middle School involves a commitment and exhibits a concern for helping your child to recognize God as the greatest good in his / her life.

Good example is the strongest teacher. Your personal relationship with God, with each other and with the Church community will affect the way your child relates to God and others. Ideals taught in school are not well rooted in the child unless these are nurtured by the example of good Catholic / Christian morality and by an honest personal relationship with God in your family life.

Once you have chosen to enter into partnership with us at Owensboro Catholic Middle School, we trust you will be loyal to this commitment. During these formative years your child needs constant support from both parents and faculty in order to develop his / her spiritual, intellectual, emotional and physical growth. Neither parents nor teachers can afford to doubt the sincerity of the efforts of their educational partner in the quest of challenging, yet nourishing, the student to reach his / her potential. It is vital that both parents and teachers remember that allowing oneself to be caught between the student and the other partner will never have positive results. To divide authority between school and home or within the home will only teach disrespect for all authority. If there is an incident at school, we ask that you as parents first make an inquiry of the complete incident with the teacher or principal. Evidence of mutual respect between parents and teachers will model good, mature behavior and relationships.

Students are naturally eager to grow and learn. However, sometimes in the process of maturation new interests may cause them to lose focus. As this natural process occurs, the student needs both understanding and discipline. At times your child may perceive discipline as restrictive. However, boundaries and limits provide a young person with both guidance and security.

It is essential that a child take responsibility for grades he / she has earned and be accountable for homework, long-term assignments, major tests, service projects and any other assignments. This responsibility also extends to times of absence.

Together, let us begin this year with a commitment to partnership as we support one another in helping your child to become the best person he / she is capable of becoming.

## **Parents As Partners**

As partners in the educational process at Owensboro Catholic Middle School, we ask parents:

*To* set rules, times, and limits so that your child:

- Gets enough sleep on school nights;
- Arrives at school on time;
- Is dressed according to the school uniform policy;
- Completes class assignments on time;

*To* support the religious and educational goals of the school.

*To* support and cooperate with the discipline policy of the school.

*To* treat teachers with respect and courtesy in discussing student problems.

*To* actively participate in school activities such as the School-Parent Association, Parent-Teacher Conferences, and Fundraising.

*To* see that the student pays for any damage to school books or property due to carelessness or neglect on the part of the student.

*To* notify the school office of any changes of address or important phone numbers.

*To* meet all financial obligations to the school system.

*To* inform the school of any special situation regarding the student's well-being, safety, and health.

*To* complete and return to school any requested information promptly.

*To* read school notes and any other correspondence to show interest in the student's total education.

## **CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE:**

The goal of Christian discipline is self-discipline. The student chooses one form of behavior over another. Students must learn to accept the consequences of their chosen behavior. Students who choose specific actions which violate the rights of the school community must be dealt with in Christian justice. In order to maintain and promote good order and discipline, students must comply with the regulations listed. Failure to obey the rules will result in disciplinary action.

**Citizenship:**

Each student is responsible for displaying the qualities of good citizenship. Students should show their best conduct in the halls, in the cafeteria, in church, in the classroom, or when traveling to or from school. Immaculate Parish and the owners of homes near the school have the right to expect no trespassing on their property. These neighbors are expected to report any action of students that is harmful to their property or to other students. Proper behavior will help the students become better citizens. The staff will place special emphasis on honesty, morality, and courtesy.

**Bus conduct:**

1. The students must observe the directions of the bus driver as well as obey all bus regulations. All school rules apply to bus behavior as well as the following regulations:
  - A. Students are to conduct themselves at all times according to the rules of behavior established by Daviess County Public Schools and bus driver.
  - B. No one is to change seats after boarding the bus unless requested by a school representative or the bus driver.
  - C. Voices are to be kept to a hushed tone, and when the bus driver requests silence, it must immediately be established.
  - D. Any behavior deemed unacceptable by the driver will be reported to the Principal. Serious misconduct may result in immediate ineligibility to ride the bus.
  - E. Stay back from the bus until it comes to a complete stop and the doors are open. When boarding the bus, students are to be in a single line and wait until each student has stepped onto the bus before the next student starts to board.
  - F. Students should stay seated until the bus stops and then exit the bus slowly and carefully.
2. No food, drinks, candy, or gum are permitted on the bus. No mp3 players, iPods, gameboys, etc. are permitted.

**Cafeteria conduct:**

In order to keep the cafeteria clean and attractive as well as a pleasant place to be, appropriate behavior is expected of all students. All school rules, as well as the rules listed below, must be observed in the cafeteria.

1. Students must stay seated. The Principal and Administrative Staff will serve as cafeteria monitors to supervise during the lunch periods. Respect must be shown to the monitor, parent volunteers and to the cafeteria staff.
2. There must be no loud talking, cutting in line, pushing, etc. Students may not throw any objects or food.

3. All food is to be eaten in the lunchroom; not carried out in the hallway or classroom. Students are responsible for their own eating area, which includes the use of napkins and cleaning the area around them. Students should also check the floor space near their places. All trays and silverware are to be deposited in the proper places. Students will be assigned turns to wipe the tables at the end of the lunch period.
4. Students will not be permitted to leave the cafeteria except to use the restroom during their lunchtime. Students must have the permission of the monitor on duty to do so.
5. Restroom use should take place during the scheduled lunch period, not after the lunch bell has rung to avoid being late for class.

### **Church conduct:**

Proper etiquette is expected of all students while they are in the Church. Acceptable church behavior will be explained in the classroom.

### **Classroom conduct:**

1. Students have the responsibility to conform to the rules of conduct set up by a teacher within a classroom or area of responsibility. Each classroom will have a posted set of rules, which are consistent with the school's general rules.
2. At the start of the school year, the teacher and students will discuss the rules for their classroom. There will also be rules for when the teacher is out of the room. Students are expected to comply with these rules or face the consequences. Consequences are determined by the individual teacher and should conform to the basic discipline philosophy of Owensboro Catholic Middle School.

### **Destruction of school property:**

Recompense for willful or careless destruction of school property or that of another student must be made by the offender. The consequence and/or fine for the defacement or destruction of school property will be determined by the extent of the damage or seriousness of the act. Parents will be notified.

### **Prohibitions:**

1. Possession, use, or distribution of any narcotic substance, alcoholic beverage, controlled drug (other than a drug prescribed for the specific student), or any intoxicant.
2. Student smoking or possessing smoking paraphernalia (Cigarettes, lighters, matches, etc.) on school property or while traveling to and from school
3. Gum chewing on school property
4. Disruptive behavior in halls, classrooms, rest rooms, and library, e.g., running, tripping, pushing, etc.

5. Improper or profane language (verbal or written)
6. Throwing things, such as metal objects, snowballs, paper wads, or any other objects.
7. Stealing and cheating
8. Defacing or destruction of personal property, property of others, or school property
9. Fighting and "rough play" such as pulling and punching, pretend Karate, etc.
10. Being out of class without permission (students must be on time for class unless they have a pass from another teacher).
11. Possession of any unauthorized dangerous instruments, e.g. knives, pocket knives, sharp items, fireworks, firearms, etc.
12. Bringing valuables to school, such as: PDA's, mp3 players, iPod's, etc. to school.
13. Public display of romantic affection.
14. Eating or drinking outside cafeteria unless given permission by Principal.

## **DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES**

### **General Procedures**

The classroom teacher is best situated to ensure high standards of behavior in a classroom. He or she will implement procedures to help students realize expected standards of behavior, the mistakes that lead to unacceptable behavior, and alternative behaviors that may prove more successful. Teacher options include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Verbal corrections
2. Room cleaning
3. Note/phone call/e-mail to parent
4. Extra assignment
5. Change in seating assignment
6. Student/Teacher Conference
7. Loss of privilege
8. Referral to counselor
9. Repairing/replacing that which is damaged
10. Loss of participation in extracurricular activities
11. Detention (lunch, after school)
12. Temporary Suspension (Supervised Isolation)
13. Referral to office

Parents are an essential element in maintaining the school's climate. Parents will be alerted to an ongoing problem by the teacher so that parents can encourage their student to become self-disciplined. Teachers should document all student conflicts and parents contacts. Teachers may refer students to the principal for repeated offenses that do not get resolved or for serious offenses. **The principal reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of an action if any doubt arises.**

## Serious Offenses:

- Repeated/chronic violation of school regulations
- Repeated/chronic disruptive classroom behavior
- Cheating of any type (may result in a failing grade)
- Disrespect toward any adult or child on school property
- Bullying behavior towards another student or students
- Fighting or excessive physical aggression against another student
- Sexual harassment
- Immoral behavior
- Possession of firearms, other weapons
- Use/possession of illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco products, or drug paraphernalia
- Threatening behavior towards an adult or student on school property
- Membership/identification/use of symbols pertaining to gangs

Serious violations of the discipline code may lead to expulsion and become part of the student's discipline record.

1. Students having a serious violation of the discipline code:
  - a. will have parents and pastor notified by letter
  - b. will serve detentions, Saturday School, or suspensions.
2. While teachers may recommend a consequence for serious offenses, only the Principal or Assistant Principal may actually give these consequences.
3. The following behavior may warrant the following actions:
  - Deceit 2 to 4 Discipline Marks, Detentions or Saturday School
  - Cheating on a quiz or minor assignment 1 Discipline Mark, 1 Detention and a zero on quiz or assignment
  - Cheating on major assignment or test 2 Discipline Marks, 2 Detentions, and a zero on test or assignment
  - Fireworks 3 Discipline Marks, possible detention or suspension
  - Stealing or vandalism 3 Discipline Marks, detentions, possible suspension or expulsion depending on degree of seriousness
  - Fighting/causing physical injury: 1 Discipline Mark to expulsion
  - Possession of weapons: Suspension to expulsion
  - Other serious misconduct: 1 Discipline Mark to expulsion
  - Repeated violation rules: Discipline Board

## **Lunch Detention**

Lunch Detention may be issued for a breach of classroom and / or school rules. Students assigned to lunch detention will eat lunch in a teacher's classroom or in the cafeteria at the detention table, which is placed away from the other lunch tables. Students are not allowed to talk or socialize while at the detention table. Lunch detention may be assigned for consecutive days.

## **Detention**

Detention may be issued for a breach of classroom and / or school rules. Any staff member of Owensboro Catholic Middle School can issue a detention. Parents are given written notification of the detention. The day, date, and time of the detention are at the discretion of the Principal who monitors the detention. **Detention takes precedence over extracurricular activities, appointments, practices, lessons, etc.**

The purpose of a detention is to help the student identify misbehavior, accept responsibility, and correct it. Students accumulate 1 Discipline Mark for each detention.

1. A student receiving a detention slip is required to take the slip home for parent's signature and present the slip to the presiding teacher on the day he/she serves the detention.
2. Students needing to reschedule the detention must see the Principal.
3. If the student fails to take the detention by the date assigned and does not contact the Principal in advance the penalty will be an additional detention(s). Failure to serve these detentions will result in being assigned Saturday School or suspension.
4. Monthly reports of detention will be mailed to parents.
5. No one will be permitted to serve if they come in late unless they have written permission from the Principal.
6. Students will:
  - a. be in uniform
  - b. work in school or community service or write a reflective essay

## **Discipline Mark System**

Violations of the school's discipline policy results in the accumulation of Discipline Marks. The accumulation of Discipline Marks reflects a student's entire discipline record at OCMS for the year. For every detention students receive, they also receive a Discipline Mark. Students may also receive Discipline Marks for more serious offenses that do not require detention. The accumulation of Discipline Marks could lead to expulsion.

When the student has accumulated:

**8** Discipline Marks, (1) one Saturday School, parents/guardian notified

**12** Discipline Marks, (2) Saturday Schools, and the student is placed on a nine (9) week probation period. In addition, the Student and parents/guardian must meet with the Principal and a counselor to discuss a program for improved student behavior.

**16** Discipline Marks, a student is suspended from school for one day and will not be readmitted without a parent conference.

**20** Discipline Marks in a year, the student will be suspended for two days or until a Discipline/Attendance Board has been held. The Principal and Discipline/Attendance Board may recommend expulsion at this time or allow a student to return to school under a strict contract which spells out conditions for continued enrollment.

### **Temporary Suspension (Supervised Isolation)**

Temporary suspension is a disciplinary procedure by which a student is removed from the school/class for a specified period of time within the school day. This gives the student an opportunity to realize that certain aspects of his or her behavior and attitude are unacceptable to the classroom or school community. Parents will be notified when their child has spent time in temporary suspension.

### **In-school Suspension:**

In School Suspension is a disciplinary procedure by which a student is kept in school, but is removed from the classroom. Students will be assigned space in the school building for in-school suspension. The teacher(s) will assign sufficient work for the day. The student must stay seated in this area at all times during the day, except for restroom breaks and lunch. Students who are given an In-School Suspension will be required to report to school each day and work with a substitute teacher **paid for by the suspended student's parents**. The student will have no contact with other students during the in-school suspension. Students will not be allowed to participate in any extracurricular activities on the day(s) of the in-school suspension. Parents will be asked to meet with the teacher and principal immediately after the discipline infraction to discuss the arrangements for the in-school suspension.

### **Saturday School**

Saturday school will be in session from 8:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. on scheduled Saturdays. Doors will be open from 8:15 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. No student will be admitted after 8:30 a.m. Tardy students will be required to report to the Principal before 8:15 a.m. on Monday morning for discipline action.

1. Saturday School will be used for completing work assigned by classroom teachers and for study after all other work is completed.
2. Students will not be allowed to go to their lockers or use the telephone (emergency excepted).

3. Students will be expected to remain busy throughout the entire morning. The monitoring teacher may make assignments to keep the student busy.
4. Students must be in regular uniform.
5. There will a short break at 10:00 a.m.

Failure to comply with the rules listed above will result in the student being sent home immediately by the teacher in charge. The student would then report to the Principal before 8:15 a.m. Monday morning.

Any student who is ill, has a death in the family, or is otherwise excused should report to the Principal before 8:15 a.m. the following Monday morning for reassignment. If you fail to be in attendance, students put their time at OCMS in jeopardy.

### **Probation:**

1. Probation is a disciplinary procedure by which a student who is in school is evaluated with regard to attitude and behavior over a specified period of time by the teacher and the Principal to determine the student's resolve to remain in the school community. When a student is placed on probation, the following procedures are generally followed.
  - A. The Principal conferences with the student, parent and teacher to advise of reasons, conditions and length of the probation.
  - B. After the period of probation, the Principal, teacher, parent and student meet to decide whether the probation is to be terminated or if any other disciplinary actions are necessary.
  - C. If probation continues, expectations and conditions will be reviewed, and either continues or modified as appropriate to meet the goals of the probation. A follow-up parent conference is scheduled.

### **Suspension:**

Suspension is a disciplinary procedure by which a student is removed from the school for a specified period of time to give the student the opportunity to realize that certain aspects of his/her attitude and behavior are unacceptable to the school community. Students who receive a Suspension will not be allowed on the campus during the time of their suspension. Students must complete all class work and tests from the days of suspension but failing grades will be recorded for this work. Students will not be allowed to participate in any extracurricular activities for one week from the date of the incident. The principal will convene a conference with the teacher and student before imposing suspension. Exact reasons for the suspension and conditions to be met before the suspension can be revoked will be detailed in the suspension letter. A copy of the suspension letter is sent to the student's parents. A conference must be conducted with the parents prior to the student's return to school.

## **Expulsion:**

Expulsion is a disciplinary procedure of last resort. It will be applied only in the most serious of discipline incidents or after all other discipline measures have been applied without success. The Principal, OCS Director and Priest Pastor will confer before a student is expelled. Expelled students may not attend school or receive any school services. Students may be expelled for a one-time event of a very serious nature or a continuous pattern of infractions that prove detrimental to the learning environment. Exact circumstances cannot be determined in advance.

## **Bullying Policy**

Owensboro Catholic Middle School has an educational plan to address the problem of bullying behavior in the school. The Counselor will conduct appropriate lessons that deal with identifying bullies, how to deal with a bully, and empowering students observing the bullying to report the behavior or to stand up for the victim. Students will be made aware how they can report bullying behavior confidentially. The following guidelines are addressed by each teacher:

1. Bullying is not allowed in our classrooms.
2. We don't tease, call names, or put people down.
3. We don't hit, shove, kick, or punch.
4. If we see someone being bullied, we speak up and stop it (if we can) or go for help right away.
5. When we do things as a group, we make sure that everyone is included and no one is left out.
6. We make new students feel welcome.
7. We listen to each other's opinions.
8. We treat each other with kindness and respect.
9. We respect each other's property. (School property, too.)
10. We look for the good in others and value differences.

**One or more of the following disciplinary actions when bullying behavior is observed or reported will be followed depending on the severity of the incident:**

- A. Apology
- B. Detention
- C. Persistent bullying could result in one or more of the following:
  1. Detention
  2. Parent/Principal conferencing
  3. In-School suspension
  4. Saturday School
  5. Out-of-School suspension

## **Threatening Behavior (Diocesan Handbook #6141)**

Any behavior deemed threatening is inappropriate and may result in immediate suspension and/or dismissal from school. Threatening behavior is defined as statements, gestures, or actions intended to cause harm to another and/or damage to property.

Behaviors deemed threatening are to be addressed in the following manner.

1. Student exhibiting threatening behavior is removed from the situation and placed under the direct supervision of appropriate school personnel.
2. Student's parent/guardian is notified. OCS Director, Priest/Pastor and Superintendent of Schools are also apprised.
3. It is possible to have a range of penalties that take into consideration the age of the child. Children who make threatening statements may be required to attend a conference in which the student and parent are clearly told that any further threats may result in suspension and a required threat assessment.
4. The school will need professional assurance that the student does not present a danger to him or herself, or to others at the school, the student may be suspended from school and may not attend any school activity or be present on school grounds pending a threat assessment and a final placement decision. The expense of any required counseling will be borne by the parents/guardian.
5. The threat assessment results and recommendations are to be shared with the principal and/or counselor who will make a final placement/reinstatement decision and follow up.

## **Homicidal Threats**

If a homicidal threat is made, the above steps will be followed, and the police will be contacted. The student(s) who have been threatened, as well as their parents, are to be notified as soon as possible.

## **False Threats**

Any student falsely reporting threatening behavior will be subject to disciplinary action which may include suspension or expulsion.

## **Search and Seizure**

If a teacher or principal believes that a student is carrying a dangerous, harmful, or restricted item on his or her person, the principal will ask the student for it. If the student refuses, the student will be asked to empty pockets, book bags, backpacks, purses, etc. If the student does not comply then the parent will be asked to come to school immediately to meet with the principal about the matter. The student will not return to the classroom until the issue is resolved.

**Lockers and desks are school property. Students are granted their use and must care for them properly. School personnel may search lockers or desks at any time without notice.**

### **Restricted Items**

Items such as, but not limited to, gum, candy, questionable books, pictures, or magazines, electronic games, radios, compact disc players, iPods, mp3 players, or any electronic listening device, laser lights, palm pilots, CDs, anything that will detract from a learning situation, and all items listed under the *Serious Offenses* section of this handbook are not allowed at school. These items are also not allowed on field trips.

The school administration, in accordance with state laws, will determine the appropriate disciplinary measures to be taken concerning the presence of these items in the school. **Items that are taken away from students will be returned only to the parents.**

### **Cell Phones**

Cell phones must be turned off and remain in the student's locker or backpack during school hours. If a student is found to be using the phone or if the phone rings during the school day, the phone will be confiscated and kept in the school office until the end of the day at which time the student will be given a detention in exchange for the cell phone.

### **Discipline Board**

The Discipline Board consists of the Principal, Assistant Principal, Counselor, and two faculty members. The committee conducts hearings on major violations of school rules. The student and/or his/her parents may request two faculty members of his/her choosing to sit on the Board. Using input from teachers and counselor the committee makes recommendations to the Principal on the status of a student. The committee will meet as needed throughout the year.

At the end of the year, the Discipline Board may recommend to the Principal that a student whose record indicates an inability to meet the normal expectations for behavior and academics be excluded from school the following year. The parents and student may appeal this recommendation to the Board by requesting a hearing within seven calendar days.