



**Elementary School**

**Parent-Student Handbook  
2023-24**

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## Mission Statement

Our Lady of the Elms, a private Catholic school rooted in the Dominican tradition, educates girls and young women to live their lives boldly with purpose, confidence, kindness, resilience and faith.

## Belief Statements

As a school we believe that:

1. The Dominican pillars of prayer, community, preaching and study be understood and practiced by each member of the school community.
2. Students, faculty and administration need to witness to the presence of Jesus Christ by our commitment to the development of our faith and conscience inspired by Christian values, especially those of truth, justice and peace.
3. Each student is a valued individual with unique physical, social, emotional and intellectual strengths and needs.
4. Students, teachers, administrators, parents and the entire school community share the responsibility for advancing the school's mission.
5. A student's self-esteem is enhanced by positive relationships and mutual respect among and between students, staff, parents and families.
6. All students can learn and should be encouraged to view learning as a lifelong skill.
7. Students learn best when they are actively engaged in the learning process.
8. Students need to demonstrate their understanding of essential knowledge and skills.
9. Students need to be actively involved in solving problems and producing quality work.
10. Students need to apply their learning in meaningful contexts.

## Daily Schedule (K-4)

**7:00 a.m. Before School:** Students arriving to school before 7:45 a.m. should be dropped off in the circle and follow the sidewalk to door #4. From 7:45-8 a.m., students should enter at Door #7 by the preschool classrooms. Any student arriving after 8 a.m. is tardy and a parent/guardian is required to accompany them into school at Door #6 to sign them in at the office. Student will obtain a tardy slip from the lower school administrative assistant. No students in grades K-4 will be given access to Door #7 after 8 a.m. For the safety of our students, we strictly adhere to this policy during the school year.

**7:45 a.m. Arrival:** Students will enter the building and go directly to their respective classrooms. Teachers are in the building supervising their students during this important time of informal interaction between the teachers and students. This

time is crucial for children to prepare for classes, to deliver messages to their teachers and to organize themselves for the day.

**7:55 a.m. Warning Bell:** The bell rings, alerting students to go immediately to their seats for the start of school.

**8:00 a.m. Classes Begin:** The bell rings, signaling the start of classes. Students are expected to be in their seats and ready to begin the day. Students who arrive after the 8 a.m. bell must go to the office where they sign in and receive a tardy slip, which they present to their homeroom teacher.

**8:05 a.m. Attendance, Lunch Count, Morning Message and Prayer**

**Lunch:** Specific times vary depending on grade level. Also during this time students have recess.

**3:00 p.m. Dismissal:** All students are to be picked up no later than 3:15 p.m. If students are not picked up by parents by that time, they are considered part of the After School Program. A fee will be charged for this service.

## **Attendance**

Regular attendance and punctuality are necessary for success in school and are strong traits for later success in life. Upon enrolling in Our Lady of the Elms, students assume the obligation to attend regularly and with punctuality. Attending school and being on time helps students receive the full educational benefit from the school's programs, in addition to developing habits of organization, self-discipline and meeting responsibilities. By Ohio law, the responsibility to ensure that the child attends school is shared jointly by the parent and the child, and our school staff will work with parents and students to encourage students to attend regularly and with punctuality.

### **Reasons for Absence**

School officials are permitted to excuse absences that, in their judgment, are for good and sufficient reasons. Our Lady of the Elms School will consider an absence "excused" if it falls into any of the categories listed below:

- Personal illness, injury or disease
- Family illness
- Medical and court appointments
- Religious holidays
- Death in the immediate family
- Family emergency

**Absence on Any Day**

***A call must be placed to the office at 330.864.7210 extension 1429 or an email sent to [kdubravetz@theelms.org](mailto:kdubravetz@theelms.org) between 7-9 a.m. if your child will be absent or late.***

If parents do not contact the office, we are required to call the parents. Please help us meet this requirement by calling in absences. *Continued illness does not require a daily call once information has been communicated to the office/teachers.*

**Make-Up Work due to Illness-Grades 1-4**

If your child is absent due to illness:

- The time period allowed for turning in class work following an absence is one day for each day she is out (e.g., if she is out three days, then she may turn in her work up to three days after she returns for full credit).
- If the work is turned in later than the set number of days and no accommodations were made between you, your daughter and her teacher(s), then at day four she will receive half credit.
- Work may be picked up in the hall outside the main office after 3:30 p.m. of the first day the student is absent. Please contact the office and/or the teacher to request make-up work.

**Tardiness -Grades K-4**

- The school day begins promptly at 8 a.m. Students must be in their seats, ready for the day to begin at this time.
- All students must arrive between 7:45-7:55 a.m. Since it takes approximately 5 minutes for the students to go to their lockers, unpack, etc., they should arrive no later than 7:55 a.m. in order to be ready for class by 8 a.m.
- If students are not ready to begin class at 8 a.m., they are tardy and must stop in the office for a tardy slip.
- Any student arriving to school after 11 a.m. will be logged absent ½ day.

Excessive and repeated tardiness results in missed instructional time. Arriving on time ensures your student will make the most of their school day and helps to support school success.

**Our Lady of the Elms tardy policy is as follows:**

After being tardy 7 times in a quarter, a letter will be sent home reminding parents of this policy. After being tardy 10 times in a quarter, a conference between parents and the Director of the Lower school is required. The Director reserves the right to issue alternative disciplinary actions for repeated offenders.

## **Unexcused Absence**

Excessive UNEXCUSED tardiness or UNEXCUSED absenteeism may be cause to review the awarding of credit. Senate Bill No. 181 defines unexcused absences as follows:

- Habitual: five consecutive unexcused absences; seven unexcused absences in one month; and 12 unexcused absences in one year.
- Chronic: seven consecutive unexcused absences; 10 unexcused absences in one month; and 12 unexcused absences in one year.
- At the time of the sixth unexcused absence, a review conference with the parents, student and appropriate faculty and administration will take place to determine continued eligibility for course credit. This policy does not apply in cases of prolonged illness. Prolonged absences (five or more consecutive days) require a note from a doctor. If a student has a chronic illness that affects attendance, a written explanation by the physician must be on file at the school.

## **Leaving School Early (Early Exit)**

If a student leaves school early for any reason, excused or unexcused, she is classified as “early exit.” Prior to the early exit, the student must present a note to the teacher indicating the time the student will be picked up and the reason for the early exit. Parents are to come to the office and sign out the student. Please do not go to the classroom to meet your student.

## **Student Conduct**

Our Lady of the Elms School community is composed of many individuals and groups including students, parents, teachers and campus staff. The nature and quality of the interaction of these individuals and groups defines the climate within our school. To ensure all interactions are respectful, meaningful and supportive of all members of The Elms community, students understand their role, and their responsibilities for working effectively with others to ensure a successful experience for all.

The following section helps to clarify our roles in making the Elms an effective and caring place to learn.

## **Responsibilities and Expectations of Elms Students**

The typical student at Our Lady of the Elms possesses the characteristics necessary for success in reaching personal goals, as well as in furthering the mission of the school. Our Lady of the Elms students are expected to:

- Maintain the high standard of academic achievement established by the school staff;
- Maintain an enthusiastic attitude about learning;
- Be respectful of the rights of others;
- Represent the school positively at all times; and
- Participate in activities and demonstrate conduct that furthers the mission of the school. This includes participation in religious activities. Students of all religious traditions are expected to attend all activities and participate respectfully where appropriate.

### **Responsibilities and Expectations for Parents of Elms Students**

Parents of an Elms student have high expectations for the development of their child in the areas of personal, social, intellectual and spiritual growth and are expected to participate in activities which support the total school program. The parents of Elms students are expected to:

- Support and actively encourage their child to benefit from the total Elms experience;
- Regularly check Digital Academy for important class and school information;
- Respect the time and talent of their child's teacher(s);
- Communicate with, and support the efforts of, the school faculty and staff;
- Volunteer and participate in Elms Community Club (ECC) activities;
- Meet all financial obligations in a timely manner.

### **Responsibilities and Expectations of Faculty and Staff Members**

The faculty and staff members of Our Lady of the Elms are expected to:

- Provide a rich school environment that addresses the personal, social, intellectual and spiritual needs of students from Pre-K through fourth grade. Foundational to this school environment is its Catholic and Dominican heritage and tradition;
- Assist the students in understanding how a person of faith views the world and encourage students to integrate a value-oriented perspective into all aspects of life;
- Provide a developmentally appropriate curriculum which maintains high and attainable standards for all of the students;
- Communicate with families
- Prepare students for the expanding roles of women in careers, community and leadership positions;
- Follow Ohio state standards and Diocesan curriculum when teaching;
- Prepare the students for the future and model learning as a lifelong process;
- Demonstrate a high level of professionalism in word and deed.

## **All-Campus Areas**

The rules stated in this Handbook are in effect in the school (across campus), on the school grounds, in vehicles involved in transporting the student to and from school and school activities, and at places where the student travels as a member of a school activity. In addition, the school reserves the right to discipline students for conduct outside of school that seriously impacts another student or the student herself.

## **Rules for Student Conduct**

### **Clothing**

A student shall dress according to the uniform guidelines described in this Handbook. It is the teacher's responsibility to enforce the dress code. Dress code violations may result in: reminders to students, notes to parents, or if deemed necessary, a call home to request a change of clothes.

### **Attendance**

A student must attend school regularly and consistently in compliance with state laws and campus guidelines. A student must come to school and to all assigned classes and activities at the designated time. Students may not leave the school grounds after arrival. This rule includes walking to other buildings on the Elms property, unless accompanied by a faculty or a staff member.

### **Disruption of School or Classroom**

No student shall act in a disruptive manner as to interfere with staff members or students in their attempt to accomplish the mission of the school. No student will encourage another student to act in such a disruptive manner. Also included in this rule is any action of passive obstruction involved in failure to participate in school activities. Students who are a disruption to others will immediately be removed from the classroom. Parents will be notified if students are disruptive to the point of being incapable of readmission to class.

### **Threats, Intimidation and Harassment**

No student shall threaten or intimidate with physical or verbal violence or other means any student, teacher or other school employee or visitor. Please note that our first priority is the physical, psychological, and emotional well-being of all students entrusted to our care. Bullying, disrespect and/or any other action to harm another person will absolutely not be tolerated.

### **Non-Discrimination Statement: Bigotry and Intolerance**

No student shall display racial, religious or national origin bigotry or intolerance. No student shall violate or urge others to violate the civil rights of any person.



In accordance with the Dominican Pillars of prayer, study, community and ministry, bigotry, intolerance and discrimination are counter to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. No student shall display intolerance or bigotry for racial, religious, ethnic or cultural differences or any other aspect of another person's being.

### **Damage to School Property**

No student shall cause damage to school property or encourage another student to do so. This section also prohibits such actions that could reasonably cause damage or require cleaning or maintenance, including chewing of gum and eating in undesignated areas. Gum chewing is not permitted in school or on the school grounds.

### **Theft**

No student shall steal property belonging to the school or to another individual, nor encourage another student to do so.

### **Profanity or Abusive Language**

No student shall use profanity or abusive language or make obscene gestures. Inappropriate pictures or written material are also prohibited under this rule.

### **Inappropriate Use of Technology Resources and the Internet**

No student shall use technology resources or the internet in an inappropriate manner as described in the campus guidelines, "Acceptable Use Policy for Computer Technology Resources and Internet Use at Our Lady of the Elms." This includes, but is not limited to, social media, texting, and applications or otherwise.

### **Cell Phone Usage and other Personal Electronic Devices ("OFF-and-AWAY")**

Cell phones and other personal electronic devices of any type (**This includes all Smart Watches**) MAY NOT be used during school hours (8 a.m.-3 p.m.). They must be kept in lockers and turned off during school hours. If a student uses such a device during school time, the following results will take place:

- 1st offense: Device will be given to office and may be picked up after school
- 2nd offense: Parent will be contacted to come and pick up the device
- 3rd offense: Disciplinary contract and parent conference

If a student must make a phone call during the school day, she should ask permission in the main office and use the office phone. If there is an emergency, please call the school office. We will provide your student with assistance to deal with the emergency should the need arise.

**Insubordination and Disrespect**

No student will display belligerent, defiant or disobedient behavior toward any staff member, supervising adult or guest to the school. Further, a student will comply immediately with the reasonable request of a faculty or staff member.

**Physical Injury and/or Fighting**

No student shall cause, or attempt to cause physical injury by fighting. Nor will a student behave in such a manner as could reasonably cause physical injury to another student, staff member or visitor to the school. Immediate removal from the instructional environment will occur if a student is a potential harm to herself or other students.

**Use or Possession of Prohibited Substances and “Look-a-Likes”**

No student shall use, possess or encourage another student to use or possess any mood-altering substance including, but not limited to, tobacco, alcohol, prescription drugs or other controlled substances. No student shall transmit such substances or any over-the-counter drugs or substances to another student.

**Use or Possession of Weapons and “Look-a-Likes”**

No student shall possess, handle or transmit any weapon or object which can reasonably be considered a weapon. This rule does not apply to instruments used for pre-planned classroom activities under teacher supervision.

**False Reporting of Fires and Bomb Threats**

No student shall set or urge another student to set a false fire alarm. No student shall submit or urge another student to submit a false bomb threat. Any violation of this rule will result in immediate and strict consequences. False reporting is legally prohibited and punishable by law.

**Fires and Fireworks**

No student shall set fires or ignite fireworks or other explosive devices.

**Additional Rules for Student Behavior in Specific Areas****Classrooms**

Students must behave in such a manner as to ensure that the learning activities can be conducted in an effective way. This means that the teacher is able to present the learning activities she has planned and that each student is able to derive the maximum benefit from these activities. To establish and maintain an effective classroom learning environment, students must do the following:

- Come to class on time;
- Come to class ready to learn. Bring the necessary books, completed homework assignments, papers, pencils, etc. that are needed to participate in class activities;
- Be aware of the objective(s) of the lesson that is being presented and avoid doing things during the class period that interfere with reaching the objective(s);
- Project a positive attitude and participate eagerly in the activities the teacher provides.
- Respond immediately when asked to do something;
- Ask for help if they are experiencing difficulty. Talk with the teacher and with their parents and make plans for improvement; and
- Help and encourage classmates, as appropriate, to enable them to achieve class goals.

### **Hallways**

Conduct in the hallways must enable students to safely move from one place to another. Also, movement through the hallway cannot interfere with teachers conducting their classes. Students will remain silent when passing through the halls when classes are in session. When students pass through the halls as a class (to specials, to lunch and to after care) they are accompanied by their teacher. Students should not be in the hallways unaccompanied or without permission of an adult in the building during instructional time.

### **Cafeteria**

Rules for the cafeteria are intended to establish an environment in which students can enjoy eating in a clean, friendly and orderly atmosphere. The guidelines and rules include the following:

- Rules for behavior are posted on the wall in the cafeteria.
- Teachers are to bring their students to the cafeteria at the exact time scheduled.
- Students remain seated throughout the lunchtime. They raise their hands to ask for assistance (in the event they forgot a fork, napkin, etc.).
- Students do not engage in inappropriate behavior. Inappropriate behavior includes, but is not limited to, loud talking, food throwing, disrespectful language to the adult monitor or other students and failing to immediately comply with the reasonable request of a lunchroom monitor.
- Students are responsible for keeping their area clean.
- When it is time to leave the cafeteria, the students must raise their hands, be recognized and then they will be dismissed by the lunchroom monitor who first checks the area to ensure things are neat and tidy.

## **Playground**

Rules for the playground are established to provide safety and fairness. Students are supervised at all times on the playground. Any and all directions from the adult monitor are to be followed to ensure safety and enjoyable play. Expectations for play on the playground are:

- No tag playing on any equipment.
- Hand hanging only on the monkey bars.
- Never pick up another child.
- Swings: only one on a seat, sitting, facing the school. No jumping from swings. For a turn, wait on the sidewalk in front of the swings.
- Slides: down only, feet first on bottom.
- Tires and Ladder: up only.
- Stairs: up or down.

## **Assemblies**

Students should exhibit behavior which permits the assembly to be conducted successfully. This typically involves the following guidelines:

- Pay attention to the presentation and be ready to respond when asked.
- Be silent unless the activity requests a response in some way.
- Clap, cheer, laugh or sing when appropriate to the situation.
- Refrain from yelling, hollering, shouting or any other disruptions to presenters, classmates and community members.

## **Consequences for Rules Violations**

Consequences are applied for inappropriate behavior to help the students understand there are consequences for all behaviors. Consequences also help the students understand they are responsible for their actions. In each case, consequences for inappropriate behavior are determined by the Director and Assistant Director:

- The severity and repetitiveness of the behavior;
- The developmental age of the student;
- The student's past behavior;
- The possible benefit of parent involvement; and/or
- Any mitigating circumstances involved in the incident.

After considering these factors, the consequences that may be imposed include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Warning
- Reprimand
- Parent contact
- Restitution
- Behavior contract
- Counseling
- Exclusion from an activity
- Suspension from school
- Expulsion from school

The Director will make the final decision regarding the consequence to be administered and will intervene when and where necessary.

### **Anti-Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Policy**

Harassment, intimidation or bullying behavior by any student/school personnel at Our Lady of the Elms is strictly prohibited, and such conduct may result in disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion from school. "Harassment, intimidation or bullying," in accordance with House Bill 276, means any intentional written, verbal, graphic or physical acts including electronically transmitted i.e., internet, cell phone or wireless hand-held device, either overt or covert, by a student or group of students toward other students/school personnel with the intent to harass, intimidate, injure, threaten, ridicule or humiliate. Such behaviors are prohibited on, or immediately adjacent to, school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity or while traveling on school-provided transportation that a reasonable person under the circumstances should know will have the effect of:

- Causing mental or physical harm to the other student/school personnel including placing an individual in reasonable fear of physical harm and/or damaging of student personal property.
- Is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment for the other student/school personnel.

Our Lady of the Elms will not tolerate behavior that infringes on the safety of any student, school employee or volunteer. A student, school employee or volunteer shall not intimidate or harass another student, school employee or volunteer through words or actions whether in the classroom, on school property, to and from school or at school-sponsored events, or from any computer not on school property. Further, out-of-school bullying that seriously impacts another student may result in discipline.

## **Cyberbullying**

Repetitive and hostile behavior with the intent to harm others through the use of information and communication technologies and other Web-based/online sites (also known as “cyberbullying”), such as the following:

1. Posting slurs on Websites where students congregate or on Web logs (personal online journals or diaries);
2. Sending abusive or threatening instant messages;
3. Using camera phones to take embarrassing photographs of students and posting them online; and,
4. Using Web sites to circulate gossip and rumors to other students; excluding others from an online group by falsely reporting them for inappropriate language to Internet service providers

## **Dress Guidelines**

The school dress code at Our Lady of the Elms Lower Elementary School is designed to promote an atmosphere on campus that is appropriate for a school setting. The type of clothing, hairstyle, and the way the students present themselves has a bearing on their conduct and attitude. These uniform regulations are intended to reduce distractions and to allow students to focus on their academic responsibilities in a manner demonstrating that we are all one community. To be just and fair to each individual, every student must follow the dress code exactly. For the good of the school and the uniform policy, students are expected to wear the school uniform and gym uniform correctly and parents are expected to support these regulations. The school administration will have the final say in the appropriateness of the uniform.

### **ALL UNIFORMS SHOULD BE MARKED CLEARLY WITH THE STUDENTS NAME**

#### **General Guidelines**

- Clothing should be neat, clean and comfortable. No under or over sizing.
- Jewelry: Necklaces, bracelets, and stud earrings should be appropriate for school activities including recess and gym class, jewelry must not be excessive or distracting.
- No makeup, nail polish, or fake nails
- Hair should be a natural color. Hair accessories should be simple and should not be distracting. Simple bows or headbands are appropriate, but students should avoid extra-large hair accessories or styles that serve to distract from the learning environment.
- No body paint, body glitter, stickers, decals or tattoos.

## **Enforcement**

If a student comes to school in violation of the uniform code, as determined by the school administration, her parents will be contacted by telephone and asked to bring the proper clothing to school. The student will not be permitted into class until properly attired. Missed class work must be made up. The dress code will be strictly enforced. Adherence to the dress code is expected of all students every day. Any item not outlined here concerning what constitutes appropriate appearance will be determined by the school administration.

## **Tops**

- Shirts must be tucked in.
- Navy or White polo shirts (short or long sleeves)
  1. Polo shirts must have the Elms logo.
  2. Plain polo shirts can be brought to the school to have the logo put on for a fee of \$5 per shirt (Please allow for at least a 7 day turn-around)
  3. Navy or White turtlenecks
  4. White oxford style shirts

## **Bottoms**

- Pant hems should rest at the top of your shoes and not bunch at the ankles.
- Shorts must be at least mid-thigh in length, but no longer than top of the knee.
- Navy Blue or tan flat front or pleated slacks or shorts
- Navy, brown or black belts (must be solid color leather or fabric style belt)
- Uniform plaid or navy blue jumper, skirt, or skorts.
- Skirts must be no shorter than 2" above the knee, but no longer than the bottom of the knee.
- Navy Bermuda walking shorts may be worn from May 1 through September 30.

## **Sweaters & Sweatshirts**

- Sweaters and sweatshirts are permitted when worn over another uniform top.
- No hooded sweatshirts are to be worn during the school day
- Navy Blue crew neck pullover sweaters, cardigan sweaters, V-neck vests
- Our Lady of the Elms sweatshirts (with official logo)
- Elms gear with jewels & other "unofficial" logos are considered "outerwear" and may only be worn to/from school and during recess.

## **Footwear**

### **Socks**

- Crew, ankle, or knee high lengths are permitted. No-show socks may not be worn to school.
- Solid navy, gray, black, or white socks, tights or knee highs.

### **Shoes**

- Boots may be worn to/from school in inclement weather.
- Shoes must be primarily navy, black, brown or tan with rubber soles.
- Solid white or solid black athletic shoes may also be worn with the uniform but no hint of any other color may be on the shoe.
- Shoes should be closed toe and closed heel style.
- A small pattern on the side of the shoe is permitted, but please NO metallic, mesh, plastic, canvas, clogs, sandals, flip-flops, crocs, mules, high heels, slippers or moccasins.

## **Gym Uniforms**

The Our Lady of the Elms black gym shirt (purchased through the school for \$10) with black, navy blue or gray shorts or sweatpants. Shorts may be worn May 1-September 30. After September 30, students may wear black leggings under their shorts. No leggings may be worn without shorts

Athletic shoes should be worn with the gym uniform but may not have lights.

## **Acceptable Use Policy**

No student may use the internet or email without a signed and dated "Acceptable Use Policy." Copies of Policy are included in beginning of the year packet and available in school office.

## **Birthdays and Holidays**

Birthdays are a special day for our students to celebrate. Their names will be announced over the PA system during morning announcements. If families would like to send treats to school, we ask that treats be kept simple. As healthy alternatives, we recommend granola bars and fruit snacks. Please also check with your child's teacher regarding allergies before sending in a snack. No gift deliveries or balloons are to be brought to the school.



In fairness to all students, birthday invitations will not be passed out at school unless every student in the class is receiving one. If not, parents are responsible for sending invitations via U.S. mail.

Please note: If birthdays fall on a Saturday, they will be celebrated on Friday; if birthdays occur on Sunday, they will be celebrated on Monday. Birthdays that occur during a holiday break will be celebrated on the last day of school before the break.

## **Emergency School Closing**

School will be in session unless you hear an announcement on a local television, radio station or via the Digital Academy communication system indicating that we are closed.

If you are tuned in to the radio or television, listen for the following:

- Our Lady of the Elms School

If you live in a school district outside of Akron, your residential school district may close, and the Elms may remain open. Usually, this means that the school bus will not transport students on that day. If you decide that coming to school on that day is too hazardous, you should keep your child at home. The day will be counted as an absence, however, the absence will be counted as excused.

Further, on some days, weather conditions may vary from area to area, such that the Elms might close even though surrounding communities are open.

## **Communications**

School communications will go home in a red folder with all students on Thursdays. The folder shall be returned to the office on Monday each week. Please read the weekly communication and any communication from the school so you are aware of important news, meetings, upcoming events, updates, etc.

Teachers will communicate with parents via Digital Academy, email, newsletters, notes regarding curriculum, projects, activities, class mission projects, meetings, etc.

An All-Campus Bulletin (Pre-K-12) that includes all events across campus is distributed electronically every Friday. Additional communications will come via email or paper copy as needed.

## **Lines of Communication**

It is our goal to be as clear and open in communication as possible. Please also note that the instruction and business of school and the safety and well-being of our students is our top priority. If parents have questions and/or concerns regarding their child, please follow the lines of communication as outlined below:

- Email your child's teacher in the morning before school (7:45-8 a.m.) or after dismissal at 3 p.m. Please understand that teachers cannot be called out of class to take phone calls from parents. Teachers will respond to emails after 3 p.m. and within 48 hours of your communication during the regularly scheduled school week. If your question needs an immediate response prior to dismissal, please contact the school office.
- If the matter needs more discussion and/or information, parents should request a conference with the teacher.
- If the matter is still not settled, parents may contact the Director
- If the Director establishes other procedures for a student's parents, these guidelines must be followed.

## **Lunch**

Lunch is an important part of the students' day which permits them to relax and have social interactions with their friends. Although exceptions can be made by the teacher, in general, it is not appropriate for students to leave the school for lunch. This is not an approved reason for students to be absent from the school day (as is listed under the "Attendance" section of this Handbook).

Students who forget lunches can get a hot lunch and reimburse the school the following day. Students are not permitted to call home for forgotten lunches. NO Lunch Deliveries from Food Delivery Services are permitted. We ask that parents refrain from bringing in fast food for their child's lunch.

## **Recess**

Weather permitting students will go outside for recess. They may be out for morning recess, as well as during the lunch periods in all weather, except in the case of rain or extreme cold. Parents should be sure that their child has appropriate clothing for the weather, i.e., boots, warm jackets, gloves, etc. Sometimes a health issue arises in which the student needs to stay in at recess. Please send in a note from the doctor indicating your child should stay in at recess.

Arrangements will be made for your student during the regularly scheduled recess period.

## **Parental Custody**

Custodial parent(s)/guardian(s) are required to furnish the school with a copy of custody papers. This copy should include the cover document, the custody orders and the signed page of the document. Additionally, any change, update or revision to custody agreements must be shared with the school immediately where school policies or processes are involved (i.e. school pick up, parent-teacher conferences).

## **Retention**

A child will be retained at a given grade level only if it is determined that he or she will benefit from the experience academically, psychologically and socially. Retention must be approved by the Director and be accepted in writing by the parents. If parents refuse to have a child retained, refusal should be in writing and will become a part of the child's permanent record. The Director will then decide if the school can continue to meet the educational needs of the child, or if another educational setting is necessary. Each case of retention is treated individually and thoroughly discussed between the teacher, Director and parents. Parents will be notified if their child is in danger of failing. Consistent and clear communication with parents about a student's progress can be expected and any concern about academic progress will be attended to in a timely manner.

## **Safety**

*Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect* Ohio Revised Code, Section 2151.421, requires certain persons, including school personnel, to report all cases of suspected child abuse or neglect. The law also grants these persons immunity from criminal or civil liability as a result of such reports. The Children's Services Board of the Department of Human Services is the investigating agency for child abuse or neglect. Our Lady of the Elms follows the law and cooperates with the Department of Human Services.

## **Smoking Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to protect the right of the non-smoker to breathe clean air. It also serves to protect and preserve in a reasonable manner the health and comfort of all persons by establishing areas that are free from the toxic and annoying effects of tobacco smoke. This policy is also in accordance with Ohio's state law regarding smoking in public places and places of employment.

This policy prohibits smoking (including e-cigarettes) anywhere on the campus of Our Lady of the Elms. Cooperation in adhering to this policy is required. Courtesy toward and understanding of everyone's health is necessary in order for the Elms to comply with applicable state and local law. This policy is effective regardless of the time of day, the day of the week or the presence of other individuals.

## Student Information

All pertinent information concerning students MUST be on file in the Lower School office. Parents should complete a “Change in Student Information” form when applicable. A copy of this form is available in the school office.

## Telephone Use

The office phone is for official school business only. Arrangements for after school projects, appointments, transportation, etc. should be taken care of before your child comes to school for the day. In an attempt to build responsibility, children are not permitted to call for forgotten homework, lunches, gym clothes, band instruments, etc.

## Tuition and Other Financial Matters

General Financial Needs. All matters regarding tuition and other fees are handled by the Business Office. You may contact the business manager by calling 330.752.2505. Student report cards and access to Digital Academy will be blocked quarterly if outstanding payment is due for tuition, fees or aftercare.

## Transportation

### Traffic

For the safety of all those attending our school, please carefully read and follow the directions listed below.

Both the teachers and crossing guards who are on duty are there for the protection of students. Please respect their directions. **Drive slowly!** All pedestrians are to use the crosswalk.

Drop off or pick up students at the student entrance only. All students who are early arrivals and/or attending the after school program are dropped off and picked up at the circle at the gym entrance.

Students should be picked up or dropped off before vehicles pass the crosswalk. Do not stop your vehicle beyond the crosswalk to wait for a student. Please be patient and wait in line. **Families are not permitted to go around cars ahead of them in the pick-up or drop-off area.**

Students may not go to their cars if parents are parked in the lower parking lot or in the circle by the gym. There is no supervision for these areas.

Do not park in the Convent driveway at any time or leave your car unattended in any driveway lane near dismissal time.

### **Traffic Pattern**

A traffic pattern has been established to provide safe delivery and pick-up of students on school property. All parents should follow this pattern. Drivers who make themselves the exception to the rules create safety hazards for themselves and others.

- Preschool and Pre-K students are dismissed from school beginning at 2:30 p.m. All other students are dismissed from school at 3 p.m.
- Cars waiting for students K-4 shall be in three lanes marked by orange cones. Students will walk to the cars using the aisles marked with paw prints.
- Crossing guards signal students when traffic is stopped and it is time to cross. They do this by lowering their flags.
- Students are instructed to use the car door on the aisle side only.
- Cars drivers are asked to stay in line and move with the line. DO NOT PULL OUT.
- All students are picked up from these “pickup lines” unless they are part of the After Care Program. Parents who try to avoid waiting in line by picking up their child at other locations on campus cause confusion and create a safety hazard. Parents who are found doing this will be asked to leave the grounds and get into the pick-up line with other parents. Children in grades Pre-School-5 who are picked up from the After Care Program are picked up at the “circle” of the gym entrance after 3:15 p.m. If a student in grades Pre-School-4 is picked up before 3:15 p.m. they must be picked up in the pick-up lines.
- Students need to know who is picking them up. Please make every effort to plan for end-of-the day pick-up before the school day begins – last minute changes can cause anxiety and stress.

### **Going Home with a Friend**

Occasionally students indicate that they would like to go home with a friend after school. Both students must turn in a letter from their parents stating permission is allowed to go home with a friend.

## **Before/After Care School Program**

### **Before Care Program**

Before School Care will be available every day that school is in session. Drop off times are from 7:00 a.m. until 7:40 a.m. Parents should walk their children to door #4. If a staff member is not at the door, please use door bell. After 7:40 A.M. you must use the drive through line. The cost of Before Care is \$1.00 per child per day. You will be billed at the end of each month.

### **After Care Program**

The After Care Program is offered to families when supervision is needed for students for a short time after school. The time of the program is 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. each afternoon. There will be a separate room for Pre-School thru K students and Grades 1-4 students. The After Care schedule is listed below:

- 3:00 p.m.** Dismissal bell. Children participating in the After Care Program will be dismissed to the gym.
  
- 3:15 p.m.** At 3:15 p.m., students who have not been picked up by their parents become part of the After Care Program. Teachers will take the students to the appropriate After Care classrooms. The program includes: 1) snack time, 2) quiet study time, 3) outdoor activities (weather permitting) and 4) indoor activities.
  
- 6:00 p.m.** All students must be picked up by 6 p.m. If you are unable to pick up your child by this time, you must make other arrangements for them to be picked up. A \$20 fee will be assessed for every 15 minutes you are late in picking up your child after 6:05 p.m. (e.g. 6:05 p.m.-6:20 p.m. - 15 minutes late, equals an additional \$20 charge, etc.)

To initially enroll in the program, parents should complete the After Care registration form. Call the school office if you did not receive a form. Billing is done monthly and added to your FACTs account. Payment is due within one week of receiving the invoice. If paying by check, checks shall be made payable to Our Lady of the Elms. Parents should send their payment to the school office in an envelope marked "After Care." After school care privileges shall be suspended if invoices are not paid when due or families habitually pick up their child (ren) after 6 p.m.

## Health Services

**Please do not send your child to school sick.** We realize, of course, it is sometimes difficult to tell early in the morning how one will be feeling. However, a child with a cold, fever or the flu should not be sent to school.

A child who feels ill in the classroom is sent or escorted to the school Health Aide. Depending on the duration and severity of the symptoms, parents may be contacted to take the child home. Parents are required to stop in the office and sign out their sick child.

In the case of minor bruises or scratches, first aid may be administered and an injury report completed and sent home with the child. Parents will receive written notification each time their child is seen in the clinic, indicating date, time and nature of the visit.

Emergency medical service (9-1-1) will be contacted for any situation that is considered by the office staff to be severe. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible following any extreme situation. If parents cannot be reached, we will attempt to reach other individuals in the order they are listed on the Emergency Medical Authorization form. It is, therefore, very important that a current Emergency Medical Authorization form is on file in the office. Without this form, your child may not receive medical attention as quickly as needed. Paramedics will not transport a child without authorization from the parent.

It is required by Ohio Law that we have on file at the time of enrollment, written evidence that your child has received appropriate immunization. Students who do not have this information on file in the office will be excluded from school.

State law prevents us from dispensing any medicine, including non-prescription medication, without written permission from the parent and the physician. This holds true also when a dosage is changed. No medication may be taken by a child in the classroom. The medication is to be brought into the school office by the parent. All non-prescription medications (pain relievers, cough drops, etc.) are to be kept with the school health aide and dispensed in the clinic or school office. A "Request for Administration of Medication" form is available in the school office.

## Curriculum and Instruction

Parents are a child's first and most influential teachers. This is due to the strong bond between the child, the parent and the family environment. Research findings show that students achieve when parents:

- Have high expectations for academic success;
- Provide outside-of-school experiences which support school goals; and
- Foster an attitude in their child that hard work is necessary to achieve high goals. It is, therefore, very important that parents are directly involved in the

teaching-learning process and must communicate regularly with the classroom teacher about their child's progress.

Teachers are responsible for providing formal academic experiences at school. They develop lessons that are appropriate for the students' developmental level and current interests. Activities are routinely hands-on or abstract, as appropriate, and are presented using motivating methods, often involving cooperative groups. Teachers regularly check students' mastery of the content and communicate progress with parents. Digital Academy is our on-line communication tool for students, parents and faculty/staff. Families receive access codes to Digital Academy at the beginning of the new school year.

The curriculum, which is the basis for classroom activities, closely follows the courses of study prescribed by the Cleveland Diocese and is closely aligned with the model courses of study developed by the Ohio Department of Education. Curriculum alignment and student success in meeting these standards is accomplished through year-long teacher assessments, as well as through an analysis of the girls' performance on MAP testing and any other required state of Ohio tests.

Students at our school participate in activities that reach objectives in mathematics, religion, science, language arts (reading, spelling, literature, composition, listening, speaking), health and social studies. They also regularly participate in art, music, and physical education.

### **Grading Guidelines**

A grade is defined as a letter which indicates the extent to which a student has mastered course objectives. When determining grades, teachers consider a variety of factors including, but not limited, to:

- Daily class participation;
- Performance on home and daily classroom assignments;
- Performance on quizzes, tests, and projects; and
- Effort.

Grades K and 1 will use a standards based report card. The ratings and corresponding meanings are as follows: Blank: not assessed 1: Assistance needed 1.5: Partial knowledge 2: Developing 2.5: Almost at Mastery level 3: Mastered

The grades and corresponding meanings for grade 2 are the following:

**O (Outstanding)      S+, S, S- (Satisfactory)      U (Unsatisfactory)**

The letter grades and corresponding meanings and percentages for grades 3 and 4 are the following:



- A **Superior** (93 - 100) Consistently does superior work
- B **Above Average** (92 - 85 ) Usually does above average work
- C **Average** (84 - 78) Usually does average work
- D **Below Average** (77 - 70) Usually does below average work
- F **Failing** (69 & below) Usually does unsatisfactory work

All students are expected to earn at least a “C” in each subject to demonstrate academic progress. If a student is unable to meet this expectation, parents, the student and teachers will meet to discuss the reasons for the lack of greater success and to develop and implement a plan to help the student succeed.

Grades are determined by the teacher in each subject to indicate success in completing the nine week grading period and the year in that subject. The teacher is the subject area expert and is, therefore, best qualified to assess the degree of mastery of the students’ work. This may include both quantitative and qualitative measures as appropriate to the characteristics of the subject. Assessments may, therefore, be objective or subjective. This can include the evaluation of written tests, long-term projects, presentations, or a variety of other assessments. Emphasis is placed on evidence which shows the students’ success in reaching specific outcomes.

The responsibility for assuring student success is shared by the student, the parent and the teacher. It is the student who assumes the greatest responsibility in the learning process; the roles of teachers and parents are supportive in nature. The student is responsible for maintaining an attitude and a pattern of behavior that promotes learning. The student must be actively involved in the learning process. The student will participate in and complete all assigned work and react in a positive way to directions given by parents and teachers. Teachers are responsible for presenting appropriate instruction, for assessing the results of that instruction and for communicating student progress to both students and parents. Parents are responsible for setting appropriately high expectations for their children and for providing support and guidance to ensure that their children complete assigned work.

### **Homework**

Homework is an integral part of the educational program and provides opportunity for practice and skill reinforcement. It is directly aligned with class activities and is a means of developing responsibility and good study habits. Homework assignments include creative work, as well as provide practice on instructional skills.

Some amount of homework should be done every night. Late homework is handled at the teacher’s discretion. Each teacher will have a policy as it relates to late homework that the administration will review and support.

A homework slip will be sent home to the parents for missing work. The slip is to be signed by a parent and returned the next school day with the completed assignment. If the homework slip is not returned the next school day, parents may be contacted through e-mail, Digital Academy, telephone or a letter mailed to the home.

The goal of homework is to help students reinforce skills taught in the classroom. Students also learn educational responsibility when they realize the importance of homework to the learning process. Homework grades are part of the overall grade received in each subject.

### **Request for Homework**

Parents may request homework if a student is going to be absent for any length of time due to illness. If you wish to pick up homework, please let the office know when you call your child off sick. Homework will not be ready unless you call the office. All requests will be ready for pick-up in the hall outside the main office after 3:30 p.m. labeled clearly with the student's' name and date of absence.

### **Textbooks and School Resources**

Students are expected to take care of all textbooks and instructional materials provided to them by the school. All materials given to a student will be inventoried by the teacher and students will be considered financially responsible for any missing or damaged materials.

### **Copyright Policy**

All students are expected to conform to existing United States copyright laws and to maintain the highest possible ethical standards in use of copyrighted materials.

### **Search and Seizure**

Student lockers, desks, Elms email and similar items are the property of Our Lady of the Elms and are provided to students as a convenience for their use. They carry no expectation of privacy for the students who utilize them. School lockers, desks, email, etc. and their contents are subject to search by school authorities at any time and without warning.

## **Extra-Curricular Activities**

Student activities are seen as educational extensions intended to provide a well-rounded program with a variety of growth opportunities. Some of these activities are class or whole school participation events; others are individual opportunities designed to meet diverse interests and needs.

All extracurricular activities are under the direction of the school and can be eliminated at the discretion of the Director. Outside clubs and organizations may not have access to our students or student information and may not distribute information about their organization without specific review and approval of the Director.

Extracurricular activities offered at the Elms will be made available to the students and shared with parents.

### **Parent Teacher Organization- Elms Community Club (ECC)**

The Elms Community Club strives to enhance the warm and caring atmosphere of the Elms. This group works to assist the school administration, faculty, students and families through the generous donation of volunteer hours, as well as through monetary support.

All parents should plan to be members of the Organization and plan to actively participate. Each year parents choose members to serve as President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. Working committees are also established to guide the various functions of the Organization. Areas of committee involvement include Hospitality Committee, Room Parents, Mother/Daughter Social, Father-Daughter Dinner Dance, etc.

Typically, there are three formal ECC meetings. These are held in September, January and May. Dates will be announced at the beginning and throughout the school year.

### **Handbook Changes**

The President, Academic Dean and Director of Our Lady of the Elms have the right to amend this Student-Parent Handbook.



## Statement of Understanding 2023-24

Please go to <https://www.theelms.org/forms> to access the Parent/ Student Handbook.

By signing my name below, I am indicating that I have read and understand the expectations indicated in this Handbook for being a student at Our Lady of the Elms.

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Student(s) (Grade K-4)

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Parent/Guardian