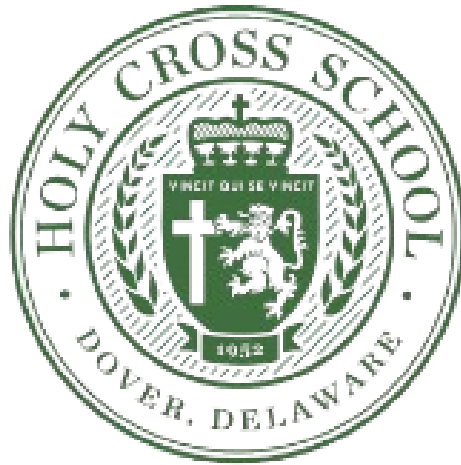


*Early Learning Center  
Parent HANDBOOK  
2025 - 2026*



*Guided by faith, committed to every learner.*

**HOLY CROSS SCHOOL  
631 S. STATE STREET  
DOVER, DELAWARE 19901**

**Phone: 302-674-5787 ext 120  
Fax: 302-674-5783**

**<https://holycrossdover.org/school>  
email: [elc@holycrossdover.org](mailto:elc@holycrossdover.org)**

## **Responsibility of Parents and Students**

This Parent/Student Handbook is a contract between Holy Cross School and its families. Parents are expected to read this Handbook in its entirety. Parents of Pre-K 3 through Pre-K 4 students should developmentally appropriately discuss this Handbook with their children after reading it.

## **Interpretation and Enforcement**

Every effort has been made to include all policies and procedures for the current school year in the Handbook. However, circumstances may require school administration to apply the Handbook to unique and unanticipated situations. The school administration interprets and enforces the policies and procedures included in the Handbook. The Pastor has the final authority in all matters of the school, and in consultation with him, the Principal may waive any regulations as seen fit for a just cause.

## **Right to Amend**

Holy Cross School reserves the right to amend this Handbook at any time. Notice of amendments will be published during the school year via the Crusader Notes and other forms of communication.

## **Mission**

Holy Cross School provides its students with an academically rich, faith-filled learning environment in the interest of fostering an education rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. At Holy Cross, we cultivate a lifelong sense of justice, peace, compassion, and respect for all God's creation.

## **Vision**

Our school's vision is to be a community where the educational process is centered on the love of Christ and the development of the whole child. By exposing students to Gospel values, high academic standards and individual expectations, Holy Cross School is committed to preparing and enhancing the personal excellence of each and every student.

## **Core Values**

At Holy Cross School, we are guided by a set of core values:

- Our primary aim is to cultivate the spiritual, moral, and intellectual development of our students.
- We are dedicated to delivering a Catholic education to every child, acknowledging them as precious gifts from God, within the constraints of our resources.

- From the majestic structures to the modest corridors, every member of our community, whether leaders, educators, caregivers, or students, endeavors to embody the compassionate teachings of Christ.
- We cherish the inseparable bond among home, school, and church, fostering a milieu that nurtures knowledge.
- Our curriculum seamlessly integrates academic excellence with a firm grounding in faith, equipping students to exemplify Christian virtues, cultivate a thirst for enduring wisdom, and transition effectively to higher education.
- The school's accomplishments hinge on our competent, devoted, and continuously improving faculty.
- Upholding a haven of security, integrity, and tranquility is vital for guiding the school toward future prosperity.

## **Beliefs**

We believe:

- all youth have the opportunity to receive a Catholic Education;
- in the spiritual, moral, and intellectual development of our youth within the framework of the Gospel, the traditions and teachings of the Roman Catholic Church;
- Each child is a gift from God. Our Catholic school recognizes individual differences and embraces diversity;
- that a quality education is an active partnership between home, school, and parish;
- that as a Christ-centered school, the administration, faculty, staff, and students strive to model the behavior of Jesus Christ;
- we instill in our students a lifelong commitment to learning and prepare them to be models of Christian values;
- an academically challenging curriculum prepares students for a successful transition to high school;
- that a well-trained, dedicated, and continuously developing staff is vital to the success of the parish school;
- that a clean, safe, and properly maintained facility is essential for the future development of the school; and
- adaptability and innovation are essential for the future development of the school.

## **Diversity**

Holy Cross School admits students of any race, color, creed and national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to the students of the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed and national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, or athletic and other school-administered programs. Recognizing each child is a gift from God, Holy Cross School recognizes individual differences and embraces diversity.

## About our Staff

- All Holy Cross School-Early Learning Center Staff are certified Early childhood teachers, aides, or interns through Delaware’s Department of Education.
- Licensed Early Childhood Administrator, Mrs. Mallory O’Mara (principal)
- CPR and First Aid Certified
- Continue their professional development throughout the school year via staff development, online/in-person Diocese/DOE trainings, or through career advancement training

## Licensed by Delaware’s Office of Child Care Licensing

Our three and four-year-old program is licensed by the state of Delaware’s Office of Child Care Licensing. In order to be licensed, a licensing specialist conducts an annual unannounced compliance review to verify that we are following the DELACARE: Regulations for Early Care and Education and School-Age Centers. A licensing specialist will also visit the center if the Office of Child Care Licensing receives a complaint. If you would like to review these regulations or our compliance reviews, please speak with our administrator.

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## Holy Cross School- Early Learning Center Policies

### Daily Schedule: Monday-Friday

Student Arrival/ Open centers	7:40-8:00 am
Morning Prayers, Mission Statement, Pledge of Allegiance	8:00-8:10 am
Continue Centers	8:10-8:30 am
Morning Meeting/Calendar	8:30-8:40 am
Phonics (Letter of the Week)	8:40-9:00 am
Religion	9:00-9:30 am
Snack (handwashing before & after)	9:30-9:50 am
Small Group Activities (centers: math, literacy, art, music, etc)	9:50-10:30 am
Recess	10:30-11:00 am

Large Group Activities	11:05-11:30 am
Half Day Student Dismissal/handwashing-whole group bathroom break	11:30-11:40 am
Lunch (handwashing & whole group bathroom break after lunch)	11:40 am -12:10 pm
Rest/Quiet Time	12:10-12:55 pm
Enrichment (music, library, media, art, gym)	1:13-1:56 pm
Afternoon meeting & Pack-Up	2:05-2:30 pm
Dismissal	2:30-2:50 pm
After-care (any student who is not picked up by 2:30 pm will be walked to aftercare)	2:50-6:00 pm

## Curriculum & Assessments

### PreK Overview:

#### GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS

We believe that all children are unique creations whose lives are a gift from God. We recognize that parents are the child's first teachers in the faith and prepare children for success in school by being involved in their child's education from birth.

We recognize and value every child's diversity in culture, home environment, development, learning style, and ability. Collaboration and partnership among all those associated with the child (parents, child-care professionals, teachers, health care providers, and community resources) contribute to the child's development and school success.

- Children entering a three-year old or multi-age program in the Diocese of Wilmington must be three years old by August 31st and fully potty trained before entering the three-year old program.
- Children entering Pre-Kindergarten Programs in the Diocese of Wilmington must be four years old by August 31st
- The following principles are the foundation for Pre-Kindergarten Programs in the schools of the Catholic Diocese of Wilmington.
  - Children will understand that prayer is a gift from God, and will be taught to pray.
  - The child's work is their play and builds the foundation for later learning.
  - Classroom environment and learning opportunities are developmentally appropriate and foster spiritual, cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and creative growth in the

preschooler's educational experience.

- Multiple instructional modalities include hands-on learning, teacher-directed instruction, whole-group instruction, and peer interaction which fosters Kindergarten readiness.

### **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Religious education during the early childhood years seeks to foster growth in a wider faith community. This is accomplished by educating our children in the ways of our faith through knowledge and practice.

#### **Knowledge of Faith**

- Identify that God created all things
- Demonstrates understanding that God calls us to be kind and loving
- Understand that making the Sign of the Cross is a way to show respect to God
- Recognize that Jesus, Mary, and Joseph are the Holy Family
- Learn and participate in daily prayers

#### **Liturgical Education**

- Learn the liturgical seasons of the Church: Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter
- Learn about the Saints and their Feast days
- Learn the appropriate gestures for Mass celebration

#### **Moral Formation**

- Understand that life is a gift from God and that we must care for all living things
- Demonstrate understanding that God calls us to be kind and loving to all people
- Demonstrate the ability to express sorrow when we have hurt others and to forgive others when they apologize for wrong doing

#### **Learning to Pray**

- Learn that prayer is a way that we talk to God
- Attempt to make the Sign of the Cross
- Learn and participate in daily prayers (morning prayer /grace before meal/ end of day prayer)
- Learn to be respectful and reverent during prayer and religious activities

### **LANGUAGE AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT**

Language and literacy development is an integral part of early childhood education. The following skills will be taught and integrated during formal and informal classroom instruction and play in the preschool program. Parents are also encouraged to provide experiences that will help children to learn these skills as they prepare to enter preschool.

#### **Language**

- Communicate to be understood by peers and adults
- Using an appropriate volume to speak
- Communicate using words appropriate to the situation
- Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly
- Respond to hearing his/her name
- Demonstrate understanding of messages in conversation by listening and responding appropriately

- Follow one to two step directions

### **Literacy/Reading Readiness**

- Show an interest in books and/or engage in reading-related activities
- Interacts with a variety of types of texts (stories, poems, nursery rhymes, songs)
- Listens with interest to a story
- Begins to answer questions related to a story that has been read or told
- Hold a book upright, turn pages from the front of the book to the back
- Develops knowledge of the alphabet
- Shows an awareness of print including name
- Begins to form the letters of his/her first name
- Uses scribbles, symbols, or drawings to express experience through pictures and play

## **MATHEMATICS EDUCATION**

The mathematics curriculum in the preschool program provides young children with knowledge and practice in understanding numbers, geometry and spatial relations, patterns and measurement, data collection and problem solving.

### **Number Sense**

- Become aware of numbers 0 to 10
- Begin to use language to compare numbers of objects (less than, greater than, equal to)
- Learns how numbers relate to everyday life
- Count in sequential order from 1 to 10
- Use 1:1 correspondence when counting objects up to 10
- Identifies numerals 0 - 10 in print
- Begins using ordinal numbers to describe the position of objects (first, second, third, etc.)

### **Geometry and Spatial Sense**

- Recognizes and names two dimensional shapes
- Identifies positional terms (top, bottom, middle)
- Able to put together/take apart puzzles
- Begin to recognize the concept of same and different
- Shows an basic awareness of symmetry
- Begins to understand basic time intervals (morning, afternoon, evening)
- Begins to use language to describe an understanding of time (days of the week, months, years, seasons, yesterday, today, tomorrow)

### **Patterning and Measuring**

- Create and extend simple repeating patterns
- Participates in activities that include measuring
- Begin to use non-standard units of measurement

### **Data Collection and Problem Solving**

- Compare and contrast objects
- Sort, categorize, classify, and order objects in a series or group according to one or two attributes (size, color, etc.)

- Contribute, display, and interpret simple graphs
- Make predictions based on observation/information

### **SCIENCE EDUCATION**

Young children are naturally curious and enjoy exploring and asking questions. The teaching of Science in Pre-Kindergarten builds upon this natural curiosity and exploration by providing the time, skills, and structures to help children formulate and investigate their questions. Children in Pre-Kindergarten are expected to learn both the content and process of science.

#### **Knowledge**

Observe, describe, and discuss the natural world: living and non-living things, natural processes, and weather

Learn about the environment and how to respect and care for it

Become aware of ideas and language related to time (i.e. daily routines, order of events)

Develop awareness and beginning understanding of changes in materials and cause/effect relationships

#### **Scientific Skills and Methods**

Use the five senses to gather information and explore the environment .Learn to use simple measuring devices and concepts to gather information, investigate and observe processes and relationships. Participate in simple investigations to test observations, discuss and draw conclusions, and form generalizations. Collect, describe and record information through a variety of means (i.e. discussion, drawings, maps, graphs, and charts). Observe and discuss differences and similarities among objects. Develop an understanding of drawings, graphs, charts, and maps as a means of recording observations. Explore the environment through hands-on activities using simple scientific tools such as magnifying glasses, measuring devices, and the five senses. Learn to make predictions, articulate explanations and generalizations.

### **CREATIVE ARTS**

Exposure and instruction in music, art, movement, and dramatic play, nurture the creative side of a child's early education. Besides formal instruction in these subjects, the early childhood environment lends itself to the integration of the creative arts in the daily routine of the classroom and play.

#### **Music**

- Participate in a variety of musical activities
- Recall and imitate patterns, songs, rhythms, and rhymes
- Experiences music from a variety of cultures

#### **Movement**

- Use movement to reinforce learning in all curricular areas
- Demonstrate through movement an awareness of different musical tempos, patterns, and beats

#### **Art**

- Recognize and name basic colors

- Experience and use a variety of art media (play dough, paint, etc.)
- Create drawings, paintings, and other creations
- Express ideas through artistic creations

### **Dramatic Play**

- Participate in a variety of dramatic play activities
- Use creativity and imagination when assuming different roles in pretend-play situations

## **EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Classroom environment and learning opportunities are developmentally appropriate and foster spiritual, cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and creative growth in the preschooler's educational experience. While allowing the child to develop and mature at his/her own pace, The following indicators provide a guide for appropriate development of the child.

### **Self-Concept**

- Develop and express a positive awareness of self
- Develop independence in a range of activities, routines, and tasks
- Demonstrate satisfaction when completing task or solving a problem
- Maintain individuality as well as a positive sense of self within a group

### **Self-Control**

- Express feelings, needs, and opinions appropriately while respecting others
- Begin to understand how actions affect others; accept consequences of negative actions
- Follow simple rules and routines
- Use materials purposefully, safely, and respectfully
- Learn to solve problems in a positive manner

### **Cooperation**

- Begin to use compromise, negotiations, and discussions in working, playing, and resolving conflicts with peers
- Demonstrate ability to give/take during peer interactions by helping, sharing, and discussing
- Learn to take turns in games or using materials
- Be a helpful member in a group

### **Social Relationships**

- Accept guidance and directions from a range of familiar adults
- Show ability to develop friendships with peers
- Express empathy and care for others
- Communicate with familiar adults in an appropriate and comfortable manner
- Demonstrate positive social skills and manners

### **Knowledge of Self, Families, Communities**

- Know full name
- Identify their own gender
- Recognize similarities and respect differences among people such as gender, race, special needs, culture, language, and family structures

- Learn about community helpers
- Understand the structures of home, classroom, school, and parish
- Learn caution in unfamiliar and/or potentially dangerous situation

### **Knowledge of Self, Families, Communities**

- Know full name and birthday
- Identify their own gender, family, and culture
- Recognize similarities and respect differences among people such as gender, race, special needs, culture, language, and family structures
- Learn about community helpers
- Understand the structures of home, classroom, school, parish, and community
- Learn caution in unfamiliar and/or potentially dangerous situations

### **Assessments**

Students will be evaluated using teacher-created assessments three times a year, once each trimester. In the fall, teachers will conduct Parent-Teacher Conferences to discuss the assessment results and share additional observations. A signed copy of the current assessment will be kept in the child's file.

The first 5 years of your child's life are important, and we want to help provide the best start for your child. As part of this service, we provide the Ages & Stages Questionnaires, Third Edition (ASQ-3), and the Ages & Stages:Social Emotional 2 (ASQ:SE-2) to help you keep track of your child's development. Developmental screening is just as important as vision and hearing screenings. The earlier delays are identified, the earlier they can be addressed before they grow larger. ***The questionnaire will be provided at least one time per year.*** You will be asked to answer questions about what your child can and cannot do. This will include questions about your child's communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving, personal-social skills, and interactions with adults and children.

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### **Days/Hours of Operation**

The Early Learning Center (ELC) at Holy Cross School provides schooling for PreK-3 and PreK-4 students Monday through Friday except for closings as referred to on the school and Diocesan calendar. The school day begins at 7:40 am and the late bell rings at 8:00 am.

Parents are expected to arrive promptly to school to ease the arrival process for their child, which will help their child learn the classroom morning routines.

### **School Hours**

The school day is from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for the ELC (Pre-K 3 and Pre-K 4). On half-day sessions, the school day is from 8 to 11:30 a.m. for the ELC.

### **Arrival**

The school doors open at 7:40 a.m. for students to report to their classrooms. Students arriving before 7:40 a.m., must go to Before-School Care and you will be charged a fee. Pre-K 3 and Pre-K 4 parents must walk their children into the building, and walk them to their classrooms before 8 a.m. The ELC Office Coordinator will escort any students arriving after 8 a.m. Students are not permitted to walk in the parking lots without being accompanied by a parent.

### **Dismissal**

In the beginning of the year parents/guardians will be given a name placard to place in their car visors to get families and teachers acquainted. On a regular full day, ELC dismissal begins at 2:30 pm and ends at 2:50 p.m. On a half day, ELC dismissal begins at 11:30 am and ends at 11:50 p.m. Parents are to pick up their children from the designated dismissal locations described below. No child will be dismissed without a teacher's approval. Students will be dismissed in the parking area behind the Junior High Building and in front of the ELC Building. Parents must utilize the DashPass application to notify teachers of their arrival. Students will remain inside the building and will be escorted to their parent/guardian's car. If your child cannot buckle themselves in, please exit your car to ensure they are safely fastened. We appreciate your patience and cooperation, as the safety of all students is our top priority. *Please do not begin the car rider line before 2:00 pm as this causes congestion in the parking lot.*

### **Inclement Weather**

Should inclement weather require the school to delay opening or closing for the day, parents will be notified via Bright Arrow at the numbers listed in the student's files. An announcement will also be made on the school's Facebook and Instagram social media pages. Our families commute from various parts of the state. If the weather in your area is uncertain, please use your discretion when deciding whether to make the drive.

Half-day ELC students will not report to school in the mornings when there is an inclement weather delay.

Should inclement weather require the school to close early, parents will be notified as above and should pick up their children promptly. After-School Care will remain open for only 90 minutes after an early dismissal.

Before Care is not open on days when there is a delay

### **Early Dismissals**

In the event that your child needs to leave school before 2:30 pm, please send in a letter or email the classroom teacher of the date and time of the early dismissal. No early dismissals will be allowed after 2:15 pm as the ELC Office will be closed to assist with dismissal duties.

## **Tardies/Late Arrivals/Half-Day Late Pick-Ups**

Please understand that if you arrive with your child at 8:00 am or later, you are required to walk your child inside the building to the ELC office to sign them in. Students will be marked Tardy-Excused if they arrive with a

doctor's note between 8:01 am to 10:30 am. If a note is not provided, then the child will be marked Tardy (unexcused).

Please note that our lunch time is not flexible, particularly for students who have purchased a school-lunch. Students arriving after 11:30 am, must bring their own lunch because they have missed the morning headcount for lunch. You may risk the scenario where a purchased lunch is not accounted for due to being tardy. If you would like to credit your account for a missed lunch, please reach out to Ms. Bifferato at [juniorhigh@holycrossdover.org](mailto:juniorhigh@holycrossdover.org).

Timely pick-up is essential to ensure that each child is released only to a verified adult. While the process may take longer at the beginning of the school year, it becomes more efficient as families become accustomed to procedures. If your child is not picked up by 2:50 pm, a staff member will walk them to the aftercare room located in the elementary building. A staff member will contact parents by phone call or email to say the student was dropped off to aftercare due to not being picked up at dismissal. It is expected that you complete a registration form for aftercare, and you will be billed per half hour for your child's attendance. At any time, you can change your child's dismissal plan from car rider to aftercare. But an Aftercare registration form, including the application fee, must be completed before the change of transportation is accepted. Please see the Aftercare Section on our website for more information (<https://holycrossdover.org/about-school/before-after-school-care>) for more information. There may be an occasion of major traffic congestion or bad weather conditions causing a delay in your travel- please contact the school office coordinator as soon as possible to inform us of your situation.

Parents of Half Day Students are expected to arrive on campus and be picked up by 11:30 am. . As lunch is not provided for Half Day Students a tardy can cause a disruption in their daily routine. Staffing is scheduled based on class sizes and being tardy for Half Day Pick-up may interfere in staffing flexibility. If you are running late for a Half Day Student Pick-Up, it is expected that you contact the ELC Office coordinator. You may still be subjected to late pick-up charges depending on the situation. See below the consequences for consistent tardiness:

**1st offense:** Parent/Emergency Contact Phone Call, tardy made aware to principal, email reminder of pick-up schedule, hourly rate of \$10.00 per child, will be charged until child is picked-up

**2nd + offense:** Parent/Emergency Contact Phone Call, tardy made aware to principal, email reminder of pick-up schedule, hourly rate of \$10.00 per child will be charged until child is picked-up, AND possible cause for termination of care.

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## Enrollment

To ensure your student has their re-registration considered before all other applicants, you must return your completed Students Enrolled Currently - Re-Registration Form along with the required fees to a school office by December 31. Your family is not guaranteed placement because of previous enrollment; you must re-enroll every year. Re-registration will not be accepted if you are more than 3 payments behind on tuition. Registration for the community will begin in December of the current school year. Below are the rates for re-registration dues for current families:

- Turn in by October 31st - \$50 per child
- Turn in by November 30th- \$75 per child
- Turn in by December 31st-\$100 per child

Any registration forms turned in after December 31st will cost \$100.

Please visit the website to view how to submit a new sibling form,  
<https://holycrossdover.org/parent-resources/re-registration>

## Tuition

### Tuition Rates for Pre-K 4 to Grade 8

<u>Family Status</u>	<u>One Child*</u>	<u>Two Children*</u>	<u>Three Children*</u>	<u>Four Children*</u>
Active Holy Cross	\$6,144	\$10,814	\$14,193	\$16,712
Catholic Other Parish	\$6,912	\$12,166	\$15,967	\$18,801
Non-Catholic	\$7,680	\$13,517	\$17,741	\$20,890

\* rates also subject to change depending on variables/discounts/tuition assistance;

\*rates for half day pre-K4 available upon request;

#### Pre-K3 rate:

\*extended learning fees available; no discount in tuition for PreK-3 students. Rates for full day Pre-K3 available in the Tuition Office.

8:30 - 11:30 AM	Monday-Thursday	\$3,000
<b>Afternoon Extended Learning</b>		
11:30 to 2:30	5 Days per week	\$5,400
11:30 to 2:30	4 Days per week	\$4,590
11:30 to 2:30	3 Days per week	\$3,645
11:30 to 2:30	2 Days per week	\$2,565
11:30 to 2:30	1 Day per week	\$1,350
<b>Friday Morning Extended Learning</b>		

8:00 to 11:30	Friday	\$1,080
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To be considered for the Catholic—Active Holy Cross Parish rate, for at least one year, you must be: properly registered in Holy Cross Parish;

- actively practicing your Catholic faith as evidenced by Sunday attendance at Mass;
- participating in the sacramental life of the parish;
- sharing your time and talent by involvement in school and parish activities;
- supporting the parish through the use of: weekly church envelopes, Faith Direct electronic giving, or other contributions that are specifically identifiable; and
- making tuition payments as agreed in your payment plan.

When considering the amount to contribute to Holy Cross Parish, (we are looking for a minimum of \$10.00 a week) please keep in mind it is the weekly contribution of your fellow parishioners that enables the parish to subsidize the school budget thereby keeping tuition affordable.

Properly registered families who fail to fulfill these expectations during the year lose their Catholic—Active Holy Cross Parish discounted rate and must pay the Catholic—Other Parish rate. Continued failure to meet these expectations will jeopardize their child’s continued enrollment at Holy Cross School.

To be considered for the Catholic—Other Parish rate, you must be:

- properly registered in your parish, for which we will contact your parish to verify;
- actively practicing your Catholic faith as evidenced by Sunday attendance at Mass;
- participating in the sacramental life of your parish;
- sharing your time and talent by involvement in school and parish activities;
- supporting your parish through the use of: weekly church envelopes or other contributions that are specifically identifiable; and
- making tuition payments as agreed in your payment plan.

Families who fail to fulfill these expectations during the year lose their Catholic—Other Parish discounted rate and must pay the Non-Catholic rate. Continued failure to meet these expectations will jeopardize their child’s continued enrollment at Holy Cross School.

If you are a Catholic but not registered in a local Catholic parish or a Non-Catholic, you will be charged the Non-Catholic rate. We expect you will make all tuition payments as agreed in your payment plan. We also expect you to volunteer your time and talent to Holy Cross School. Families who fail to fulfill this minimum expectation during the year will jeopardize their child’s continued enrollment at Holy Cross School.

**Submitting an Application for Tuition Assistance**

Tuition assistance funds are available from both the Diocese of Wilmington and Holy Cross School, and you submit only one application for both funding sources. To be eligible for the maximum award for which your family qualifies, you must submit your tuition assistance application online before January 31 of each year.

New families applying to Holy Cross School after January 31 are eligible for tuition assistance only from Holy Cross School as long as you submit your tuition assistance application online within 15 days of the date of your acceptance letter. All tuition assistance applications must be completed online and evaluated by FACTS Grant & Aid Assessment. Once FACTS evaluates your application, they will forward their recommendations to the Diocese of Wilmington and Holy Cross School. Once the Diocese of Wilmington makes their award decisions, the Holy Cross Tuition Assistance Committee will make theirs. If your tuition assistance application is submitted after the Holy Cross School Tuition Assistance Committee makes their tuition assistance awards, you may still qualify for a reduced amount of tuition assistance, if funds are still available. Please read the Diocese's Tuition Assistance Letter for specific instructions and their Apply Online Document for additional information.

Click here (<https://online.factsmgt.com/aid>) to submit your application online to FACTS.

All links are viewable by going to <https://holycrossover.org/parent-resources/tuition-financial-aid>

### **Tuition Payments**

Families may select from 3 options when setting up their payment plan for school tuition: pay full tuition in one lump sum payment, pay 2 times a year (6 month increments), or set up a 12 month payment plan. Three missed tuition payments will result in your child not being able to return to school until a payment plan agreement is set-up with the Tuition Officer.

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### **General Expectations**

Students are expected to act in a manner that will reflect favorably on themselves and their school. They are expected to show consideration and respect for their fellow students and teachers, thus creating a harmonious atmosphere within the school. Students must recognize their responsibilities and obligations and discharge them per school regulations. Children who fail to comply with school policies and regulations should expect to accept the consequences of their actions. The conduct code applies in school, at school-sponsored events, and within the school/parish community. "School/parish community" shall mean in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, or at any activity sponsored, supervised, or sanctioned by the school or parish. Any behavior contrary to Catholic teachings or embarrassing to Holy Cross School is unacceptable. Students are expected to show a Christian attitude toward one another. Therefore, fighting, abusive and foul language, roughness, excessive taunting, teasing of a student, or any similar action, cannot be tolerated. Students not displaying acceptable or appropriate behavior will face disciplinary action. *(Extracted from Holy Cross School Parent Handbook, see full parent handbook by visiting <https://holycrossover.org/parent-resources/parent-student-handbook>)*

### **Positive Behavior Management**

At Holy Cross School we believe in positive reinforcement and teaching by example. We prioritize praising students when they are demonstrating appropriate and respectful behavior. Teachers reserve

the right to use flexible, age-appropriate strategies for managing behavior, which may vary from class to class. These strategies may include, but are not limited to, sticker charts, positive behavior cubes, or other forms of token-based systems. Regardless of whether a token is given or withheld, a conversation will take place between the teacher and the student to ensure the child understands the reason behind the decision. These moments are used as learning opportunities to reinforce expectations and celebrate progress.

If consistent behavior challenges occur, the teacher will contact parents using one or more of the methods above to work together on resolving concerns. Should concerns persist, the principal will be informed, and a parent-teacher meeting will be scheduled as the first step in discussing a collaborative plan moving forward.

### **Probationary Period**

Once a child is accepted into our ELC program they are on a 90 day probationary period. If at any time Holy Cross School cannot meet the needs of the enrolled child, a conversation with parents will take place to discuss tentative enrollment status. We hold our students to the highest standards and expect them to follow all guidelines in our student handbook. By the end of the first trimester, we will review how your child is doing both academically and socially and will make sure you have financially kept current with your tuition fees. If there should be any concerns, we will contact you about their continued attendance in the school. We certainly don't expect any issues.

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## **Emergency Health Policy**

In the event of a medical emergency involving your child:

- Non-life threatening emergencies: Your child's teacher will contact the school nurse, and your child will be escorted to the nurse's office for medical attention. *The school nurse will contact you about illness and next steps.*
- Life-threatening emergencies: The school nurse will be contacted by teacher/staff of student illness, the school nurse will provide medical attention, the school nurse reserves the right to call a 9-1-1, and you will be notified immediately by the school nurse/principal.
- If you are unable to be reached, your child's emergency contact listed on the Student Information Card and/or PowerSchool will be notified.

### **Illnesses**

Students must be fever-, vomit-, and/or diarrhea-free for 24 hours without medication before returning to school. A fever is defined as a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher. Students displaying symptoms of any communicable disease should be kept at home and not be sent to school. Parents of students displaying symptoms of a communicable illness are strongly encouraged to contact the school nurse to explain the nature of their child's absence. *(Extracted from Holy Cross School Parent Handbook, see full parent handbook by visiting <https://holycrossdover.org/parent-resources/parent-student-handbook>)*

### **Medication**

Medication may not be administered in the school by anyone other than the school nurse or those certified by the Delaware Department of Education. Children are not permitted to bring prescription or non-prescription medication for self-administration. A signed Medication Administration Record form from the parent is required for all doctor-prescribed medications. Medications must be sent to the school nurse in the original container indicating the child's name with a prescription label.

### **Allergies**

When a child suffers from a food allergy, bee sting allergy, asthma, diabetes, or any other medical condition, the parent must ensure that the school is aware of the child's condition. For Page 20 of 28 of current Holy Cross School Parent/Student Handbook, children with life-threatening illnesses, parents must provide the school with an emergency care plan signed by the child's physician and properly labeled emergency medications and supplies, all of which are kept in the nurse's office. Parents of students with food allergies are responsible for providing all food for their children. Snacks will be kept in a separate snack box provided by the parents. According to their developmental level, students should be aware of and proactive in the care and management of their food allergies and reactions. They should not trade food with others nor eat anything with unknown ingredients or known to contain any allergen. Students must notify an adult immediately if they have eaten something believed to contain the food to which they are allergic. *(Extracted from Holy Cross School Parent Handbook, see full parent handbook by visiting <https://holycrossdover.org/parent-resources/parent-student-handbook>)*

### **Head Lice**

Parents are to notify the school nurse if their child has head lice so a letter may be sent home to his classmates. Parents will not be informed of other children with lice in school, as this is a privacy concern. Students with lice may return to school after being treated with the proper shampoo. If parents do not follow through with the proper treatment, their child will not be permitted to return to school until the treatment is completed. *(Extracted from Holy Cross School Parent Handbook, see full parent handbook by visiting <https://holycrossdover.org/parent-resources/parent-student-handbook>)*

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## **Communication**

### **School Website**

Our website holds the majority of parent and student information, [holycrossdover.org/school](https://holycrossdover.org/school). Here you will find the school calendar with events and closings, curriculum information, tuition rates, medical forms, and so much more! Exploring the website will help keep you informed of current events at Holy Cross School.

### **Student Information**

Unless a court or custody agreement specifies otherwise, each parent with legal custody may access their child's school records. Absent a subpoena or court order, school records may be disclosed only upon the written consent of the parent with legal custody. Page 14 of 28 of current Holy Cross School Parent/Student Handbook, parents are asked to inform school personnel when legal custody of a child resides with one parent. The school needs to have a copy of the custody decree. This will help school personnel make effective decisions when the need arises. Custodial parents are likewise asked to supply the school with copies of restraining orders if needed. Those individuals with legal custody of the student may attend school meetings, participate in educational decisions, and review educational records regarding that student. Persons who do not have legal custody (including those with visitation rights but not legal custody) have no such educational rights and may not participate in these matters. *(Extracted from Holy Cross School Parent Handbook, see full parent handbook by visiting <https://holycrossdover.org/parent-resources/parent-student-handbook>)*

### **Crusader Notes**

The Crusader Notes are the school electronic newsletter that goes out every Friday evening. It summarizes the events that happened during the week and gives information about upcoming school events. It is required that all parents sign up for the newsletter and stays up to date by reading each edition.

<https://holycrossdover.us11.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=7075ab64f629cc7dbaf5c63a0&id=d7372bb1d6>

### **Family Contact Information**

At the beginning of each school year, it is required that parents complete a Student information card and update the same information in PowerSchool. When a change of address, telephone, cell phone, e-mail address, or other vital information is known, families should inform the school office in writing. *(Extracted from Holy Cross School Parent Handbook, see full parent handbook by visiting <https://holycrossdover.org/parent-resources/parent-student-handbook>)*

### **Thursday Communicator**

Each Thursday, an envelope possibly containing classwork, quizzes, and tests, along with school-wide information, will be sent home with each student. Upon receipt, parents should examine the contents and sign the envelope. These envelopes should be signed and returned the following school day. *(Extracted from Holy Cross School Parent Handbook, see full parent handbook by visiting <https://holycrossdover.org/parent-resources/parent-student-handbook>)*

### **Bright Arrow Notification System**

Holy Cross School will send telephone messages notifying parents if an emergency occurs or to update important school-related activities. If you are not receiving Bright Arrow notifications, please let the school know immediately *(Extracted from Holy Cross School Parent Handbook, see full parent handbook by visiting <https://holycrossdover.org/parent-resources/parent-student-handbook>)*

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## **Food and Nutrition Policy**

Lunch is the only meal that is provided during school hours. Snacks must be prepared and packed by the parent/guardian. Each morning, the classroom teacher will check that each student has a packed lunch, purchased lunch, and/or a snack. If a child does not have a packed lunch or a purchased lunch, the classroom teacher will contact the parent via email or phone call immediately upon realization for the parent/guardian to remedy the issue. The teacher may or may not have other options available for snacks for all students so it is essential that you be sure your child has these food items before drop off. Children are encouraged to eat but they are not forced to eat. Cakes, cookies, and other “not so nutritious food” may be served during special events like birthday parties, and holidays. Please reach out to your child’s teacher before sending items in to ensure there are no health restrictions. Classrooms will have seasonal celebrations. We encourage parents to sign-up to bring food items to assist in the cost.

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## **Safety**

Safety is very important to our center. Our staff members are thoroughly screened, highly trained, and have successfully completed a comprehensive criminal background check. Our building has a safety plan in place to ensure unauthorized people do not have access to your children. Our classrooms are set up to be kid friendly and hazard free.

### **Discipline Policy**

Behaviors such as biting, kicking, pushing, hitting, and other actions that may cause harm are considered very serious incidents. Our goal is always to support students in making safe and positive choices. When such behaviors occur, the following steps will be taken:

#### **Incident #1:**

- The classroom teacher will contact the family to share details of the incident.
- The principal and relevant administrators will be notified.

#### **Incident #2:**

- A parent–teacher conference will be scheduled to discuss ongoing concerns and develop strategies for support.

#### **Incident #3:**

- A parent–teacher conference with the principal present will be scheduled.

- A formal behavior plan will be created to guide next steps and ensure consistency between home and school.

### **Release of Children**

For the safety and security of all students, children will only be released to individuals listed as authorized contacts on the Student Information Card and in PowerSchool.

If an unauthorized individual attempts to pick up a child, the school will immediately contact the parent or guardian, and if necessary, will also contact the local authorities.

In the event of an emergency, a person who is not previously authorized may be permitted to pick up your child only if the following steps are taken:

1. The parent or guardian must call the school to inform staff of the change
2. An email must be sent to the ELC Office Coordinator at [elc@holycrossdover.org](mailto:elc@holycrossdover.org), clearly stating the first and last name of the individual and a statement authorizing the release of your child for that specific situation.

Before a child is released to any authorized individual, including a parent or guardian, that person will be required to show a valid state-issued photo ID. This identification check will take place even at the beginning of the year and may include parents or guardians until staff becomes familiar with them.

If an authorized individual arrives to pick up a child and appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol or impairment may hinder the safe release of the child to the individual, the school will contact an emergency person listed on file. If the individual insists on leaving with the child, the police will be notified immediately to ensure the child's safety.

### **Sanitation**

All teachers are trained in proper hygiene practices, which include hand-washing procedures, standard precautions, cleaning, sanitizing, disinfecting, safe food handling, and diapering procedures. Each classroom is thoroughly cleaned and disinfected according to licensing regulations. To prevent the spread of infections and viruses, equipment and toys used by infants and toddlers are to be cleaned and disinfected daily. The non-porous toys and play equipment in the other classrooms are cleaned with soap and water and then disinfected weekly or more frequently if needed. Our administrator routinely checks each classroom to ensure staff members are using the training that they received.

### **School Access**

For the safety of students and school personnel, all doors that grant access to the school are locked during the school day. Access to the school buildings is maintained and monitored by the Office Coordinators.

### **Child Abuse Laws**

Holy Cross School abides by the child abuse laws of the State of Delaware. This law mandates that all cases of suspected child abuse and/or neglect be reported to Child Protective Services.

### **For the Sake of God's Children**

Holy Cross School supports and complies with the policies and practices established by the Catholic Diocese of Wilmington through the For the Sake of God's Children initiative. These include an Acceptable Use Policy for technology, which is available on the Holy Cross School website.

### **Volunteers and Visitors**

For the Sake of God's Children states that all church personnel, including volunteers who have regular, recurring contact with minors of more than five hours annually, are required to have criminal background checks, participate in training, and sign a covenant.

Page 22 of 28 of current Holy Cross School Parent/Student Handbook, Volunteers and visitors must sign in at a school building office upon arrival. They will be issued a badge that must be worn on campus. After their service or visit, they must sign out at the school building office and return their badge.

### **Accidents, Injuries, and Serious Incidents**

If your child is injured, bitten, or involved in a physical altercation with another child, your child will immediately be sent to the school nurse for medical attention. The principal will also be immediately notified and disciplinary action will occur. A phone call from the school nurse and principal will follow up as soon as medical attention from the school nurse has begun/completed. The principal will conference with the classroom teacher to remedy the issue.

You will be notified of less serious accidents/injuries before your child is released at the end of the day via a nurse slip. (A less serious injury can be but not limited to bumps, scrapes, and scratches.) If your child has a serious medical incident that requires outside medical attention i.e. 9-1-1/Paramedics, the school nurse will activate that emergency system prior to notifying you.

### **Emergencies & Drills**

Each classroom is equipped with an Emergency Preparedness Kit that is easily accessible and hung by the classroom door. Inside this kit is our Emergency Planbook with directions on what to do for any emergency, class roster and parent phone numbers, and first aid items.

Every month students will participate in a fire drill. Other drills that your child may participate in throughout the school year are lockdown and tornado drills.

Please take the time to read our parent letter regarding emergencies.

Dear Parent/Guardian:

In the event of an emergency situation, Holy Cross School has outlined the below response plan. Please know that we will attempt to notify you, so please keep your emergency contact information up to date. Keep this letter with you so that you will know how to contact us in the event of an emergency.

**Evacuation/Relocation**

1. If the emergency is confined to the immediate area at Holy Cross School, e.g. fire, and the children cannot stay on the premises, the children will be taken to South Dover Elementary. The children and staff will remain at this location while you or your emergency contact is notified of the situation.
2. If the emergency is more widespread, encompasses a larger area such as the neighborhood due to an environmental threat, e.g. flood, and the children cannot remain in the immediate area, they will be transported to Kent General Hospital. The children and staff will remain at this location while you or your emergency contact is notified of the situation.
3. Children will be transported by walking.

**Notification**

1. We will repeatedly try to call you as soon as the children and staff are safe. If we cannot reach you, we will call your emergency contact. During emergencies, children will only be released to you or your emergency contacts.
2. Information about the event can be found through bright-arrow messaging in the form of the following: phone call (designated on student’s PowerSchool account for guardian), text message, and email.

**Emergency Supplies/Shelter-in-Place**

1. You may want to leave in your child’s classroom a change of clothes, a few family photos, and a comfort item like a small teddy bear to help your child during a crisis.
2. If we need to shelter in place, we will remain in our classrooms. First aid supplies are located in Emergency Preparedness Kit (bag hanging by classroom door). Emergency food and water is located cafeteria.

Our center is most likely to experience:

- |  |   |  |  |                                       |
|--|---|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> family-staff conflict | <input type="checkbox"/> power outage                   | <input type="checkbox"/> ice/snow storm              | <input type="checkbox"/> thunderstorm                | <input type="checkbox"/> flood        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> gas leak              | <input type="checkbox"/> fire/bomb threat               | <input type="checkbox"/> building intruder           | <input type="checkbox"/> missing child/kidnapping    | <input type="checkbox"/> earthquake   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> medical emergency     | <input type="checkbox"/> water outage/<br>unclean water | <input type="checkbox"/> chemical/hazmat<br>exposure | <input type="checkbox"/> tornado watch or<br>warning | <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____ |

Please rest assured that Holy Cross School staff will remain with and care for the children at all times during an emergency to ensure the children’s safety. As always, please don’t hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Mallory O’Mara/Principal

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### **Safe Sleep for Toddlers**

All PreK-3 and PreK-4 students are required to bring a mat for nap time. An example of an approved mat is:

“KinderMat, 1.5 Inch Thick, 4-Section Rest Mat”

[https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07CH3JRY6?ref=cm\\_sw\\_r\\_cso\\_cp\\_apin\\_dp\\_AMCK1N62X801CZPAZJ10&ref=cm\\_sw\\_r\\_cso\\_cp\\_apin\\_dp\\_AMCK1N62X801CZPAZJ10&social\\_share=cm\\_sw\\_r\\_cso\\_cp\\_apin\\_dp\\_AMCK1N62X801CZPAZJ10&previewDohEventScheduleTesting=C&csmig=1&th=1](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07CH3JRY6?ref=cm_sw_r_cso_cp_apin_dp_AMCK1N62X801CZPAZJ10&ref=cm_sw_r_cso_cp_apin_dp_AMCK1N62X801CZPAZJ10&social_share=cm_sw_r_cso_cp_apin_dp_AMCK1N62X801CZPAZJ10&previewDohEventScheduleTesting=C&csmig=1&th=1).

In addition to the mat, each child is required to have a top and bottom cover for the mat-this means a small blanket for covering and a small fitted sheet or cover that fits over the mat surface. These items will be stored in each student’s classroom cubby, and the mat will be wiped down weekly by the classroom teachers. All covers will be sent home every Friday for clearing and must be returned on Monday. Mats will remain at school throughout the year and will be sent home at the end of the school year.

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### **Screen-Time Policy**

Children will only be permitted to participate in screen-time activities, including watching television or videos, with written permission from parent or guardian. All content shown will be age-appropriate, educational, and aligned with the school’s values. Screen-time will be limited to no more than one hour per day, and will be used to enhance learning or support occasional classroom activities.

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### **Transportation**

In the event of a medical emergency requiring transport off school grounds, children may be transported by an official vehicle to receive appropriate care. Parents will be contacted immediately in such cases. Families who wish to enroll their child in Holy Cross School bus Program must do so by contacting Ms. Bifferato at [juniorhigh@holycrossdover.org](mailto:juniorhigh@holycrossdover.org).

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### **Calendar**

Please visit the school website to view the Diocesan and Holy Cross School Calendar for important school events, half days, and closures. All information will also be shared in said communication applications/formats. <https://holycrossdover.org/school-cal>

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## **Potty Training**

All PreK-3 and PreK-4 students are required to be fully potty trained by the start of the school year. We understand that students may have an occasional accident. To ensure your child is prepared, families are required to provide a complete change of clothes, which should include: shirt, pants, underwear, socks, and shoes. These items should be clearly labeled with your child's name and will be kept at school in case of accident. Please update the clothing as the seasons change to ensure it remains appropriate.

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## **Supplies**

An updated supply list will be sent home at the end of each school year via Thursday Communicators for the upcoming school year. All Supply Lists can be found on our website, <https://holycrossdover.org/parent-resources/school-supplies-list>

## **RIGHT TO AMEND**

Should it become necessary to do so, the Principal and Pastor reserves the right to amend the handbook at any time by advising all personnel of the changes in writing.

\*Some items were extracted from the Holy Cross School Parent Handbook and those policies remain valid for Early Learning Center students too. This version has been adapted to the Early Learning Center's unique rules and policies. It is expected of parents to also view the main Holy Cross School Parent Handbook to ensure understanding of all school rules, policies, and procedures.\*

**I have read and agree to comply with all policies and procedures in the Holy Cross School Early Learning Center Parent Handbook.**

Signature of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Daycare Provider: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Revised November 21, 2025