

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION ELEMENTARY
PreK-5th grade
St. Joseph Club

314 Vine Street, Traverse City, MI 49684
231-947-1252

HANDBOOK
REVISED JANUARY 2025



MISSION STATEMENT

The Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools are dedicated to providing a Catholic education – ensuring educational quality for all families willing to enter into a partnership to develop each child to his or her fullest spiritual and academic potential.

www.gtacs.org

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Welcome to Immaculate Conception Elementary School

Immaculate Conception is a parochial school system in Traverse City, Michigan, serving just under 600 students in PreK through the 5th grade. It is a ministry of five local parishes—Christ the King, Immaculate Conception, St. Francis, St. Joseph, and St. Patrick—and the Diocese of Gaylord.

Our staff, parents, and students work together to create a nurturing, safe, and healthy Catholic environment where children can develop their full potential. Maintaining this environment requires an ongoing partnership between families and staff.

Our Immaculate Conception School Parent Handbook is intended to provide our families with information about our expectations, policies, and programs. Please read through the handbook before the start of the school year and review it as needed. If you have any questions, please contact our school office.

Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools Family School Agreement

Our mission is to partner with families to enlighten children’s minds and ignite their hearts to serve Christ. This Family-School Agreement supports that mission.

Families enrolling children in the Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools are required to sign the Family-School Agreement. By signing, it is understood that:

- Children from families of a variety of faith backgrounds and traditions are welcome.
- Students and their parents agree to support, rather than contradict, the school’s mission – including modeling and teaching the Catholic faith. While the beliefs of individual students or parents may differ from those of the Church – potentially creating conflict – the school is committed to upholding its mission. Questions about Catholic teachings are welcomed, but open hostility or defiance of the Church may lead to denial of admission or dismissal.

Faith and Reason

Our educational mission is clear: “Education must develop what is best in man, and make him not only clever, but also good.” (Bishops in Baltimore, 1884) To guide us, we rely on the Gospel and on the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

The Human Body as a Constitutive Aspect of the Human Person

The Church teaches that our differences as male and female are part of God's good design in creation and that our bodies –including our sexuality – are gifts from God. In fact, "'being man' or 'being woman' is a reality which is good and willed by God" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 369). A person cannot change his or her sex. A person should accept and seek to live in conformity with his or her sexual identity (sometimes called "gender identity") as given by God. The human person is a body-soul union, and the body-created male or female is a constitutive aspect of the human person. Having a proper understanding of the human body- and more generally, of the moral law - enhances, rather than restricts, man's freedom.

It is the policy of the Diocese of Gaylord that all schools shall respect the biological sex of the human person as given by God and shall apply all policies and procedures in relation to that person according to that person's God-given biological sex.

Employees and volunteers shall conduct themselves in accord with their God-given biological sex. Diocesan schools partner with families to educate and form students consistent with the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Church. Students and parents (or legal guardians) shall conduct themselves in accordance with their God-given biological sex.

Partnership with You

Partnership with Families

Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools are dedicated to providing a Catholic education ensuring educational quality for all families willing to enter into a partnership to develop each child to his or her fullest spiritual and academic potential. This partnership with parents is highly valued; however, situations can arise where the partnership is significantly damaged. In these situations, administrative discretion may be used to ask a family to leave the school and deny future enrollment.

Parent Activity Committee

All parents/guardians with children enrolled at Immaculate Conception are members of the Parent Activity Committee (PAC). The mission of the PAC is as follows:

- To recognize and support the shared responsibility between school and family for a child's spiritual and educational development during the entire period the child spends in school.
- To support the goal of GTACS to educate all students effectively by assisting both the school and parents in working together as knowledgeable partners.
- To contribute to the educational success of the students attending GTACS by fostering a partnership between families, staff, administration, and the community. This partnership promotes a positive faith-based environment, which values everyone's participation. The PAC will fulfill its mission by focusing on the following core values: open communication, educational enrichment, sense of belonging, school spirit, and fundraising.

PAC Bylaws are available in the school office.

Non-Custodial Parents

The schools abide by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents.

- If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order.
- In the absence of a court order to the contrary, our school will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the academic records and to other school-related information regarding the child.
- If a legal document is on file for a student and arrangements are made between the custodial and non-custodial parent to pick up or see a child, the custodial parent should call or send a note to the office.

Change of Address

It is imperative that we have up-to-date address, email, and phone information for you and the persons you authorize on your student's emergency card. Please update your profile in FACTS or call the school office if changes need to be made.

Confidentiality

Individual issues involving discipline, academic progress, socialization, etc. are private concerns to be shared and discussed only among those persons directly involved. No staff member shall discuss such matters outside the school, and within the school, only with those other persons who have a legitimate need to know. Parents are also expected to refrain from discussion of such issues unless they are directly involved in the matter. Questions or concerns should be addressed to the principal.

Volunteer Confidentiality Policy

In the course of working with students in classroom settings, school activities, or accompanying students on field trips away from the school, volunteers occasionally may develop their own opinions or insights or become aware of possible sensitive information regarding students or their families. The volunteer should hold any such opinions, insights, or information in confidence.

If the information potentially involves abuse or other harm to the student or others, the volunteer should convey the information to the school principal immediately. When in doubt as to the nature of the information, the volunteer should discuss the information with the principal. Parents wishing to volunteer on a regular basis will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement and comply with possible background checks as part of a Diocesan Policy effective Oct. 1, 2003.

General School Information

School Office

The school office is open for business from 7:20 a.m.- 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Voicemail is available for messages before and after school hours. If you leave a message, someone will contact you as soon as possible.

Daily Schedule

7:20 a.m.	Office Opens
7:45 a.m.	Bell Rings
7:50 a.m.	Morning Prayer and Announcements Students must be in their seats and ready for attendance. (Students not in their seats at 7:50 a.m. will receive a Late Pass from the office)
2:28 p.m.	Afternoon Prayer PikMyKid Dismissal Process begins after prayer
3:30 p.m.	Office Closes

Arrival of Students

Morning supervision of PreK–5 students begin at 7:20 a.m. Staff members are not available to supervise students until 7:20 a.m. The safety of your children is of the highest importance. We have a well-run car line, and the success of it is due to the partnership with our families. All families are encouraged to use the morning and afternoon carlines where we have multiple staff members ready to welcome you or reunite you with your child(ren) at the end of the school day.

- Morning car line and walk-up lines run from 7:20 a.m.-7:45 p.m. All students should be in their classrooms and ready for announcements at 7:50 a.m.
- Car Line traffic is in the FRONT of the school building.
- Walk up/foot traffic is BEHIND the school building.

Morning Walk Up Procedures

- Park in Sleder’s lot as indicated on map (larger lot across Vine Street from Sleder’s).
- The Sleder’s lot will be closed to all school parking after 8:30 a.m.
- Do not park in any of the other parking lots in the back of the school building please.
- Parents MUST walk their child(ren) to the back door of the school and drop off to a staff member.
- Please use crosswalks.
- DO NOT let children cross the street on their own
- PreK parents must walk their child to the front of the building directly to their mudroom doors
- PikMyKid numbers are not needed for morning walk-ups.
- After the bell rings at 7:45 a.m., parents will walk their child to the front doors of the school.

Morning Carline Procedures

- Follow the same route for both morning and afternoon carline.
- Refrain from cell phone usage once in the parking lot and drive slowly.
- All carline traffic begins at N. Elmwood forming a single carline on Second Street.
- Do not enter from any street other than Elmwood; doing so cuts off other people.
- Enter the church parking lot off N. Cedar Street and flow through the lot to where staff assists in unloading students.
- Have your car in park when staff is unloading students.
- Turn right onto N. Cedar Street OR go straight on Second Street only; no left turns are permitted.
- If exiting via Randolph Street onto Division Street, please turn right only to facilitate efficient traffic flow.

* All morning shuttles that go to Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Middle School leave from the St. Francis Church parking lot at 7:25 am.

Dismissal of Students

PikMyKid

Each student will be assigned a number on a car tag at the start of the school year. When you arrive for carline, a staff member will input this number on an iPad, which will signal to your child waiting in his or her classroom that it is time to come to carline. This system allows students to remain inside during inclement weather and increases the safety of our campus.

We have established the following procedures that must be followed for us to provide our students with a safe and orderly dismissal:

- Dismissal is from 2:28-3:00 p.m.

- Any students who are not picked up by 3:00 p.m. will wait for their parent in the office. Please be mindful of the fact that we often have after-school meetings and there is no supervision after that time.

Afternoon Walk Up Procedures

- Park in the west church lot and use crosswalks to get to the back of the school.
- The Sleder's lot is closed to all school parking after 8:30 am.
- Do not park in any of the other parking lots in the back of the school building please.
- Form one line please on the sidewalk along the rectory side of Immaculate Conception.
- For the safety of our families and your pet, **pets** are not allowed in walkup line (unless a trained and certified service animal).
- After prayer and end of day announcements, an IC staff member will greet you at the corner of the building and input your student's **PikMyKid number**.
- After providing your PikMyKid number(s), you will wait for your child outside by the cafeteria doors.

Afternoon Carline Procedures

- Follow the same route for both morning and afternoon carline.
- Place your carline tag in your passenger side visor so that a staff member can enter your PikMyKid number into the iPad.
- Refrain from cell phone usage once in the parking lot and drive slowly.
- Begin carline on N. Elmwood.
- Do not enter from any street other than Elmwood, as doing so cuts off other people.
- Form a single carline on Second Street.
- Enter the church parking lot off N. Cedar Street and flow through the lot to where staff assists in loading students.
- Have your car in park when staff is loading students.
- Please remain in your car and wait for teachers to bring your children to you to keep the line moving.
- Staff are not allowed to buckle children at dismissal. Cars will need to pull to the left in front of the church if extra time is needed for buckling.
- After exiting the drop off/pickup area, turn right onto N. Cedar Street OR go straight on Second Street; no left turns are permitted.
- If exiting via Randolph onto Division Street, please turn right only to facilitate efficient traffic flow.

SEAS Shuttle Pickup

Please park in the west side church lot to wait for SEAS students. Shuttles arrive at approximately 2:55 pm.

Neighborhood Bus Transportation

- Students must be on time at the designated bus stop. Buses cannot wait, as they are on strict time schedule. Students should cross in front of the bus when crossing a road.
- Written permission from the parent/guardian and verification by the principal are necessary for a child to leave the bus at another place other than his/her regular stop.
- Parents wishing students to ride the bus to a bus stop other than the normal bus stop must send written notice to the office. Bus passes will be issued from there. Please be advised that TCAPS does not allow switching busses for convenience purposes. This service is for emergencies only; sports activities or going to a friend's house are not included in this service.
- Student conduct on the buses reflects on not only parents, but also on the school. Transportation "referrals" from the Traverse City Public School are reviewed by the principal before inclusion in the student's school record.
- It is a privilege to ride the bus. Students must follow all directions of the driver and obey all bus rules. Discipline is handled jointly by the bus driver, principal, and TCAPS director of transportation. Final

- authority for all bus-related decisions, however, rests with the public-school director of transportation.
- Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Shuttles will drop off at Immaculate Conception in the afternoon at approximately 2:55 p.m.

Animals on School Premise

Immaculate Conception Elementary does not allow pets on campus except for certified service animals. Pets are not allowed in walkup line (unless a certified service animal).

Bicycles

- Students may ride their bicycle to and from school during the months of August, September, October, April, May, and June only.
- Students in grades PreK-2 must always be accompanied by an adult.
- Riders must agree to walk their bicycle when on school property, follow all bicycle safety procedures, and yield to all pedestrians.

Parking

When visiting the school, parents are asked to use school visitor spots or the main school parking lot spots during the school day.

Food Service Policy

School-prepared lunch is included in tuition for grades K-5. This fosters healthy habits as local fresh ingredients are included in every meal. PreK lunch is billed on the monthly tuition statement.

After School Program

- St. Joseph Club is modeled after Jesus' father, who cared for Jesus as if he were his own child.
- After school care at Immaculate Conception runs from all call at 2:55 until 5:30 p.m.
 - All children will be supervised by staff from the time of their arrival until they are dismissed to either the parent, or person approved on the child's information card.
 - Care is not available on snow days, holidays, or full day professional development days.
 - If there is an emergency between the hours of 3:30 and 5:30 p.m., please call the St. Joseph Club phone at 231-493-8081.
 - Changes for attendance reservations for St. Joseph Club must be communicated in advance to the SJC Coordinator via email or use of the Google Form provided at the beginning of the school year. Please make every effort to give advance notice. If you need to contact the school office, please do so before 1:45 p.m. if at all possible.

After School Events and Arrangements

When an activity does not begin immediately after school by 3:00 p.m., parents must make arrangements for their children. Students are not allowed to roam the school, play in the gym, or remain outside on school grounds unsupervised.

The playground is open from 2:30 until 3:20 p.m. for students who are supervised by an adult. Due to licensing for our after-school program, the playground is reserved from 3:20 - 5:30 p.m. for SJC use only.

Daily Prayers

Prayer is an integral part of our school day. Each morning, we come together as a school over the PA system for a morning prayer, the Pledge of Allegiance, and daily announcements. We end our day with the Memorare, also recited over the PA.

Messages

To ensure the safety of our children and minimize interruption to the learning process, all messages and deliveries must be made through the school office. This includes lunches, books, and musical instruments.

Messages for students regarding a change in plans for the end of the school day should be left with the office. Please limit messages to your child to urgent matters only. If possible, messages should be called in before 1:45 p.m. We cannot guarantee that messages for students received after 1:45 p.m. will be delivered. Please do not email teachers, as teachers are expected to check email before and after school only.

Lost and Found

The school maintains a Lost and Found for items separated from their owners. It is located on the main level of the school by the stairwell. Please be sure to put your child's name on all his or her belongings. This helps to return the item to its owner. Smaller found items such as glasses and jewelry are kept in the office.

Elevator Use

Immaculate Conception Elementary School has one elevator available. This elevator is not for general use by students but may be used by students who have a medical reason. Prior authorization for student use of the elevator must be given by the office.

Admissions

Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools (GTACS) are open to students regardless of race, sex, color, religion, political belief or national origin whose needs can be reasonably met. GTACS will not deny admission to students because of a demonstrated financial need.

Transfers

Enrollment of students is considered incomplete until receipt of permanent records from a sending school. Transfer students with special needs will be referred to the intermediate district. Immaculate Conception (IC) Elementary School has limited provision for "special needs" students and cannot necessarily accommodate all

students. The building principals have the final word as to the enrollment of the student. Our school automatically forwards records of such a nature to requesting schools in which the student intends to enroll.

Classroom Age Policy

To ensure a rewarding school experience, we adhere to the following age guidelines:

- For PreK class, the child is to be 5 before May 1.
- For Kindergarten, the child is to be 5 before September 1.
- These dates are based on the state-mandated guideline that students be 5 years old before September 1 to enter Kindergarten.

PreK children must have a completed Health Appraisal, including up-to-date immunization record, before the child can start school. The health form must be signed by a physician every year. If your child has an immunization waiver, the school will need an updated copy for any child in PreK and Kindergarten and any newly enrolled students.

Tuition, Savings Plan and Support

Tuition schedules, tuition assistance forms, and loan applications are provided as part of the online enrollment packet. Enrollment packets are emailed to eligible families starting in January. Contact the admissions office for additional information.

Tuition Assistance

A tuition assistance program is partially funded by the Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools Foundation (GTACS Foundation). The funds are allocated based on an assessment by an independent outside firm. The assessment requires an online application, a copy of the last income tax return, and a small fee. Personal finances are kept confidential.

Tuition Payment Schedule

Tuition payment in full or a monthly payment plan must be completed by July 1 prior to the start of the school year. All families must set up a FACTS payment plan during the enrollment process. The plan can be set up with a one-time (annual) payment due in July or by selecting a 10- or 12-month payment option. Payments can be paid directly to the school (payable to GTACS), or to FACTS. FACTS offers the option of automatic payment, online payment initiated by the parent, payment by phone or by mailing a check to FACTS (payable to FACTS if mailed to FACTS).

The school also offers a 10- or 12-month loan available through the Traverse Catholic Credit Union. An application is available during the enrollment process or by contacting the admissions office or the Credit Union directly.

Due to fixed costs, no tuition refund will be made for withdrawal after January 31. If a student is newly enrolled for second semester, no refund will be made for withdrawal after March 31. Tuition will be prorated based on the student's attendance per academic quarter.

Tuition Reduction Incentive Plan

The Tuition Reduction Incentive Program (TRIP) is a scrip program designed to help families reduce tuition costs. There are two main ways to earn credits for your TRIP account:

1. Purchasing Gift Cards: When you buy gift cards, you receive the full value of the card, and a percentage (rebate) is automatically credited to your TRIP account.
2. Shopping at Local Businesses: No pre-purchase is necessary. Simply inform participating local businesses that you are part of the TRIP program, and they will send a rebate to your account.

The TRIP program is through Raise Right, which offers a convenient app that allows you to purchase physical gift cards, e-cards, and reload cards online. Physical gift cards are also available for purchase at our office.

The TRIP office is located in the lobby of the St. Francis High School gym. We are open Tuesdays 2-5:30 p.m. and Wednesdays 7:30 to 10 a.m. For more information, you can contact us at trip@gtacs.org or call (231) 932-4848. Additional details can also be found on the GTACS website under the "Parents" tab.

Dress Code and Uniform Policies

Uniforms are an important aspect of Catholic education. We remind students to “dress for success!” Please take a moment to review our uniform policies. Thank you for your partnership in helping children adhere to the uniform code daily before leaving home. Uniforms are required PreK-5. Please label all outerwear and uniform fleeces and sweatshirts.

Vendors

- Current uniform vendor: FlynnO’Hara <https://flynnohara.com/>
On drop-down menu, choose “MI” and “GTACS PreK-8 (MI014) Traverse City, MI”
- Items from Dennis Uniform (previous vendor) are allowed until no longer serviceable.

Shirts

- Must be from FlynnO’Hara (or Dennis) with approved logo
- All polos must have GTACS logo.
- Shirts should be tucked in.

Bottoms/Dresses

- Must be from FlynnO’Hara (or Dennis) with approved logo
- Only navy blue is allowed at the elementary level.
- Shorts season is May 1 - October 15.
- Skirts must be of modest length.
- Navy blue spandex shorts should be worn under skirts and dresses.

Layering Items

Only FlynnO’Hara (or Dennis) cardigans, or quarter-zips may be worn in the classrooms. St. Francis logo wear hoodies may not be worn with the school uniform during school hours.

Accessories

- Socks and tights must be solid navy or white
- Ankle-length (navy or white) leggings may be worn under skirts

- Ties for boys are optional
- Belts are to be navy, black, or brown
- Hair accessories should be simple and coordinate with uniform, scarves or bandanas are not allowed

Shoes

- Must be closed-toed, secured on the heel
- Neutral in color (black, brown, gray, blue, white)
- No ankle boots or high-heeled boots
- No light-up shoes, sparkles, high tops, wheelies or high heeled shoes.
- Boots are only allowed to and from school and at recess; a separate pair of shoes should be packed for the classroom.

Other Uniform Notes

- Undershirts must be white.
- Hairstyles are to be neat; no mullets, mohawks or shaved patterns or designs on their heads. Hair should be clean, well-groomed, and out of the eyes. Boys' hair must be above the collar. Hair color must be of natural tones.
- Makeup is NOT allowed at any time, including non-uniform days. This includes tinted lip-gloss or lipstick, mascara, eye shadow, foundation make-up or powder. Tattoos and/or body art are not allowed.
- Jewelry should be simple and not detract from the uniform.
- Boys cannot wear earrings.
- A separate pair of non-marking tennis shoes must be kept at school and used only for Phys Ed class.
- No hooded sweatshirts are allowed in the classrooms, but they may be worn outside.
- No coats, jackets, or hats may be worn in class. Hats should be removed when entering the building and at Mass.
- On days when students are attending Mass, they must always be in uniform.

Casual for a Cause or Other No Uniform Days

On Casual for a Cause Days, children may wear some types of “dress-down” clothing.

Should questions arise, only the principal's discretion will determine what is acceptable and what is not. Casual for a Cause Days typically fall on the 3rd Friday of the month. Students are asked to bring a monetary donation, which will be donated to a designated monthly charity.

On Casual for a Cause Days, students may wear sneakers, sweatshirts, t-shirts, blouses, jeans, joggers, sweatpants, pants, or shorts that are no shorter than three inches above the knee. Girls also may wear dresses and skirts, if they reach the top of the knee.

NOTE: Students should avoid wearing tight clothing, items with holes or cut-outs, low-cut blouses or tops, shirts with inappropriate writing, spaghetti straps, biker shorts, pajama pants, jeggings, stretchy pants, hats, tennis shoes that convert to roller skates or that light up, flip-flops, open-back shoes, sandals, or any shoes that do not fully enclose the toe and heel.

Winter Weather Guidelines

Please ensure that your child is properly dressed for cold and wet weather. Boots, hats, gloves, and snow pants must be worn during winter. Notification that such outerwear is mandatory will be communicated in the school

newsletter. Boots are not permitted in the classrooms. Students must have a change of footwear to wear in the classrooms during the winter months. Please adhere to the dress code when purchasing boots and shoes.

Uniform Non-Compliance

The first non-compliance incident with any specific dress code issue will be a request by the teacher to rectify the situation in the least disruptive manner with the family/student. A second uniform non-compliance incident will result in communication home to the parent from the office. Repeated uniform violations will result in the student being sent to the office to change into proper uniform clothing, or parents will be contacted to assist in providing uniform dress code-compliant items.

If you are questioning the appropriateness of an item, please check with the office before allowing your student to wear it to school. Final decisions on uniform issues will rest with the principals.

Academics

Curriculum

Immaculate Conception School strives to educate the whole person—heart, mind, and soul. A strong academic curriculum is supported by Catholic Tradition and an emphasis on Christian family values. All aspects of student formation (intellectual, spiritual, psychological, physical, and social) are evaluated in light of how the mission of the school is to be fulfilled. Those families wishing to enroll at our schools must be willing to accept the standards, values, and regulations of the school. The curriculum is in keeping with Diocesan guidelines and the Michigan Association of Non-Public Schools accrediting directives. Ongoing assessment and continual improvement is necessary to the school’s continued certification. The core curriculum consists of Religion, Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, Physical Education, Art, and Vocal and Instrumental Music. All students, regardless of their religious affiliation, are expected to participate in Religion classes, school liturgies, and religious services/functions.

Homework

Homework is assigned on a regular basis in order to review and reinforce the work done in school. Achievement cannot be attained without study. Parents should help their child to understand that the study and review of assignments are needed for practice, as well as the further development of classroom instruction. The amount of home study per night should be approximately as follows:

Grades 1-2	30 minutes or less
Grades 3-4	30-45 minutes
Grade 5	30-60 minutes

Daily homework time does not include long-range assignments or projects. In most instances, students will need parental guidance with time management skills. All children vary in their abilities to perform any task. Parents should provide proper conditions in the home, and, as far as possible, a specific routine or time span in which work for school can be done. In Grades 1-5, each student is given a personal planner in order to keep track of daily assignments and projects. Parents are expected to show an interest in their child’s homework, and to provide only the kind of help that encourages them to succeed on their own merit.

Report Cards

Kindergarten through grade 5 are on a quarterly schedule. PreK is on a trimester schedule. The grading system on report cards is as follows:

Grades PreK-2

Proficient (P) – Student consistently demonstrates an understanding of grade level concepts and skills taught at this reporting period.

Developing (D)– Student does not consistently demonstrate an understanding of grade level concepts and skills taught in this reporting period.

Emerging (E) - Student does not yet demonstrate an understanding of grade level concepts and skills taught in this reporting period

Grades 3

Highly Proficient (HP)- Shows advanced progress with proficiency and grade level expectations.

Proficient (P)– Shows adequate progress towards proficiency with grade level expectations.

Partially Proficient (PP) – Shows some progress towards proficiency with grade level expectations.

Grades 4 – 5

– 90 – 100%

– 80 – 89%

– 70 – 79%

– 60 – 69%

F – 0 – 59%

The grades for each quarter are based on the criteria that have been outlined by the classroom teacher. In grades 4-5, warnings for inadequate performance (dropping two or more letter grades) must be sent to parents/guardians four (4) weeks before the end of each marking period.

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) is a prayerful, peaceful method of presenting Scripture and the Truths of our Faith to young children in an atmosphere of tranquil joy. It has been used in parishes and schools across the world for more than 60 years. CGS takes place in a prepared space called an Atrium. This space has developmentally appropriate materials for students which will allow them to develop their relationship with Christ through Sacred Scripture and the Traditions of the Catholic Church.

Band

All 5th grade students will have the experience and expectation of music with an instrumental emphasis during the school year. Additional information will be provided by the band director.

Mobile Computer Lab

The Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools (GTACS) strongly promote the use of electronic technologies (such as computers) in the educational process. One such example would be the Accelerated Reader program. These technologies allow students and staff to access current and relevant resources, provide opportunity to communicate in a technologically rich environment, and become responsible, self-directed lifelong learners. All users must read, understand, and abide by the Acceptable Use Policy, which is part of the registration process

online via FACTS.
Accelerated Reader

Accelerated Reader is a school-wide reading enrichment program. The program is networked for use in our computer lab. The library and each classroom have a title list of those books included in the program. A list of book titles is also posted on our web site at www.gtacs.org. Books for the program may be borrowed from the school library, public library, and classroom library. Further information will be provided by each school regarding the specifics as to how Accelerated Reader is used in the classroom.

Enrichment

Out of gratitude to the Lord for all that we have to share, we offer Enrichment classes to further enable our students to grow in wisdom, knowledge, and service. At Immaculate Conception School, eager learners have a robust selection of after school teams, service clubs, and Enrichment class options. Your child can sign up for quarterly, semester, or year-long activities such as Foreign Language, Robotics, Challenge Island STEAM, Fine Arts, Physical Education, Competitive Robotics, Battle of the Books, Athletics, Choir (a service club for our school liturgies), and more. Watch your email and the weekly school newsletter or contact jwinkler@gtacs.org for more information.

Physical Education

Students are required to wear gym or tennis shoes while participating in PE class. These may be left in the student's room when not in use. There should be a separate pair of shoes for PE as shoes worn outside bring in sand and grit, which ruins the gym floor. Please purchase shoes with non-marking soles so that we may keep the gym floor in good condition.

Holiday and Birthday Celebrations

Classroom celebrations are limited to a few a year (typically All Saints Day, Christmas, and Valentine's Day). Planning and organizing are the duties of the teachers with the assistance of the room parents when needed. Please see classroom teachers' newsletters for plans and procedures for celebrating birthdays. Please consult with the classroom teacher prior to bringing in treats. Gum is not permitted. To avoid hurt feelings, birthday invitations should not be distributed at school.

Library

Students in grades PreK-5 are assigned a weekly library period. Students may check out books from the library and are reminded of the special care that they should give to the books. A fine may be charged for all books that are not brought back to the library on time. There is also a fine for damaged or lost books. Please see the school librarian if you would like to donate a book that would be inscribed to commemorate a birthday, anniversary, or memorial.

The library exists for the use of all of our students in order to:

- Support the instruction and learning taking place in the classroom.
- Provide for personal intellectual growth.
- Promote interest in good literature.
- Assist students in learning how to use reference materials.

Assessments

In accordance with Diocesan regulations, standardized tests will be administered yearly, and results will be shared with parents/guardians. These tests include AimsWeb Plus, NWEA in the areas of reading and math, and, for 5th grade only, the Assessment of Catechesis and Religious Education (ACRE).

Student Assistance Program

Our Student Assistance Program (SAP) is available to help students who are having difficulty succeeding in the everyday classroom/school environment. A team comprised of teachers, the school counselors, and the principal work together to design an intervention plan aimed at promoting the student's success in school. Reasons for referral include, but are not limited to: the need for academic individualization, difficulty interacting with other students or adults, problems with appropriate conduct, medical reasons, or a suspected learning disability. Students may be referred to SAP by either staff or parents, and extreme care is taken to ensure the privacy of the individuals involved.

Mass

School liturgies are held weekly at Immaculate Conception Church.

K-2 students will attend Mass on Wednesdays at 8:15 a.m.; grades 3-5 students will attend Mass on Thursdays at 9:30 a.m. Our PreK classrooms will rotate weekly and attend Mass on Thursdays. There will be times during the year when mass times vary, and this will be communicated in the weekly newsletter.

Holy Days and special Feast Days are observed at school. Periodically, a special "All System Mass" is held in the St. Francis gym in which all students K-12 and their welcomed family and friends experience Mass together.

Starting in the first grade, students are given an active role in the liturgy as: greeters, lectors, altar servers, cantors, choir members, and gift bearers, with classrooms "hosting" (performing these duties) on a rotating basis. This is a special time for students to participate in the Mass and all parishioners, especially family members, are invited to attend. In keeping with the dignity and sacredness of the Mass, please refrain from taking flash photography.

*Please refer to Responsibilities and Behavior Policies for more details about our Mass procedures.

Communication Between Home and School

Immaculate Conception Elementary School recognizes the importance of and encourages frequent communication between school and home. The following means of communication are used to share information with parents and guardians concerning their child(ren) and the school.

GTACS Website

Please visit our GTACS website at www.gtacs.org. You will find general information there about the school. All K-5 parents also have access to Google Classroom.

Parent and Student Handbook

This Handbook contains important information about Immaculate Conception Elementary School and is posted on the GTACS website (www.gtacs.org). During enrollment, each family is required to electronically sign an acknowledgement that they have reviewed the information in the Parent and Student Handbook. By signing, you are agreeing to abide by the policies as stated in the handbook.

Weekly Newsletter

Our Weekly GTACS News is a weekly newsletter published electronically each week. The Weekly GTACS News contains timely information about school events, school information from Immaculate Conception, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and Saint Francis, as well as messages from all the principals. Classroom newsletters and google classrooms also serve as a vital link between home and school.

Back to School Night for Parents

This is a PreK-5 open house held the week before school begins. This event provides an opportunity for parents and students to meet their teachers and receive important information about curriculum and school policies for the upcoming year. Prior to Back to School Night, you will receive information about scheduling a time slot.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Individual conferences with your child's teacher are scheduled at the end of the first marking period for all PreK through 5th grade students. All parents are required to attend these conferences. Prior to conferences you will receive information about scheduling conference. Additional conferences can be arranged with any teacher at any time.

Educational Enrichment

K-5 Field Trips

Field trips are extensions of the classroom. They are scheduled as part of regular class activities for one or more of the following reasons:

1. To enrich students' knowledge through exposure to resources, culture, and information unavailable in the classroom.
2. To provide a spiritual retreat experience.
3. To demonstrate Christ-like living through service and charity to both our parish and city.
4. To develop friendship, cooperation, and community outside the normal academic environment.

Parents will always be notified in advance with specific information. Students must have a permission slip signed by their parent/guardian in order to participate. Phone permission is not accepted. A new form must be signed for each trip. Some field trips may require a nominal fee to cover student participation. The fee should accompany the permission slip prior to student participation. To ensure all children have an opportunity to participate, please discuss any financial assistance concerns with the principal. Field trips are a special time for the children in the class. While the teacher is ultimately in charge of the field trip, drivers/chaperones are responsible for watching and assisting those children who have been assigned to them and follow teacher instructions and expectations. All Volunteer Drivers must complete a volunteer driver form available through the school office.

PreK Field Trips

PreK classes participate in occasional field trips. You will be notified of these in advance. To ensure a safe and pleasurable experience for all the children, the regular school rules apply on field trips. Parents are required to fill out the approved “Diocesan Field Trip Form” for all trips. Permission will only be accepted on these forms. We cannot accept phone permission. Field trips are a special time for the children in the class. While the teacher is ultimately in charge on a field trip, chaperones are responsible for watching and assisting those children that have been assigned to them. With this in mind, we ask that siblings do not accompany us on field trips. Fees, if any, may be required dependent upon the trip and will be noted on the permission form.

PreK students are required to have a signed walking field trip permission form on file to attend Mass at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church. These will be signed at the beginning of the school year.

Safety Policies

Entry and Security Information – Visitors to School

School safety is our utmost priority. To always ensure safety, the following items are addressed throughout the school year:

1. All Immaculate Conception employees wear proper identification.
2. All visitors (including parents) must stop at the office to sign in and pick up a volunteer, or visitor’s badge to wear.
3. Parents wishing to come into the building to pick up their child(ren) after school for enrichments must wait in the school foyer.
4. Parents picking up their child(ren) during the day will enter the office. The secretary will notify the student that they are to meet their parent(s) in the school foyer. Each child will be checked in and out by the parent.
5. Staff and students will be actively involved in becoming aware of the people in the building and taught how to respond if they see someone without proper identification.
6. People in the building and on the grounds without permission will be considered trespassers and may be prosecuted.
7. Students are instructed to never open a door to anyone, even if they know the visitor.

Emergency Plan

Immaculate Conception Elementary School has an emergency management plan ready for any crisis. These plans are reviewed every year with all staff members. We conduct safety drills as required by state laws. In case of an emergency, staff will use alarms or coded signals through the PA system to notify everyone. The crisis plan covers:

- Fire Emergencies
- Severe Weather
- Hazardous Spills
- Lockdown Procedures

Emergency Response Team

Fire and tornado drills are conducted regularly throughout the school year in compliance with

the State School Code. As part of our accreditation with the Michigan Association of Non-Public Schools, we are required to conduct six fire drills, two tornado drills, and three lock-down drills per year. In the event of an emergency, students at Immaculate Conception will be evacuated to either Bayview Wesleyan Church. Notification to the local media would be made so parents are aware of the evacuation site. When an alarm sounds, students are expected to act quickly, quietly, and in an orderly fashion and to follow the directives of Immaculate Conception Elementary personnel.

Lockdown Procedures

Immaculate Conception Elementary School conducts formal lockdown drills three times a year. In the event that a lockdown is needed, students and staff must follow the school's lockdown procedures. The lockdown will remain in effect until the Emergency Response Team gives the "all-clear" signal.

Child Abuse and Neglect Mandatory Reporting Policy

School staff members must comply with Michigan law regarding the reporting of child neglect and abuse. The following is a summary of the law:

Staff are required to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to local law enforcement or social services. This obligation applies if they know or have reason to believe that abuse or neglect is occurring now or has happened within the past three years. A written report must be submitted within 72 hours of making the initial verbal report.

Neglect is defined as the failure to provide essential needs such as food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or exposure to controlled substances before birth.

Abuse includes physical or sexual abuse as well as emotional maltreatment.

Emergency/Winter Weather Closings

Because of our shared transportation, our schools are generally cancelled whenever Traverse City Public Schools are cancelled due to weather. Visit the [TCAPS website](#) or call the Bus Garage (231) 933-1955 to determine an early morning school closure, or visit our home page or [Facebook page](#).

Parents will be notified of a GTACS Snow Day via ParentAlert, Facebook, GTACS website, and the local news.

Drop Offs and Delivery Services

To ensure the safety of our children and minimize interruption to the learning process, all messages and deliveries must be made through the school office. This includes lunches, books, and musical instruments.

Please do not drop off fast food lunches for your child. This includes parents/family members/friends dropping off fast food and/or Door Dashing. We do not allow Door Dash or other delivery services to drop off food for students. If your child has left a lunch at home, they may receive lunch through our lunch program.

Attendance

Starting Time: Full, Half or Early Release Days is 7:50 am

Students at Immaculate Conception should not arrive earlier than 7:20 a.m., as there is no supervision until that time. The bell rings at 7:45 a.m.; however, school begins at 7:50 a.m.

Late Start Time: 8:35 a.m.

Dismissal Time-Full Day: 2:28 p.m.

Dismissal Time-Half Day: 11:00 a.m.

Dismissal Time-Early Release: 12:30 p.m.

Each student is expected to attend school regularly and on time. Once children get off the bus or arrive on the grounds, they may not leave the grounds for any reason without the permission of the principal.

Tardy Students

Students are marked tardy if they arrive after 7:50 a.m. Tardy students must report to the office to pick up a slip, which allows them to join their class. When buses are late, students are not marked tardy.

Absences

Excessive absences hinder a child's academic and emotional growth. Studies indicate a significant correlation between student absences and lower achievement. Excessive absences often result in poor schoolwork. Parents are urged to have their children attend school regularly, unless ill.

As a safety measure and as a courtesy to the school staff, parents/guardians are requested to call the school office on the first day of a particular illness. All absences must be reported to the school office by the parent or guardian. Please call by 8:30 a.m. School secretaries begin calling parents of any students marked absent at 8:30 a.m. If a parent or guardian cannot be reached within a reasonable amount of time, the student will be marked unexcused. Excessive tardiness and absences may be referred to the Grand Traverse County Truancy Intervention Program.

Excused Absences

Absences will be excused based on verified contact with the parent, or guardian, as well as by a written explanation for the following reasons:

1. Personal illness of the student.
2. Medical and dental examination and /or treatment of the student when such appointments cannot be scheduled other than during the school hours.
3. Student participation in school sponsored activities taking place during school hours.
4. Death in the immediate family.
5. Reasons of extenuating circumstances to be judged by the principal.

Unexcused Absences

Absences other than those mentioned above, or any absence without a written explanation from parents/guardians, will be considered unexcused. In case of an unexcused absence, the teacher is not required to instruct again, give credit for work missed, or provide make-up tests. If a student has been absent for twenty-five percent (25%) or more of the grading period, the teacher may choose to withhold grades for that period.

Appointments

Should you find it necessary to schedule appointments during class hours, please notify the school by note. Appointments will be judged excused or unexcused according to the criteria listed above. Parents or guardians coming to school for dismissal of a student are to go to the office to sign the student out of the building. Likewise, when dropping a student off after an appointment, parents/guardians should report to the office and sign the student into school.

Make-up Assignments

Students are responsible for missing assignments. When a child is absent, even for a day, it is wise to get his or her books and any missed assignments. Every school day is important. Good study habits are essential to the academic progress of the child. Parents/guardians may request homework to be dropped off in the office and picked up at the end of the school day. Homework/tests missed at the end of a marking period may result in a grade of "I" (Incomplete). Students have an equivalent number of days to make up the incomplete if absences occur. For example, if a student misses 3 days, they will have 3 days for make up after their return.

Truancy

Regular and consistent attendance is not only a vital part of a student's success; it is necessary for compliance with the Michigan Compulsory Attendance Law, and the Michigan School Code. (We recognize that there are those occasions when students are not able to attend school because of illness, accidents, family obligations, etc.)

In accordance with the Michigan Compulsory Attendance Laws, we use these guidelines:

- At 10 absences or tardies of any kind per semester, we notify the parent/guardian.
- At fifteen absences or tardies per semester, we again notify the parent/guardian of our concerns.
- At twenty absences or tardies or ten consecutive tardies per semester, we file a report with the Truancy Intervention Coordinator, who may review the file.

We thank you for your attention to this policy and appreciate your cooperation in curbing unnecessary tardiness and absences demonstrating good work ethic.

Vacations

Vacations during regular school days are discouraged. If we value education, then we must value time spent in school. Various vacation times are provided throughout the school year (Thanksgiving, Christmas, an occasional Mid-Winter break, and spring) for vacations. Spring break in our district has been aligned so that it will always be in conjunction with the Traverse City Public School System. Family vacations should be taken at those times. There is no replacement for time spent in school with the classroom teacher.

Family Vacation Homework Policy

When a student misses school due to a family vacation, we rely on the student to ask for assignments when he or she returns and see that the missed work is covered. Due to the volume of work and preparation, teachers will not provide assignments prior to a vacation. Assignments will be gathered while the student is gone. They will be given out when the student returns from vacation. Students will be given one school day per day of vacation to make-up the missed work and tests after he/she returns to school. Please refer to the school calendar when planning vacations.

Health Policy

Emergency Medical Form

This form must be updated each year for each student in school through the registration process online via FACTS. This form contains emergency numbers where parents/guardians or responsible parties may be contacted in case of emergency. It also contains vital information regarding allergies or other information invaluable to medical personnel. These forms travel with children during field trips and are authorization for emergency medical treatment.

It is essential that this record be kept current. Please make any changes on the FACTS website and notify the office about any changes to your address or phone number.

Immunizations

All students at Immaculate Conception Elementary School must follow the Michigan Public Health Code (P.A. 368) regarding immunizations. Parents/guardians will be required to show proof of immunization for their children. Parents/guardians who opt not to fully vaccinate their children before they enter school or childcare must receive education and request a waiver from the local public health department.

Accidents/Injuries

When a student is injured at school, our first responsibility will be to see to his/her comfort and safety, followed by contact with home. If it is determined that the injury requires immediate emergency health care, 911 will be called for emergency vehicle transportation to the hospital, or urgent care center you have identified on the Emergency Form.

Illness Policy

Certain symptoms in students suggest a communicable illness, or one that a child easily passes to another child. To keep the school environment as healthy as possible for all, please keep students' home with the following symptoms.

- Fever – A fever is defined as a reading of 100.4 degrees F or higher – oral or axillary (underarm). Students must be fever free, without medication, for 24 hours before returning to school.
- Severe sore throat
- Runny nose that is thick, cloudy, green or yellow in discharge
- Earache until the cause is determined
- Diarrhea – Until diarrhea stops or a health provider exam indicates that it is not due to a communicable disease. Diarrhea is defined as an increased number of stools compared with a person's normal pattern, along with decreased stool form.
- Vomiting – Keep home for 24 hours from time of last episode.
- Rash that is spreading – (especially with fever or behavior change) – Health provider exam is necessary to determine that the rash is not communicable to other.
- Eye drainage – If thick mucus or pus is present, health care treatment may be necessary.
- Other signs to consider in your child – Unusually tired, uncontrolled coughing, irritability, difficulty breathing, wheezing, color of skin, persistent crying, emotionally distraught, unrelieved headache.

- Head Lice - Keep home until treatment is complete and there is no evidence of active infestation. Students contracting head lice (For the protection of all students, families, and staff, GTACS holds a “no nit” head lice policy).
- Impetigo, pink eye or ringworm, and other such highly contagious diseases – Keep home until treated. If the child is exhibiting symptoms at school, he/she will be removed from the classroom and parents will be notified.

Notification of Injury or Illness

Your child’s health is a matter of importance to all of us. Parents or guardians will be informed of any head injuries, chipped, broken, or loose teeth, eye injuries that can’t be fixed by cleaning, or injuries involving swelling or bleeding. Spontaneous nosebleeds or minor scrapes to knees, elbows, etc., however, are exceptions. Parents will be notified immediately of the above-mentioned health changes using contact information provided by parents.

- A parent/guardian is responsible for transportation home of a sick child.
- In serious situations where the parent, or guardian cannot be contacted, the school will use the emergency contact number provided on the Emergency Medical Form. If neither the parent/guardian nor the emergency contact can be reached, the principal will decide on the appropriate treatment. This procedure also applies to any student illnesses.
- If your child has contracted or been exposed to a communicable disease, the parent is required to notify the school of that disease and its symptoms so that we may inform parents. Children under a doctor’s care may return to school when the doctor believes the child is well enough.

Infectious Agents/Blood Borne Pathogens

Immaculate Conception Elementary School has a process in place for the control of infectious agents, which includes procedures for cleaning and disinfecting the students’ environment. There are established procedures and training for personnel in handling blood or other body fluids.

As a precautionary measure concerning blood borne pathogens, we may notify parents to bring in a change of clothing in the event of exposure to body fluids (blood, urine, vomit, etc.) in which we are unable to supply an appropriate change of clothing.

Health Screenings

Vision and hearing screenings are conducted in the spring for all students.

Medication Administration Procedures

When a student must take prescribed medication during school hours, Immaculate Conception requires a licensed prescriber signature and medication order for the prescription. Signed parental permission is also needed. Medication must be dropped off by the parent in a current labeled prescription bottle.

Any over the counter medication, including Tylenol and throat lozenges, dispensed at the school will require written permission and direction from the parents or guardian. All medication will be dropped off by the parent in the original over the counter container.

All medications will be kept in the office and will be dispensed from there by school personnel. Parents will need to keep the school informed of changes in the student's health or medication.

No student may keep any medication in his/her possession or administer his/her own medication. The only exception to this would be for a student to carry his/her own inhaler if there is a written note from the physician on file in the school office.

Our medication permission form is available on the school website and in the main office.

Pesticides

The Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools utilizes North Shore Services Inc. to facilitate its integrated Pest Management Program (IPM) at all school buildings for the control of unwanted pests and organisms. IPM is a system that utilizes various methods and techniques in a total pest management program with the intent of preventing pests from reaching unacceptable levels or to reduce an existing population to an acceptable level. A few of the techniques include pest exclusion, sanitation and biological controls. As with most pest control programs, however, chemical controls may also be utilized periodically. You have the right to be informed prior to any liquid spray able or dust application of an insecticide, fungicide or herbicide made to school grounds or buildings during this year. In certain emergencies, such as an infestation of stinging insects, pesticides may be applied without prior notice to prevent injury to students; however, you will be notified following any such application that takes place during the school day. If you need prior notification, please contact your building principal to fill out a Prior Notification Request Form that will be submitted to the Director of Facilities.

Asbestos

In accordance with the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act that was passed by Congress in 1986, we have inspected all Grand Traverse Area Catholic School buildings and have identified all sources of asbestos in various locations. It is our paramount concern to limit the release of any asbestos fibers. Therefore, we have developed a plan for controlling asbestos containing materials. This plan has been submitted to the State of Michigan and a copy for public inspection is on file with the GTACS Director of Buildings and Grounds as well as at the Diocese of Gaylord. Additionally, if you would like a copy of the management plan for personal review, you may make a request in person to purchase one from either GTACS or directly from the Diocese of Gaylord.

Wellness Policy

In the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, the U.S. Congress established a requirement that all school districts with a federally funded school meal program form a Wellness Committee to draft a Wellness Policy by the start of the 2006-2007 school year.

The law requires that these policies must, at a minimum:

- Include goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness.
- Establish nutrition guidelines for all foods available on campus during the school day with the objectives of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity.

- Provide assurance that guidelines for reimbursable school meals shall not be less restrictive than regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture.
- Establish a plan for measuring the impact and implementation of the local wellness policy.
- Involve parents, students, and representatives of the school authority, school board, school administrators, and the public, in development of the local Wellness Policy.

There are several basic principles that served as a guide for this Wellness Policy:

- Healthy children are the foundation of a healthy society
- Healthy, well-nourished children are better able to learn
- All children deserve nutritious, safe, and deliciously prepared food
- Eating habits developed in childhood will affect health throughout life
- Knowledge of food—how it is grown, who grows it, how it is prepared, its connection to tradition, and its influence in shaping the future of society—is integral to a healthy education.

Elementary Snack Time

A morning break time will be provided each day for grades K-5. Nutritious snacks are encouraged, such as: fruit, yogurt, granola bars, cheese/crackers, etc. and should be able to be eaten in a 10 minute period. Please refrain from packing cookies, chips or other sugary treats for your child’s snack. Gum is not permitted anywhere on parish or school grounds. Due to carpeting in our classrooms, we ask that students do not bring snacks that can spill and stain the carpet. Students may bring a water bottle. Only water is permitted in the classrooms.

PreK Snack Time

The snack area is as much of a learning experience as any other area in the PreK classroom. It is a perfect time to develop social skills, fine motor skills, and healthy eating habits. PreK students who attend half day need to bring a snack from home. Students who attend full day will need to bring two labeled snacks (one for the morning and one for the afternoon). Filtered water will be provided on-site.

Code of Conduct - General

Immaculate Conception is committed to providing a safe and orderly learning environment. The school has an obligation to expect an attitude of respect and cooperation from their students. Discipline is fundamental in education and a respectful atmosphere is essential for academic, social, and spiritual growth. In order to establish and promote an atmosphere of Christ-like living in the school community, the following standards of conduct are expected:

- Respect for self, students, teachers, staff, and guests.
- Respect for personal and communal property.
- Respect for rules and regulations.

Self-discipline is an expectation we place on our students. Helping students learn self-discipline is a shared responsibility of the school and parents/guardians. Rules and regulations are devised by the administration to help the school community function smoothly. Students are expected to follow the rules and regulations. By enrolling at GTACS, parents and students have accepted the conditions expressed.

The following activities are not permissible anywhere on school, or Parish property:

1. Cursing or obscenity (words, pictures, or gestures).
2. Fighting.
3. Killing statements, put-downs, and threatening statements.
4. Throwing of any object not meant to be thrown, taking hats or belongings of others, etc.
5. Disregard of safety rules.
6. Disrespect of others (children or adults).
7. Aggressive behavior/putting hands or feet on another student or “play fighting.”
8. Gum is not permitted anywhere on parish or school grounds.
9. Playing or trading cards (like Pokemon cards, sports cards, etc) are not permitted.

At School

Students should:

- Arrive ready to learn and on time.
- Follow the dress code and uniform policy.
- Be kind and respectful to all adults and students.
- Take care of school property, textbooks, and other people's belongings.

In the Lunchroom

Students should walk to and from cafeteria in an orderly fashion following rules of courtesy for other classes in session-do not disturb other classes in session.

- Students are expected to show respect to the lunch supervisor and staff and follow instructions the first time they are given.
- Students are assigned tables to sit at which change periodically throughout the school year.
- Students not permitted to save seats or say, “You can’t sit here.”
- Students should sit down and eat/visit quietly for the allotted lunch time. Students will not be permitted to move from table to table or wander around the lunchroom at will. (Trash and trays will be handled at dismissal.)
- Once students leave the building for recess, they may not re-enter without permission.

On the Playground

Students will be expected to:

- Play on designated playground areas within sight of supervisors.
- Respect the rights and feelings of others (NO pushing, fighting, teasing, or foul language.)
- Obey the supervisors the first time a direction is given.
- Rough play of any kind is not permitted, i.e. “chicken,” Red Rover, tackle football wrestling, martial arts fighting, etc.
- Use the play equipment properly.
- NO food, drinks, candy, or gum are allowed on the playground, except on special occasions.
- Snow pants and boots are required attire to play in the snow.
- In the winter, students may only climb on the snow hill when properly supervised by a team of teachers or playground helpers. There will be times when the snow hill will be closed due to icy conditions. Sliding on ice is also not permitted.
- Students are not to re-enter the building until the bell rings, unless permitted by a playground supervisor. When the bell rings, playtime is over. Students should line up quickly and quietly.

- It is expected that students show respect to each other and adults by:
 - Giving all students the opportunity to participate in games.
 - Taking time to apologize and make amends if someone is hurt
 - Taking constructive corrections from adults positively and with a cooperative attitude.

At our schools, we don't say, "You can't play."

During Mass or Worship

Students should follow these guidelines:

- Entering the Church:
 - If Holy Water is available, dip the tip of your finger on your right hand and make the Sign of the Cross.
 - Move quietly to your assigned seat.
 - Genuflect on your right knee.
 - Kneel or sit quietly, say a prayer, and wait for Mass to begin.
- During Mass:
 - Face forward and focus on the altar.
 - Sing appropriately.
 - Respond to prayers at a suitable volume.
 - During the Sign of Peace, greet those around you with a gentle handshake and say, "Peace be with you."
- Receiving Communion:
 - With folded hands, walk respectfully and patiently toward the Eucharistic Minister.
 - Bow your head, extend your hands one under the other to receive the host, and respond "Amen" aloud before placing the host on your tongue. Alternatively, you may receive the host directly on your tongue from the minister.
 - If offered the chalice, hold it carefully, take a small sip, and respond, "Amen" when the minister says, "The Blood of Christ."
 - Return to your seat quietly.
- Coming for a Blessing:
 - If you cannot receive communion, go up for a blessing.
 - Join the line patiently and respectfully, folding your arms across your chest.
 - After the blessing, respond, "Amen" and return to your seat quietly.
- Exiting the Worship Space:
 - Leave your seat silently.
 - Genuflect on your right knee.
 - If Holy Water is available, dip the tips of your fingers on your right hand and make the Sign of the Cross.

Parents should follow these guidelines:

- If your child's class is not hosting Mass and you arrive before Mass starts, you may connect with the teacher and have your child sit with you.
- If Mass has started, please do not disrupt the sacredness of the liturgy by pulling your child from the classroom pew.
- Please remember our church is a place of prayer. Before, during, and after Mass there should be no talking.
- If your child's class is hosting Mass, this quiet volume remains in effect during and after pictures as many people continue to pray around us and, most importantly, Jesus is in the Tabernacle.

Assemblies or Programs

Students should:

- Follow the directions given during the program.
- Pay full attention to the presenter; talking to friends is both disrespectful and distracting.
- React in a polite and encouraging way—yelling, whistling, or booing is not acceptable.

At After-School Activities and Events

Students should:

- Maintain the same level of courtesy, conduct, respect, listening, and kindness as they would in school.
- Ensure their transportation arrives and departs at the scheduled times.
- Stay within the designated area of the event.

On Buses

Students should:

- Observe the same rules of courtesy, conduct, respect, listening, and kindness as they would in school.
- Follow all bus-specific rules.
- Ride only their assigned bus.

On Field Trips

Students should:

- Uphold the same standards of courtesy, conduct, respect, listening, and kindness as they do in school.
- Adhere to all bus-specific rules.
- Remember that they are representing the school.

General Behavior Discipline Policy for grades PreK - 5th and St. Joseph Club/IC Enrichment

Our philosophy is based on the belief that each child is special and unique. One of our goals for our children is to foster a strong, positive self-concept.

- We believe in firm but loving discipline. We continually strive to provide affection, order, security, an interesting and developmentally appropriate program, and an unconditional positive regard for each child.
- Children need to have their boundaries defined to foster a sense of security. Within the limits, they need freedom to make the decisions. We have simple and direct rules. Children will respect themselves, respect others, and respect program materials and supplies. These rules are applied through positive reinforcement and emphasizing the desired behavior.
- In extreme cases such as a tantrum, children are removed from the situation in a firm but caring manner. Children in our program are never physically disciplined. We believe in positive discipline, which helps build self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-control.
- Appropriate discipline would be handled by teachers, aides, and principals. These could include:
 - Verbal direction and redirection
 - Time-outs including time-out from certain play equipment, as necessary due to miss-use
 - Apologizing
 - Speaking with parents
 - Suspension from school or St. Joseph Club or IC Enrichment for a period of time
 - Out of school suspension and expulsion are permissible, but hopefully, infrequent

The principal has final discretion on all disciplinary actions. The principal may determine an “in-school” or “at home” suspension of one to three days. Parent conferences (with teacher(s) and principal) are required in all cases of chronic or serious discipline cases. If a child is suspended, parents will be notified directly and be requested to attend a joint conference with their child, the school principal, and possibly a faculty member. Depending on the case and in accord with Diocesan guidelines (4110), the principal will place the student on probation, suspension, or in rare instances, recommend expulsion to the (president) Pastor.

Minor Disruptive Behaviors

Disciplinary action may include, but is not limited to detention, parent conference, loss of privileges, and behavioral contract.

- General: Disruptions in the class, hall, restrooms, locker room, lunchroom, playground, etc., which are unsafe, disrupt school routines, or interfere with students’ ability to learn.
- Violation of classroom rules: Students shall abide by the classroom rules as determined by the teachers at the beginning of the year.
- Leaving the classroom without permission: Students shall not leave the classroom, or their assigned area without permission from the supervising teacher.
- Tardiness: Students shall arrive at school and for each of their assigned classes at the scheduled time.
- Chronic failure to complete assignments.

Major Disruptive Behaviors

A student will be subject to immediate disciplinary action up to and including suspension and expulsion for any of the following reasons:

- Disruption of school: A student shall not by use of violence, force, coercion, threat, or false alarm to cause disruption, or obstruction of normal school operations.
- Damage of school property: A student shall not cause, or attempt damage to any school property. This will include books, equipment, furniture, vehicles, and buildings. Students/parents are responsible for restitution of all damages.
- Assault: A student shall not act or behave in such a way as could cause physical injury to other students, any school employee or other persons on school property, or during school sponsored activities.
- Dangerous weapons and instruments: A student shall not possess, handle, or conceal any dangerous weapon, or instrument while on school property, or during school-sponsored activities. NOTE: A weapon is an object that can be used to threaten or injure another person. The school vicinity refers to any of the buildings on the Parish compound, as well as the adjacent grounds (including parking lots, playgrounds, play fields, and/or the perimeter of all parish property).
- Procedures regarding weapons policy (In compliance of The Michigan School Code and The Diocese of Gaylord Weapons Policy 4112):
 - Any student discovered to have, or suspected of carrying, possessing, concealing, or transferring a weapon on school grounds shall be immediately removed from classes pending further investigation.
 - A search may be conducted to verify the suspicion. Questions may be asked by the principal, a member of the administration team, a teacher, the pastor, or any other person acting on behalf of one of these individuals.
 - Depending on the nature of the weapon, the local police department may be notified immediately, and the pupil may be detained.
 - A pupil found to be in violation of the school’s policy is subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

2. Alcoholic beverages, drugs, controlled substances: A student shall not possess, use, deliver, conceal, or

be under the influence of the aforementioned items while on school grounds or at any school-sponsored activities.

3. Repeated violations, gross disrespect, insubordination: A student shall not repeatedly fail to comply with directions of teachers, substitute teachers, teacher aides, principals, or other authorized school personnel or school volunteer while the student is under the authority of school personnel.
4. Stealing: Students shall respect the personal ownership rights of others.
5. Verbal abuse/profanity: A student shall not verbally abuse and/or use profanity to harass another student, teacher, administrator, staff member, or other school personnel or volunteer. This includes “Killing Statements” and put-downs of other students.
6. Smoking/chewing tobacco: Students shall not possess or smoke cigarettes, cigars, or other tobacco products. Tobacco of any kind is prohibited.
7. Cheating: Students shall not cheat on tests.
8. Physical abuse: Students shall not engage in inappropriate touching or physical abuse of another student, teacher, administrator, staff member, or other school personnel or volunteer.
9. Hands-Off Policy: All students are to keep their hands and feet to themselves in order to avoid any misunderstandings. Unfortunately, the most innocent of touches can be interpreted as being aggressive and can lead to fighting.

In School Suspension

The pupil is removed from daily classes but not from the building. They are expected to complete daily assigned work in silence by themselves. Parents will be informed by the principal of all suspensions.

Out of School Suspension

Suspension procedures according to Diocesan Policy 4110 will take effect when a student has been found to seriously impair the development of Christian education, respecting the rights of all involved.

Expulsion

The following is taken from Diocesan Policies 4114:

Expulsion is defined as the permanent dismissal of a student from the school. Like suspension, it is enacted as a last resort after all other means of motivation and correction have failed and/or circumstances of crime, scandal, morality, or disruption necessitate this extreme disciplinary action.

There are two general situations that may lead to expulsion:

1. When the moral or physical well-being of the student body or staff is endangered.
2. When there is prolonged and open disregard for school authority.

The school principal shall exercise the right of expulsion only after suspension and having had a conference with the student, parents/guardians, and pastor.

Counseling

In keeping with the Mission Statement of our school, we are privileged to have a counseling department that provides periodic instruction and guidance in life-long skills. Students may request to see the counselor or social worker and may be seen one time without prior notification to parents or guardians. Subsequent visits (if any) require both parental knowledge and consent.

Smart Phones/Cell Phones/Other Electronic Devices

All electronic devices such as smart phones, smart watches, tablets, messaging devices, and those capable of capturing, storing, or sending digital images are particularly concerning for potential misuse in a school setting.

Students are not allowed to use smart devices, smart watches, cell phones, messaging devices, personal hot spots, tablets, music or video gaming devices, digital imaging devices, or E-Readers during the school day. All such devices must stay in the student's backpack. During off-campus, school-sponsored field trips within regular school hours, these devices should also remain unused. In case of an emergency where a student needs to make a phone call, they should use the office telephone.

Unauthorized uses of electronic devices will result in the following consequences:

1st Offense:

Device is confiscated by the teacher until 2:28 pm and the parents are notified.

2nd Offense:

Device is confiscated and will be returned to the parent of the student only after a conference between the student, parent and principal has taken place.

The principal has final discretion on all disciplinary matters.

Because it is impossible to foresee all problems that arise, the faculty and administration are empowered to take disciplinary action for any behavior that violates the spirit and philosophy of GTACS.

Code of Conduct: Anti-Harassment

Diocesan Policy

It is the policy of the Diocese of Gaylord and GTACS to make every effort to provide an educational environment that is free from all types of harassment. This policy applies to the actions of all faculty, staff, and students at GTACS, as well as others who may be in a working relationship with the school. The Diocese of Gaylord and GTACS School are open to and respect any/all complaints brought under this policy. At GTACS, every individual should be treated with dignity and respect. Faculty, students, staff members, and anyone else who works and/or visits the school are entitled to work/attend school in an environment free from discriminatory practices, including sexual and other forms of harassment. All will be held by standards of conduct that ensure that the school is free from sexual and other forms of harassment. Students are expected to treat all persons with respect and dignity. Thus, inappropriate sexual behavior or comments, which are directed at faculty, students, or other staff members, will not be tolerated. The school will investigate all complaints of harassment in a confidential, professional manner. Appropriate action will be taken when warranted. Individuals involved in any allegations will be given due process. It should be noted, however, that individuals who are found in violation of this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including suspension and/or expulsion. A complete copy of the Diocese of Gaylord Sexual Harassment Policy is on file at the school office and is available for review.

Code of Conduct: Technology Use

As stated, and signed in the online application, Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools Computer, Network, and Internet Student and Staff Acceptable Use Policy. All students and staff at GTACS are required to abide by the following code of ethics:

Introduction and Code of Ethics

The Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools (GTACS) strongly promote the use of electronic technologies in the educational process. GTACS provides access to information resources in a variety of formats. Together these allow students and staff to access current and relevant resources provide opportunity to communicate in a technologically rich environment, and become responsible, self-directed lifelong learners. The use of technology within the GTACS is a privilege extended to students, faculty, and community members to enhance learning and exchange information. When using GTACS technology, the user must realize that he/she represents the Catholic community, and therefore must uphold Christian, ethical, and legal requirements. All users must read understand, sign, and abide by the Acceptable Use Policy. Access privileges may be revoked; school disciplinary action may be taken, and/or appropriate legal action for violations that may constitute a criminal offense.

Rights

All GTACS students and staff have the right to make educational use of the following censored resources: internet access, limited hard drive space on our servers, and access to GTACS approved software on the workstations, in a manner consistent with Catholic school philosophy.

Responsibilities

It is important that users of electronic technologies within the GTACS represent themselves with ethical, Christian responsibility. As such, the following points are a partial list of unacceptable behavior:

- Users may not damage or mistreat equipment or facilities under any circumstance.
- Users must not leave their workstation unattended for any reason and must properly logout at the end of their session.
- Users must make sure that all food or drink are kept away from computer equipment.
- Users may not intentionally waste computer resources.
- Users may not transmit any material in violation of any United States or State of Michigan law.

Regulations

- Users may not employ the network for personal financial gain or commercial purposes.
- Users may not violate regulations prescribed by the network administrator.
- Users may not engage in practices that threaten the integrity of the network (e.g., knowingly download files containing viruses).
- Users may not engage in personal business that is unrelated to the research being done or the performance of the job.
- Users may not write, use, send, download, or display obscene, threatening, harassing, otherwise offensive messages or pictures, including pornography, violence, or hate sites.
- Users may not use the equipment for any illegal activities, including the violation copyright laws and software piracy.
- Users may not load or copy any software or other programs to or from GTACS equipment unless permission is explicitly granted by an authorized party (e.g., the network administrator).
- Users may not use anyone else's password, nor may they share their password with others.
- Users may not trespass into anyone else's folders, documents, or files.

- Users may not disclose anyone else’s personal information (e.g., address, phone number, or confidential information), including and especially that belonging to students, community members and families, or fellow employees.
- Users may not use the network, or the internet for unauthorized game playing, unauthorized “chat” or chain letters.
- Users may not use the network for acts of vandalism against persons or resources including the uploading of viruses.
- Users may not use another person’s computer file, access accounts, and or files without proper authorization.

Privileges

The use of the Internet and related technologies is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use may result in cancellation of those privileges.

Administration Professional Code of Ethics Copyright

It is the policy of the Diocese of Gaylord and the GTACS that all employees, volunteers, and students will abide by federal copyright laws. Employees, volunteers, and students may copy, print, or non-print material allowed by:

- Copyright laws
- Fair use guidelines
- Specific license or contractual agreements
- Other types of permission

Policy Enforcement Guidelines

Depending on the nature and severity of the policy violation, the technology director, or school administrator may take one or more of the following actions:

- Verbal or written warning
- Temporary access denial
- Permanent access denial
- Suspension
- Expulsion
- Legal action

Demonstrated intent to violate policy will be considered the same as actual policy violation. Demonstrated intent means evidence of actions, which if successful or carried out as intended, would result in a policy violation. Evidence of attempted or actual system security, integrity, or performance-related incidents will be cause for immediate access denial.

If warranted, the school administrator will refer the case to Local, State, or Federal authorities for further disposition.

Limitation of Liability

The Diocese of Gaylord and the GTACS makes no guarantee that the functions or the services provided by or through the school/district system will be error-free or without defect. The school/district will not be responsible for any damage suffered, including but not limited to, loss of data or interruptions of service. The school/district is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of the information obtained through or stored on the system. The school/district will not be responsible for financial obligations arising through the unauthorized use of the system. In addition, it is understood that despite reasonable efforts at supervision, access control, and filtering, students may inadvertently or otherwise access inappropriate materials.

PreK and St. Joseph Club Amendments

PreK Criteria for Admission

A PreK student application must be submitted online via FACTS prior to receiving an invitation to enroll online. PreK children must have a completed Health Appraisal, including up-to-date immunization record, before the child can start school. The health form must be signed by a physician every year. Student emergency information records will be generated from the online SIS database, FACTS.

PreK Tuition Policy

When a child enrolls in the PreK program, a non-refundable registration fee is made payable to GTACS. This fee is not deducted from your total tuition due. Tuition will be billed to you and may be paid in full or in nine (9) monthly installments. Your first tuition payment is due September 1st to hold your child's place in the PreK. If your child misses PreK due to illness or vacation, full tuition is still billed. This also includes days off for any teacher in-service, scheduled school holidays and snow days. All tuition and fees are billed through the FACTS Mgt payment system so will require that a payment plan is set up during the enrollment process. Payments can be paid directly to the school (payable to GTACS), or to FACTS. FACTS offers the option of automatic payment, online payment initiated by the parent, payment by phone or by mailing a check to FACTS (payable to FACTS if mailed to FACTS).

PreK Withdrawal Policy

A family that wishes to withdraw shall notify the admissions director in writing two (2) weeks in advance of withdrawal. We need this time in order to fill the vacancy and ensure our PreK no financial burden due to loss of tuition. There will be no refund of tuition for non-attendance of a child. If a family gives two weeks prior notice of a withdrawal, they will receive a refund for any tuition paid beyond the date of withdrawal.

PreK Food Service Policy

Immaculate Conception PreK offers delicious, whole food lunches, served at 11:00 a.m. Monday to Friday.

- Lunches are prepared by chefs in a commercial-level kitchen at Immaculate Conception.

- Local, fresh ingredients are an integral part of every meal.
- Menus are posted monthly on the PreK bulletin board, emailed as part of our GTACS Newsletter and can be found on the GTACS website.
- We follow Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines of providing a well-balanced meal.
- Menu options include a protein, baked or roasted vegetables, fresh fruit, whole grains and savory soups.
- Beverages and food shall be age appropriate, and if necessary modified for a child’s individual nutritional requirements/dietary needs.
- Our dining services team responsibly stewards the environment, with an emphasis on recycling, reduction of waste and composting.
- The GTACS “Life Balance Initiative,” which includes its whole foods lunch program, has become a model for other schools.
- Parents may choose to purchase lunch from school, send lunch from home labeled with student name and date, or choose to do a combination of both – occasional lunch from home or purchase from school.
- The food policy and parent options are included in your online enrollment packet.

PreK Snack Time

The snack area is as much of a learning experience as any other area in the PreK classroom. It is a perfect time to develop social skills, fine motor skills, and healthy eating habits. PreK students who attend half day need to bring a snack from home. Students who attend full day will need to bring two snacks (one for the morning and one for the afternoon). Snacks need to be labeled each day with student name and date. Filtered water will be provided on-site. PreK students will be provided a snack if one is not supplied from home. SJC students are provided snack by Immaculate Conception and contain at least 2 components of the following food groups: dairy, fruit/veggie, whole grain, or protein.

PreK Typical Daily Routine

Each class attends morning specials at least one day/week: Music, PE & Library. These offerings are built in around their typical routine of morning guided activities, recess, snack, 11:00 a.m. lunch, 11:30 a.m.-12:30p.m. rest time, and afternoon choice time.

Schedules are tailored for age appropriateness and available for parents during back-to-school conferences.

PreK Conferences

PreK conferences are held prior to the start of each year and in November. All parents are required to attend these conferences.

Individual conferences are encouraged and may be called by either parent or teacher whenever necessary. If a conference is desired, parents must call the office or schedule an appointment with their child’s teacher.

PreK Report Cards

PreK report cards will be shared at the November conferences and sent home again in January and at the conclusion of the school year.

St. Joseph Club Policies

For current SJC registration and cost information, please see the Parents tab at www.gtacs.org or contact the SJC Coordinator.

A family that wishes to withdraw from SJC should contact the SJC Coordinator in writing. Immaculate Conception PreK/SJC has the right to modify schedules or dismiss a child for reasons included but not limited to: consistent non-payment of tuition/fees, the suitability of the program for a particular child and specific behaviors that are deemed unacceptable as outlined in the discipline policy

Licensing Notebook Availability (PreK and St. Joseph Club)

Childcare centers must maintain a licensing notebook which includes all licensing inspection reports, special investigation reports and all related corrective action plans (CAP).

- Immaculate Conception's licensing notebook is available to parents during regular business hours in our main office.
- Licensing inspection and special investigation reports from at least the past 3 years are available on the childcare licensing website at www.michigan.gov/michildcare.
- The licensing notebook contains all the licensing inspection and special investigation reports, and related corrective action plans and retains them in the notebook for 5 years.