

MESSAGE TO PARENTS

Welcome to Ascension Catholic School. We are celebrating our 80th year of commitment to Catholic education and all members of the faculty and staff pledge their support to you. May Jesus, the model of all teachers, be our encouragement in this important ministry of Catholic education.

In choosing a Catholic school for their child, parents are also choosing to become members of our community. Therefore, we ask that every parent fulfill the following responsibilities while his/her child is enrolled at Ascension School:

- to be a partner with the school in his/her child's education
- to understand and support the religious nature of the school
- to display courteous, appropriate behavior and comply with school policies, rules, and regulations
- to read all communications from the school and to request clarification when necessary
- to know his/her child's teachers and to observe parent-teacher conference dates and any special requests for meetings
- to first discuss concerns and problems with the person(s) most directly involved (with the exception of suspected child abuse or other legally reportable matters)
- to be as actively involved as possible in the life of the school and to volunteer assistance when possible
- to meet financial obligations in a timely manner and to support the fundraising efforts of the school

Our entire community pledges its support to you.

*Ascension School
Administration, Faculty and Staff*

Ascension School reserves the right to amend the Handbook at any time. Parents/guardians will be notified of changes. This Handbook is an informative booklet for parents and students, setting forth the rules and policies of the school, and is not intended as an expressed or implied contract.

Mission Statement

Ascension School is a parish school in the Archdiocese of Baltimore whose mission is to educate the whole child. Our teachers acknowledge each child's gifts – spiritual, academic, social, and physical – enabling each child's healthy development as an individual, infused with self-esteem, a sense of responsibility, dignity and commitment to the greater good.

Encouraged by a staff that embraces Christian values, our students are guided in living their faith and are also challenged to reach their full academic potential. Parents /Caregivers are welcomed into the school community as partners in the education of their children, working and meeting with our teachers in ensuring that their children succeed.

Statement of Beliefs

The Ascension School Community believes:

- *that every person is created in God's image.*
- *that the Catholic school is part of the community of faith and a ministry of the Church.*
- *that parents are an integral part of their child's educational growth.*
- *that education should nurture each student's growth spiritually, morally, physically, emotionally, and academically.*
- *that all students need the opportunity to cultivate their God-given gifts and talents.*
- *that an appreciation of diversity and an understanding of the uniqueness of each individual are critical in fostering a harmonious environment.*
- *that all students need to be challenged to reach their full academic potential and become life-long learners.*
- *that a Catholic, values-centered education, based on the teachings of Jesus, is at the heart of Ascension School.*

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

The Pastor, the Principal and the School Board collaborate in the administration of Ascension School.

The Pastor: The Pastor is the Canonical head of the Parish and is accountable to the Archbishop of Baltimore. He works with the Principal in the Sacramental programs for the children, and considers the advice and recommendations of the School Board.

The Principal: The Principal is the executive officer of the school and directs the operation of the school on a day to day basis. The Principal carries out the policies of the Archdiocese and recommendations of the School Board that have been approved by the Pastor.

The School Board: Board members meet the second Monday of each month during the school year to recommend school policy and deal with school issues, including the passing of the annual budget and the setting of the tuition rate. The School Board advises the Pastor and the Principal. Board members serve two consecutive three-year terms. Each spring, the Board appoints members to replace those whose terms have expired.

ACADEMICS

Curriculum: Ascension School follows the Course of Study prepared by the Division of Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Baltimore. Textbooks and schedules comply with the standards for Maryland elementary schools.

Students are promoted to the next grade upon successful completion of all subjects in a given year. The lowest passing grade is D. Students who receive no lower than a D in all major subjects—Religion, Reading, Math, English, Social Studies, Science, and Spanish (if applicable)—advance to the next grade level.

A student who passes all but one major subject may still advance to the next grade if he or she either takes and passes the course in summer school or receives **approved** tutoring. Ascension School must receive the

official documentation that the student has passed the summer school requirement or received the tutoring before being advanced to the next grade. The Principal and teacher reserve the right to determine if the tutor is sufficiently qualified to provide services.

A student who has two or more grades lower than D in major subjects will not advance to the next grade level.

Ascension School has a system of updating parents and students on students' grades:

- Assessments of students' progress are distributed three times a year; in December, March and June.
- At mid-trimester, reports are sent to parents of students in Pre-K through grade 2; parents of students in grades 3-8 may access grades in PowerSchool (online grading system)
- The grading system set forth by the Archdiocesan Division of Schools is as follows:

Subject Marking Code		Effort/Conduct
A+ 97-100	C+ 80-84	Outstanding
A 93-96	C 75-79	Satisfactory
B+ 89-92	D 70-74	Needs Improvement
B 85-88	E 69 and below	Unsatisfactory

Achievement Comments	
P	Demonstrates Proficiency
G	Very Good Progress
S	Satisfactory
I	Needs Improvement
N	Not Yet Demonstrating

- Students in grades K-2 do not receive grades in subject areas but progress is noted in specific areas of development as follows:

Progress Codes		(Areas are: Religion, Language Development, Reading, Mathematics, Fine Motor Coordination, Gross Motor Coordination, Social Development and Special Areas-Art, Music, Rhythm & Movement)
I	Independent	
P	Progressing	
E	Emerging	

If it appears that a student is in danger of not advancing to the next grade level, generally the school will use the following procedure:

1. By the end of January, the teacher, Principal, parents/guardian and student will meet to discuss the student's academic status. The school will give the parents/guardian a written summary of the meeting.
2. No later than March 31, the parents will receive written notification of the possibility that the student may not advance to the next grade
3. By the end of the last marking period, parents/guardians will be notified to inform them of the decision regarding the student's advancement.

(Note: It is not always evident throughout the course of the school year that a student is in danger of not advancing to the next grade. Failure to give notice in accordance with the foregoing procedure does not mean that a child will be advanced.)

To be eligible to graduate, an eighth grade student needs an overall average of D or better; and at least a D in each of the major subjects: Religion, Reading/Literature, Math, English, Social Studies, Science and Spanish. A student who has a D average and who fails one major subject will not be eligible to participate in the graduation ceremony but will receive his or her diploma if he/she passes the subject in summer school.

The Principal's List is the school's highest academic recognition. It recognizes students in grades 3 through 8 who have received an A or A+ in all academic areas and no lower than Satisfactory in the special subject areas of Art, Computer, Library (grades 6, 7, 8), Music and PE.

The Honor Roll recognizes students in grades 3 through 8 who have a grade of B or B+ in two academic areas an A or A+ in the remaining subjects, and no lower than Satisfactory in the special subject areas of Art, Computer, Library (grades 6, 7, 8), Music and PE.

To qualify for either of Ascension School's academic recognitions, the student must be judged acceptable in conduct, personal development and effort.

Exemplary Effort recognizes students in grades 3 through 8, who have achieved an effort grade of Outstanding in all academic areas and at least Good in the special subject areas.

Homework is important, in that it provides additional practice of skills and reinforces lessons taught during the school day. If a student misses an assignment, he/she will be required to complete the assignment. The teacher generally will notify the parents, by means of the demerit system, if homework assignments are missing. Parents of students in grades 3 through 8 may also access PowerSchool to check for assignments. Parents will be informed of a teacher's homework policy at the beginning of each school year. Although teachers will post homework on their individual websites, it is the ultimate responsibility of the student to keep track of and turn in assignments in a timely manner. PowerSchool and TeacherWeb are tools to help achieve success but are not substitutes for a student's responsibilities.

ARD Referral Process: If a child is not progressing academically, the school may ask the parents to initiate, or the parents may initiate on their own, the process to request professional assistance from their local public school system. The Admission, Review and Dismissal Process (ARD) is available to children who may need further academic assistance. The ARD process begins with the collection of screening information to determine if there is a reason to suspect a disability under special education laws. An initial meeting with the ARD committee from the child's local public school (the non-public school must be invited to participate in this meeting) will determine whether or not an evaluation plan is necessary. If an evaluation plan is developed and the test results determine that there is a need for implementation of an Individualized Education Program (IEP), the administrator will consult with the parents to determine the most appropriate academic placement for the child. *(Note: Federal Law requires implementation of an IEP only in public schools.)*

Throughout the process to determine if the child is eligible for special education services, every effort will be made by the Ascension School staff to complete the required paperwork, to attend the ARD meetings and to support the parents. In order to facilitate this process, parents should inform Ascension School's administration prior to initiating the ARD process.

ADMISSIONS

Children whose families are members of Ascension Parish receive priority of acceptance to Ascension School. If space is available, the school will accept children from outside the Parish. Prior to a student's acceptance, parents must submit all registration materials and meet with the Principal and/or classroom teacher. New students must also take an academic placement test. At the time of registration, parents must present the following: child's birth certificate, baptismal certificate (if any), Social Security number, and permission to obtain the previous school's records. In the case of foreign-born students, immigration documentation is also required. All students must be immunized in accordance with Maryland state law. Parents have a **maximum of twenty (20) calendar days** from the time that of registration to obtain the immunization record, get needed doses of vaccine, or get started on the vaccination series. If there is not verification of the immunization record, the student is to be excluded until the record is obtained. In the case of religious objection or medical contraindication for one or more immunizations, form DHMH 896 must be submitted to the school. **All students entering Grade 6 must have an updated and completed physical examination form on file.** Parents will be notified in writing if their child is accepted to Ascension School.

All new students are given a two-month evaluation period. If during this time, the school determines that the student is unable to succeed at Ascension, the parent/guardian will be asked to place their child in another school. Such recommendations occur after conference(s) with parent(s) and consideration of assistance that could be provided to help the student.

When a child's parents/guardian desire, every Catholic child should have the opportunity to attend a Catholic school. As far as possible, Catholic schools will accept children whose families belong to parishes that do not have schools. Although Ascension School welcomes children of other faiths, all students at Catholic schools must take religious courses and attend Catholic religious activities.

The school reserves the right to deny admittance to anyone whose behavior is contrary to the teachings and ideals of the school or whose behavior or attitude is disruptive to the functioning of the student body.

It is the policy of the Archdiocese of Baltimore and Ascension School to prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, religion, age, disability or handicap in the administration of its educational policies, or admission policies, scholarships and financial aid, and other school programs.

ATTENDANCE

School hours are 8:10AM until 3:00PM for Pre-Kindergarten through grade 8. Early dismissal is at 12:10PM.

All absences and tardiness become part of a student's permanent record. Regular attendance is considered essential for learning at Ascension School. Students need to develop the work habits and responsibilities required of all of us as we go through life. When a student is absent from school, a parent/legal guardian must telephone the school between 8:00AM and 9:00AM to report the reason for absence. Students who are absent from school may not participate in any after school or evening school-sponsored activities, such as band or sports programs.

When he/she returns to school, the student must bring a written note to their homeroom teacher, signed by a parent/legal guardian, stating the reason for the absence. A doctor's note is required after the child is absent for 3 days or more. A child may not be permitted to return to school until he/she is well enough to participate in school activities, including recess at lunchtime. A student must be well enough to fully participate in outdoor play. Absence from school during the academic year due to family vacations is strongly discouraged.

Students may begin to enter the building at 8:00AM. The first bell rings at 8:10AM. The 8:15AM bell signals the beginning of first period. A student arriving after 8:10AM but before 9:00AM will be marked late and must pick up a late slip. Students arriving between 9:00AM and 11:45AM are marked ½ day absent; students who arrive on time, but leave before 11:45AM are also considered ½ day absent. Students who arrive later than 11:45AM are marked a full day absent. If a student is absent 5 times in a trimester, they will receive a demerit. If a student receives 2 demerits for lateness in a trimester, the parents/guardian must meet with the Principal.

Students may not be on the school grounds before 7:50AM and should be picked up promptly at 3:00PM. Ascension School does not assume responsibility for supervision of the children beyond these times, unless they are enrolled in the Extended Care Program. The school is not liable for any injuries or accidents that may occur before or after the times stated above. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension or dismissal of the student. Parents are required, therefore, to follow the times stipulated when dropping off or picking up students. If the student is participating in a scheduled, supervised activity before or after the hours noted above, specific arrangements must be made for drop-off and/or pick-up at the designated times. Students in the Extended Care Program report to and remain in Brewer Hall. Parents must comply with the rules established by that program for drop-off and pick-up.

The school discourages early departures from school and requests that families arrange medical and dental appointments, etc., either after school hours, on Saturdays or when school is not in session. In case of an emergency, the student must submit a note to the office, signed by the parent/legal guardian, on the day of early dismissal. The note should include the reason for the request and the time the student must leave school. The parent/guardian must sign the student out in the nurse's office. The student is counted absent from classes missed, and must make up the work at the discretion of the teacher. Perfect attendance for the year means no days absent. This includes absences on early dismissal days and partial-day absences.

Students in the eighth grade are permitted two "shadow days", in order to visit high schools that they may be interested in attending. These days will not be counted against perfect attendance, provided the student remains at the high school he or she is visiting for the entire school day. A written note is required from the parent.

In the case of inclement weather, Ascension School follows Baltimore County Schools for closings and delayed opening. Parents should watch ABC, NBC or CBS, or listen to radio station WBAL or WLIF.

FINANCIAL

The Church of the Ascension helps to support the school; therefore students whose families are worshipping members of the parish pay a lower tuition than students whose families are not members. A child's family is considered a worshipping member of the parish if:

- The family has been registered with Ascension Parish at least six months before the child's school registration.
- The family regularly worships at the Church of the Ascension.
- The family submits Ascension contribution envelopes at least 24 weeks per year.

All tuition payments are made through FACTS Tuition Management System.

Tuition Assistance: Families that cannot afford the full tuition may be eligible for full or partial tuition assistance. A family applies for tuition assistance through FACTS Grant and Aid Assessment. Application information is available in the school office in January for the next school year. These forms are mailed directly to FACTS or filed electronically. An analysis is sent to the school. The Pastor and Principal determine the amount of tuition assistance each family receives.

Unpaid tuition and fees: If the tuition is 30 days late, the school will give the parents/guardian one week's notice. If the parents/guardian do not pay at the end of seven calendar days, the school may immediately suspend the student. The school will consider an appeal of the suspension only if extraordinary circumstances exist.

No student may enroll in Ascension School if his or her parents/guardian owe tuition from the preceding year. School officials will consider working out a payment schedule for the delinquent tuition. The parents or guardian must negotiate the schedule with the Pastor and Principal.

Academic records will not be forwarded to another school until all financial obligations to Ascension School have been satisfied. Late fees and fees for returned checks will be imposed.

Refunds: Fees are non-refundable. The Registration fee is applied toward tuition. Parents should notify the school in writing when withdrawing a child. Tuition must be paid in full for the current month. Any pre-paid tuition, beyond the month of withdrawal, will be refunded in 30 days.

Marion Burk Knott Scholarships are four-year, full-tuition awards to attend parish elementary or Catholic secondary schools in Baltimore City, Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Harford, or Howard Counties. Any student, regardless of race, gender, or national origin will be considered who is: a baptized Catholic or convert officially received into the Church, residing in the above geographical area; in Grade 4 entering Grade 5, or in Grade 8 entering Grade 9; previously accepted by their parish school or high school of choice. The primary purpose of Marion Burk Knott Scholarships is to provide a quality Catholic Education for students of outstanding academic merit. The criterion is academic achievement, evaluated objectively, and based upon: national standardized test scores, first marking period grades in academic subjects, principal's evaluation of student performance factors. A small amount of additional credit is added to the National standardized test scores for families with proven financial need.

DISCIPLINE

Students of Ascension School are an integral part of the faith community to which they belong. They need to be aware that their actions affect themselves as well as the entire faith community. The ultimate purpose of this policy is to develop true Christian character and a sense of responsibility, to establish an atmosphere of academic excellence, and to protect the welfare of the individual as well as the school community. The discipline policy is based upon Christian values of love, respect, and forgiveness. The joint involvement of parents and school in the disciplinary process is necessary to realize the goals of Christian education.

The Discipline Code applies to all school sponsored events, such as field trips, dances, and athletic practices and competitions. Discipline also may be imposed for conduct that adversely affects the interests or reputation of Ascension School, regardless of when or where the conduct occurs.

Grades Pre-K through 3:

The well-being and safety of each child guides our discipline procedures. When a child's actions interfere with the learning environment or may result in injury to themselves or others, the teacher, to improve the situation, may use strategies such as distraction, redirection, or time-out. By giving choices and offering experiences in problem solving, our program provides a learning environment that encourages self-discipline.

Grades 4 through 8:

Discipline is a process, not a single action or statement. The ultimate goal is to have students become self-disciplined individuals who know and accept personal boundaries, standards and expectations. Our goal is for students to learn to accept responsibility for their actions and to mature into adults who model Christian behavior.

Demerits: The Demerit System provides a series of warnings to students when they make inappropriate choices. It also serves as a form of communication with parents about their child's behavior. When students do not follow a classroom or school rule, a demerit is issued by the teacher, and a parent signature is required. Parents are requested to discuss with their child the reason for classroom/school rules and the expectation that he/she follow them.

If a student receives 5 Level A demerits within a trimester, he/she will conference with the principal to receive guidance on the rules at Ascension School. Should an additional 5 Level A demerits occur within a trimester, a major detention will be issued. Students earning 3 Level B demerits within a trimester will conference with the parents, teachers, and Principal to assist the student in improving behavior. The students will sign a behavior contract as a result of this discussion. Demerits are cumulative for one trimester only; however, continual issuing of demerits each trimester will be addressed with an alternate plan. Students who do not meet the terms of the contract may be suspended or expelled from Ascension School.

Major Detentions: Inappropriate behaviors that are more serious in nature may result in a major detention. Major detentions also may be imposed when students receive 10 Level A demerits in a trimester. The one-hour detention will be served on Wednesdays, under the supervision of the assigned faculty member. During major detention, students complete a written assignment about their behavior and perform a school service project. Major detentions are cumulative for one year. After a second major detention is issued, a conference is scheduled with parents to determine a future course of action.

A sample demerit form is provided below.

Ascension School 4601 Maple Ave. Halethorpe, MD 21227	DEMERIT VIOLATION		Date _____
	To the Parents of: _____ Homeroom Teacher: _____		Grade _____
Notice to Parents Please discuss with your child the importance of following classroom and school rules. Your child should be aware that the rules are designed to create a positive learning environment for all students.			
Your child chose not to follow a school or classroom rule during _____ class. He/She engaged in the following behavior(s):			
Level A offense:		Level B offense:	
Eating at inappropriate times.		Disrespect to teacher/student.	
Uniform/dress code violation.		Name calling (principal conference).	
Failure to return signed infraction.		Inappropriate behavior in church, assemblies, other school functions.	
Failure to return signed homework, quiz, or test.		Leaving classroom without permission.	
Late 5 times in a marking period.		Disruption of learning environment:	
Gum chewing.		*Excessive talking *Calling out	
Inappropriate manners at lunchtime.		*Disrupting teacher *Not following directions	
		*Disrupting peers *Writing/passing notes	
Other _____		Other _____	
After receiving 5 level A demerits in a marking period, the student will meet with the principal to determine consequences.		After receiving 3 level B demerits in a marking period, the student will meet with the Principal, the teachers involved, and his/her parents and will sign a behavior contract.	
Teacher signature _____ Parent Signature _____ Date _____			
Comments: _____ _____ _____			

Suspensions: Repeated violations of the discipline code or a violation of a serious nature may result in a student suspension. After careful consideration of all factors, the Principal will determine if a suspension is merited and for how many days. Any student on suspension may not attend school functions during that time period. While on suspension, the student is still responsible for missed work. After the specified amount of time for suspension, the student and the parent(s) guardian(s) will meet with the Administration to discuss reinstatement. The administration reserves the right to determine the conditions for reinstatement. A continuation of discipline problems may result in expulsion.

Expulsions: After hearing from everyone involved in serious incidents of misconduct, the Principal may expel a student. Parents may appeal an expulsion decision to the Superintendent of the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

Searches: Lockers and desks are properties of the school and, like all other school property, may be searched at any time. The Principal, or designee, may conduct a reasonable search of personal belongings of a student if he/she has grounds to suspect a violation of school policies. Failure of the student to cooperate with the search may result in automatic suspension and/or expulsion from the school.

School's and Principal's Discretion: Circumstances relating to the offense and the student's disciplinary history may influence the action taken by the school. Ascension School reserves the right to impose more or less discipline as appropriate.

It is the responsibility of the Principal to make judgments in extenuating circumstances. The Principal shall make the final determination as to whether an infraction of this section exists. In all disciplinary decisions, the Principal's primary goal is to maintain a safe, appropriate learning atmosphere. The goal is to be fair and reasonable as we teach children to be responsible for their actions.

Examples of Disciplinary Violations: Following are examples of disciplinary violations that may result in detention, suspension, or expulsion, depending on the circumstances:

- Harassment or abuse of any kind, including bullying
- Inflicting or attempting to inflict physical harm on another, including acts that could result in injury and/or could be a safety issue
- Dishonesty
- Presence in an unauthorized area without permission
- Deliberate destruction of school property or another's property [Note: If a student damages school property or the property of others, the Principal may require that the student either repair the property or pay for its repair or replacement in addition to imposing discipline.]
- Use of cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices during school hours
- Certain violations of the Acceptable Use Policy, which will be signed by students and parents/guardians before a student may use the computer lab
- Communication of obscene, offensive, or otherwise inappropriate material
- Possession, consumption, distribution, sale or transfer of alcoholic beverages or tobacco products
- Possession, consumption, distribution, sale or transfer of a controlled dangerous substance or controlled dangerous substance paraphernalia or "look a like" materials
- Possession, distribution, sale or transfer of any weapon or item designed to inflict harm, such as pepper spray
- Disparagement of the reputation of school personnel or the school, including through use of the internet
- Plagiarism and forgery
- Other actions of a serious nature.

DRESS AND APPEARANCE

From the first day of school in September, through the last day of school in the spring, students are expected to wear the full school uniform, unless the Principal announces otherwise.

Boys' Uniform: Grades 1 – 5

- Navy blue trousers (regular or relaxed fit) and belt
- White, light blue or yellow long-or short-sleeved polo shirt with Ascension logo. Shirts must be tucked in.

Boys' Uniform: Grades 6 – 8

- Navy blue trousers (regular or relaxed fit) and belt
- White, light blue or yellow long-or short-sleeved shirt (Shirts must be tucked into the pants or shorts.)
- The Ascension School tie

*In the cooler weather, boys in grades 1 through 8 may wear:

- Navy blue V-neck cardigan
- Navy blue V-neck or crew-neck pullover
- 6th, 7th, and 8th grade boys may wear navy blue sleeveless V-neck sweater vest

Girls' Uniform: Grades 1 – 5

- Dropped-waist jumper in polyester in the Ascension plaid
- White, light blue or yellow long-or short-sleeved blouse with Peter Pan collar
- White or navy blue knee socks, solid colored tights, or ankle socks.

*In the cooler weather, girls in grades 1 through 5 may wear the navy blue cardigan

Girls' Uniform: Grades 6 – 8

- Kilt or kick pleated skirt in the Ascension plaid—skirts may be no shorter than 2 inches above the knee
- White, light blue, or yellow long- or short-sleeved blouse
- White or navy blue knee socks, solid colored tights, or ankle socks

*In the cooler weather, girls in grades 6, 7, and 8 may wear:

- Navy blue V-neck sleeveless sweater-vest
- Navy blue V-neck cardigan
- Navy blue V-neck or crew neck pullover

*For uniformity of shade, the blue sweaters must be purchased from Flynn & O'Hara

**After the 2009-2010 school year, the yellow blouses and yellow polo shirts will be phased out.

Optional Warm-Weather Uniform: All students Grades 1 - 8

From the first day of school until October 16, and from April 20 until the end of the school year; students may wear an optional warm-weather uniform consisting of:

- Navy blue walking shorts, which must be purchased at Flynn & O'Hara
- White, light blue, or yellow polo shirt with the Ascension logo
- Solid white or navy blue traditional ankle socks

Socks are to be white or navy blue with no team or company logo and must be visible above the shoe and cover the ankle.

Physical Education Uniform: The uniform for Physical Education consists of gym shorts and the class color tee shirt. From mid-October until the end of April, unless the weather is unseasonably warm, the students wear "Ascension Sweats". The shorts and sweats are purchased at Flynn & O'Hara.

Shoes: Boys in grades 1-8 and girls in grades 6-8 are required to wear the tan suede buck shoe. Girls in grades 1-5 may choose to wear a black leather Mary Jane shoe or the tan suede buck shoe. For safety reasons, the shoes should be leather or rubber-soled. Students may not wear athletic shoes, work shoes or boots. Shoes should not leave black scuffmarks. Children in PreKindergarten and Kindergarten should wear a shoe that securely fastens. Students may not wear sandals, jellies, or "flip-flops".

Jewelry and Other Decorative Items: Students may wear only a small religious medal or cross. Girls may wear one pair of small earrings on the lobe of the ear. Boys may not wear earrings. Students may not wear makeup or colored nail polish, nor may they wear decorative items such as false fingernails or tattoos.

Hair Styles: Students may not wear extreme hairstyles such as mohawks and hair may not be dyed or colored. Boys' hair should not touch the eyebrows or the collar. The Principal will be the judge of what hairstyles are acceptable.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Upon entering Ascension School, students must have a complete physical, a dental check up and the required immunizations. Parents should keep ill children home. To return to class, children should be free of fever or on antibiotics for at least 24 hours. Children must be well enough to be kept outside during recess periods and to follow the regular school schedule.

Parents must call the school if their child is diagnosed with a communicable disease, because the school must notify the Health Department. All reports are confidential. The following diseases/conditions are necessary to report: measles-regular or German, meningitis, hepatitis, food poisoning, pediculosis (head lice), adverse reaction to pertussis vaccine, Lyme disease, chicken pox, TB, whooping cough, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, human immune deficiency, impetigo, AIDS.

Any student with drainage from the eyes associated with conjunctivitis (pink eye) must be kept at home until under treatment by a doctor. A doctor's note will be required for readmission to school. Students who have chicken pox are excluded from school until all lesions are scabbed over. Students are excluded from school for head lice. A child may return to school when he/she is free of lice and nits. A child must be examined by school personnel before he/she can return to class.

The administration of medication in school is discouraged. However, if a student's physician recommends that the student receive prescription or over-the-counter medication during the school day, a written order from the physician is required that specifies start and stop dates for the medication. The original medication container or box for inhalers must be brought to the school. These containers or boxes should include the following: name of the medication, directions for use, time for dispensing, name of doctor ordering the medication, date of prescription, expiration date as stated by the pharmacist, strength of medication/dosage, and the student's name and grade. Students may not possess, dispense or distribute medication on their own. All medication must be delivered to school by a

parent/guardian. Calamine lotion and cough drops may be administered with a note from parents. Cough drops should be brought to school in the original package in a ziplock bag with the student's name on it. The package should be given to the student's teacher. Cough drops that contain an anesthetic will be kept in the Nurse's office.

The child's physician must renew school medication orders each year and the order must be signed on or after July 1. Parents must notify the school of their child's allergies, including food allergies. If the student carries an epi-pen, the physician's order must state this requirement.

If any injury to the head or any other serious injury occurs to a student, the school will call the parent and send home a report. The report is to be signed by the parent/guardian and returned to the school. If the parent/guardian or alternative contact person cannot be reached in an emergency, the school will contact police/ambulance for assistance.

Scoliosis Screening Requirement: Maryland law mandates scoliosis screening for every student at least once in grades six through eight. A student, whose parent or legal guardian objects, in writing, to the screening, is not required to be screened. Trained personnel from the local public school jurisdiction will conduct a screening program to determine if any of the students screened have scoliosis (an abnormal curvature of the spine). According to the available information, 4 in every 100 children may develop scoliosis, and 2 of these may require treatment. If the condition is detected early, and treated appropriately, progressive spine deformity can be prevented.

Blood borne Pathogens: A complete Blood borne Pathogens Standard Exposure Control Plan has been established by the school and can be found posted in areas throughout the school building.

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Policy and Procedures: Maryland law requires that all educators and other employees of the school, including volunteers, report suspected child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities in order that children may be protected from harm and the family may be helped. The school policy supports Maryland laws in this regard and requires that all school staff report suspected abuse and neglect to the Department of Social Services, Protective Services Division, and/or the local police department.

Vision and Hearing Screening: The school follows the directives of Baltimore County Health Department and responds to parent's requests for individual testing. This testing is usually done for all students in Kindergarten, grades 3, 5, 7 and 8, as well as for new students in all other grades.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

AHERA: In October 1986, the U. S. congress enacted the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA). Under this law, comprehensive regulations were developed to address asbestos problems in public and private elementary and secondary schools. Our program for fulfilling the requirements under this law is outlined in our asbestos management plan. This plan contains information on our inspections, re-inspections, response actions and post-response action activities, including periodic surveillance activities that are planned or in progress. The school's asbestos management plan is available in the school office.

Anti-Harassment Policy: It is the policy of the Archdiocese to prohibit discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, religion, age, disability or handicap, or protected activity in its education programs and activities. Ascension School neither condones nor tolerates harassment of students at school, at school-related activities or functions, or in any school-related setting. Harassment of students, whether engaged in by other students, teachers, administrators, or others, is prohibited and will result in disciplinary action depending on the nature and severity of the offense.

Cafeteria and Play Areas: School staff members and teachers have a list of cafeteria and play area regulations all students must follow. Homeroom teachers explain these rules to students. When school is in session, students may not be outside the school building unless they are involved in class or recess activities and are accompanied by a faculty member. The faculty room is a restricted area for students. Empty classrooms are restricted areas. Corridors are to be generally clear of traffic except for movement at the change of class.

Change in Name or Family Status: If there is a change in the family status, or a change of a child's name, it is important that the school be informed promptly of the change. In case of a change of custody, a copy of the

portion of the court order that identifies the custodial parent and the visitation rights, if any, of the non-custodial parent must be on file with the school.

Communication Between Home and School: In order to comply with our Green School status, Ascension School will communicate through its website and through e-mail as often as possible. We urge parents to sign up for paperless communication. Newsletters and the updated calendar will be posted monthly.

Whenever a situation occurs that causes concern, the concern should be addressed first at the level at which the situation arose. Therefore, parents should first contact the teacher involved and then, if necessary, teacher and parents should go to the Principal. Parents may request a conference with a teacher by sending a note to school or an e-mail to the teacher and arranging an appointment for before or after school hours. In the best interest of students, the school welcomes and encourages verbal and written communication between parents and teachers. Parent conferences will be scheduled for all students during the first marking period.

Day Care and Extended Care: Ascension provides affordable day care for school-age and younger children. Qualified personnel run all of the programs. Please call 410-242-5498 for further information.

- There is a year-round Early Learning Center for 2- and 3-year old children.
- The Extended Care Program during the school year provides before- and after-school supervision for children in Pre-Kindergarten through eighth grade.
- The school has a summer program for school-age children.

Emergencies: In the event of a student's illness or other emergency, school officials will make every effort to contact a parent/guardian. If the school officials cannot reach parents or guardians, officials will contact a person listed on the student's emergency form, therefore, it is most important that each student has on file an emergency form, listing two emergency contacts, which are authorized to make decisions if parents or guardians are not available. The school office must be notified immediately if there is a change in the student's address or phone number, or the phone numbers of the contact persons so as to update emergency information. Children will be released only to the person(s) designated on the emergency form, unless otherwise

instructed by the custodial parent/guardian. Children enrolled in the Extended Care Program need an additional emergency form specific to that program.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA): Ascension School is in compliance with FERPA regarding an individual's right to privacy. The following persons will be allowed access to the child's educational records: teachers and other school officials who have legitimate educational interests; parent(s)/legal guardians; non-custodial parents, unless the school has been provided with a certified copy of a court order denying such access. It is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of any court orders or legal agreements regarding access to educational records. Any other person requesting access to a student's educational records must have the written consent of the parent/legal guardian unless the disclosure is otherwise authorized by law.

A log will be maintained of each request for access to and each disclosure of educational record information other than disclosure to parents or school officials. The log should contain the name of the person(s), the date, and their legitimate interests in requesting or obtaining the information.

FERPA permits schools to disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent. Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations, such as companies that publish yearbooks, without a parent's prior written consent. Ascension School has designated the following as directory information: student's name, parents' names, address, telephone numbers, e-mail address, grade level, and photograph. If a parent/guardian does not want Ascension School to disclose directory information from his/her child's education records without prior written consent, the parent/guardian must notify Ascension School, in writing, during the first week of school.

Field Trips: Field trips are considered an integral part of the school's educational program and a valuable learning experience for students. Field trips are scheduled at various times during the school year. In advance of the trip, a permission form, required by the Archdiocesan Division of Catholic Schools, is sent home. A student will be permitted to attend the trip only if the permission form is signed by the parent/guardian and

returned to the teacher by the specified date, along with any fees. If, for some extraordinary reason, a student is unable to participate, the student is expected to attend school on that day and fees must still be paid as the rates for the trip reflect total participation. Work will be supplied by the teacher(s), and the student will be assigned a classroom in which to work, under the supervision of a staff member. If a student is unable to attend because of illness, the school cannot promise a refund. The teacher must be notified if a child will not participate in the field trip experience. Students who are kept at home from the trip will be marked absent. Parents/ guardians are encouraged to participate as chaperones on field trips, as the need arises. However, because of safety and liability factors, pre-school siblings and other school-age siblings are not allowed. The school does not permit parents not selected as chaperones to join the group at the trip destination. **ALL CHAPERONES MUST BE STAND CERTIFIED.**

Fire Drills: When the fire alarm sounds, students are to remain silent and walk single-file to the designated exit, then to the evacuation area. At the conclusion of the drill, students return to their classrooms in silence.

Fund Raising: Money raised by parents and school groups helps to maintain the tuition rate and enhances the programs at Ascension School. All families are expected to participate. Families are required to earn 30 service points by participating in fundraising. There are many and varied opportunities to earn points and a list is posted and updated by the Home and School Association. Families may opt to pay \$10.00 per point in lieu of participation.

Home and School Association: Parents of Ascension School students should attend meetings of the Home and School Association, the organization through which they may help the school and discuss school issues. The Home and School Association meets monthly to talk with the Principal and plan fund-raisers. All parents are members of the Home and School Association. The Association meets in Brewer Hall at 7 PM. the second Tuesday of each month, as noted on the school calendar. Election of officers is at the May meeting. The officers are: president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and two directors.

Instrumental Music program: Through this private company, Ascension School offers an instrumental music course. In September, students in grades

4 through 8 are given a presentation on the course. Parents enroll their children for lessons and pay a fee directly to this company.

Insurance: At the start of each year, each student receives information on how to enroll in a voluntary accident insurance plan approved by the Archdiocese of Baltimore. The plan covers accidents that occur en route to and from school, during school hours and while participating in school activities. The school office has claim forms.

Liturgy: Students in grades K through 8 attend Mass once a week. Once every month, there is a special school Mass planned by teachers and students. In the seasons of Lent and Advent, and at other times during the school year, students have a chance to participate in the sacrament of Reconciliation. Eucharistic Adoration is held monthly.

Lost articles: The school is not responsible for personal articles. Parents should be sure the child's name is on all personal items. A lost and found box in Brewer Hall contains all items found on school grounds.

Messages: Students may make or receive phone calls only in emergencies. For example, no student may call home to get his or her parent/guardian to deliver homework or other material needed for class.

Money: If the student is to make a payment to the school, his or her parent/guardian should place the money in a sealed envelope marked with the student's name, room number, grade and purpose for the money.

In general, students should carry no more than three dollars. If a student brings more than three dollars to school, he or she should place the money in a sealed envelope and take it to the office. The money will be locked up until the end of the school day.

Traffic Pattern and Parking: For safety and convenience, please abide by the following traffic and parking rules:

- Although Maple Avenue and Arbutus Avenue are not officially posted as one-way streets, on school days please abide by the recommended one-way uses shown on the map. The X's on the map show where parking is prohibited. Please use the church parking lot.
- Do not block crosswalks or driveways
- Do not double park.

(insert map here from last year's handbook)

Transfers: Parents should inform the Ascension School office at least one week before a student will transfer to another school. The week's notice gives Ascension School officials time to complete paper work on such administrative items as tuition, fees, records and release forms.

Visitors: For security reasons, visitors must enter through the front door. They must sign in at the main office and receive a volunteer or visitor badge. No one may go to a classroom without permission.

Volunteers: Ascension School welcomes approved volunteers to help both in and outside the classroom. During the first week of school, the student will bring home volunteer information. In accordance with Archdiocesan policy, volunteers and chaperones must complete the STAND process. Training is offered online at the Archdiocese of Baltimore website and will be offered in the fall at Ascension School.

