



Student & Family Handbook

2024-2025

Nativity

Academy

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Agreement of Enrollment

This handbook is provided to help students and parents/guardians become familiar with the procedures, rules, and regulations of Nativity Academy. We ask parents/guardians to carefully read and review with their student all sections of the Student-Parent Handbook so that they are thoroughly familiar with all aspects of Nativity Academy.

The enrollment of a student at Nativity Academy is considered to be an agreement on the part of the student and the parents/guardians that they will comply fully with all school procedures, rules, and regulations set forth in this handbook. Failure to comply with school procedures and regulations set forth here may result in a student being asked to leave the school.

The policies outlined in this handbook represent a framework. They are not exhaustive and should not be considered comprehensive of all Nativity Academy policies. The Principal reserves the right to amend this handbook for just cause without notice; and some changes may be immediate due to circumstances.

Program Purpose

Nativity Academy was created in response to the identified need for high quality early childhood faith-based programs in the community. The school provides developmentally appropriate education for children starting with PreK3.

Mission Statement

Nativity Academy of Houston, a non-tuition based private Christian school, empowers low-income students to reach their full potential through a challenging curriculum, spiritual development and family support within an extended day and extended year.

Program Hours

Nativity Academy normally is open for business from Monday through Friday from August-June. Please see the calendar for information regarding holidays and days off.

8:00 am-3:30 pm Classes

Arrival begins at 7:30 am

History of the Nativity Miguel Model and Coalition

The Nativity Miguel model was created in 1971 with the formation of the Nativity Mission Center in Manhattan's Lower East Side. The school provided low-income students that wished to succeed in a challenging academic environment with a tuition-free education. The school featured an extended school day and school year and offered a graduate support system to place them into quality high schools. The hope was to prepare these students for admittance into the best local private and Catholic high schools and to support them while they were there. Ultimately, others around the country were inspired to use the school as a model for low-income students seeking a quality education. In 1989, the second Nativity school opened in Boston leading to the growth of additional schools around the United States.

After the success of the Nativity Mission Center, the schools that replicated the model created the Nativity Network of Schools. In 1993, the Christian Brothers opened a San Miguel School in Providence, Rhode Island which after its replication led to the formation of the Lasallian Association of Miguel Schools. These two networks merged together in 2006 to form the Nativity Miguel Network of Schools. The hope was to create an efficient way in which to help member schools serve the needy population more effectively. The mission of the NativityMiguel Network was to: "empower middle schools to provide a unique, faith based education that breaks the cycle of poverty in underserved communities across America. In turn, our schools empower thousands of students at a critical developmental crossroads to realize their potential, forge brighter futures and enjoy the lifelong benefits of a holistic education." Unfortunately, the NativityMiguel Network officially dissolved in June of 2012. While the closing of the network was disappointing, no school within the network closed as a result. Currently, there are over 60 NativityMiguel schools in operation serving over 4,300 students in 27 states.

The newly formed NativityMiguel Coalition was formed in 2013 to provide shared resources and best practices to schools shaped by the NativityMiguel model. "The NativityMiguel Coalition is member-driven and member-invested. Our mission is the strength of our members, and our members believe they are stronger together than they are as a single school. As member schools learn and inform new ways to flourish in impoverished communities, their leaders inspire, equip, and compel one another with mission-aligned support and accountability to effectively deliver on their mission.

The Nativity Miguel Mission Effectiveness Standards

Each Nativity school adheres to the Nine Mission Effectiveness Standards which include:

- 1. Faith Based** - A Nativity School is explicitly faith-based in its mission.
- 2. Serves the Economically Poor and Marginalized** - A Nativity School offers a financially accessible, non tuition-based education to students from low-income families in underserved communities and reflects the faith, cultural, and racial demographics of the local community.
- 3. A Holistic Education** - A Nativity School addresses the academic, physical, social, emotional, moral, and spiritual needs of a student, and develops the growth of the student in all areas.
- 4. Partners with the Family** - A Nativity School involves the student's support system in the education of the child and provides opportunity for the growth of the support system.
- 5. Extended Day and Year** - A Nativity School extends the hours and days that a student is in session and offers structured opportunities for learning, enrichment, and growth during that time.
- 6. Commitment Beyond Graduation** - It is the expectation that any and all students in a Nativity School will graduate from high school and go on to some form of post-secondary education. A Nativity School offers a Graduate Support Program that eases a graduate's transition into high school; tutors, advocates for, and maintains a connection with all graduates during high school; supports the high school in preparing the student for graduation and post-secondary education; and tracks the growth and achievements of all graduates.
- 7. Effective Administrative Structure** - A Nativity School is governed by an effective administrative structure that includes a strong board comprised of leaders, committed to the financial and academic sustainability of the school, and a working administrative team, based on the President/Principal model, that attends to the operational and educational stability and

vitality of the school.

8. On-going Assessment and Inquiry - A Nativity School is accredited by a recognized accrediting association as providing a quality education that will prepare students for success in high school; and utilizes standardized tests and other appropriate assessments to track and document student performance and adapt the educational design if needed.

9. Active Network Participant - A Nativity School is an active participant in the collaboration, support, and development of the school's respective network. This includes conferences and institutes, collegial visits, data gathering, etc

Parent as Primary Educator

Nativity Academy recognizes the parent as the primary educator and will create a partnership that engages the families in their child's education. The school will include the families of our students by integrating volunteer hours, parent education classes, and a signed commitment agreement supporting their child's education. This is based upon the belief that the school can provide significant enhancement to the home learning environment but cannot replace it.

Curriculum

The curriculum supports planning for everything that can contribute to the child's development and the teacher's relationship with the child and family. Nativity Academy supports each child's spiritual and human growth and development in each of the following areas: social, emotional, physical, language and cognitive. Curriculum planning involves assessment of the needs of the individual child as well as that of the group. The curriculum is delivered through planned learning activities appropriate to the children's age and development. These activities include daily prayer, prayer services, developmentally appropriate literacy, math, science, social studies and religion activities. Students also have opportunities for outdoor activities and free play, as well as social emotional learning.

Nativity Academy is an institution of academic excellence with a rigorous and supportive learning environment. The school utilizes the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for the framework of the curriculum and as the minimum benchmark for grade level standards.

Testing Purpose

Tests are meant to give the teacher and administrator a certain amount of information regarding the native endowments as well as the educational growth of the students as they advance. All students in 1st-8th grade will be tested using the Stanford Assessments. Standardized testing presents one component in measuring a child's ability. Standardized testing assists the school in developing curriculum strategies and strengthening instruction. Annual results are placed in the child's permanent folder.

Student Assessments

Students will be given informal assessments throughout the year. Formal assessments will include DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment) beginning in Kindergarten, and annual Stanford achievement assessment beginning in kindergarten.

Staff Qualifications

Each Nativity Academy staff member has experience working with groups of children and meet or exceed the requirements set by the State. Staff members understand children's development and are dedicated to providing children with developmentally appropriate activities. Above all, staff members respect, value and care for children as unique individuals. Staff members are required to continue to expand their knowledge of child development through professional workshops, lectures, conferences and other continuing education opportunities. All Nativity Academy Employees must have 1 clock hour of training each year on recognizing and preventing child abuse.

Non Discrimination Policy

Nativity Academy complies with all laws regarding unlawful discrimination in its student admissions process, faculty and staff hiring practices, educational policies, and other school administered programs.

Admissions Policy

The admissions committee will review all applications and contact the families to complete the final steps of the application process which may include an observation of a student and entrance assessments. The process may include a parent/guardian interview and a home visit.

All new students are accepted with provisional status. The conditional acceptance is for the first nine weeks that the child attends school and is granted to determine the student's ability to meet the expectations of the school's program. The student must meet all the criteria that apply including: meeting academic standards, demonstrating acceptable behavior/social interaction, and displaying developmental readiness for the grade level as outlined in the current handbook. In addition, parental cooperation and compliance with the school's policies and procedures as outlined in the school handbook must be evident.

Privacy Policy

Maintaining confidentiality of children and families is very important. Children's files which may include medical information, family information and assessments are restricted to authorized personnel only. Written parental permission is required prior to the release of any information. Any observation or information concerning children and families that parents may gain while volunteering are to be kept confidential and should not be shared with other parents in the class or the Program.

Family Agreement

The "Family Agreement", is a document produced for each family annually. It outlines the partnership between Nativity Academy and participating families, describing expectations and responsibilities for each party: the school and the family.

Enrollment Procedures and Admissions

The following information is required for admission of children. All of this information must be on file in the office in order for the child to begin attending the school.

A signed Registration/Enrollment Agreement Copy of child's Birth Certificate Immunization Record Physician Statement	Emergency Contact Authorization for Release of Child Media Release Form Counseling Consent Form
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Updating Information

The program requires updated forms annually prior to the start of the academic year. Parents are required to notify the school in writing if changes are made in their enrollment information. Examples: new phone number, new address, new employer, new physician, changes in authorization for release. This is essential in order to keep school records accurate and in order to be able to contact the parents or guardians in the event of an emergency.

Changes in Policies and Procedures

All parents are given access to the Parent Handbook annually. The Handbook contains the policies and enrollment procedures for the Program. Annually, the staff reviews the policies and, if and when changes occur, parents are notified in writing.

Fees

Nativity Academy is a non-tuition based school in which each student receives a full scholarship. Each family is asked to pay a monthly (11 months) participation fee of \$25.00 to contribute to support educational programs and activities at the school. The fee will be reviewed annually by the school administration and is due by the specified day each month. A late fee will be charged if the fee is not paid by the 15th of the month. Nativity Academy covers the cost of school uniforms, enrichment opportunities, extracurricular activities, summer programming, meals and snacks, and school supplies.

Staying Healthy

Protecting the health of children and staff is very important. The Harris County Health Department does not require TB testing for young children for school entry at this time. All staff follow their personal physician's recommendations for immunizations. Each year employees are encouraged to have a flu shot. Substitutes are provided for staff who have contagious illnesses.

Vision and Hearing

The Special Senses and Communication Disorder Act requires screening for vision and hearing for all children 4 years old by September 1. This should be done by the child's physician at 4 yr check-up. Nativity Academy will schedule screening in early fall for children who have not been screened by their doctor.

Anti-Harassment Policy

Nativity Academy is committed to provide a learning environment that is free from harassment in any form. Harassment of any student by any other student, parent, teacher, employee or volunteer is prohibited. The school will treat allegations of harassment seriously and will review and investigate such allegations in a prompt, confidential, and thorough manner.

Harassment occurs when one or more individuals create an atmosphere that has the purpose or effect of creating an unreasonable, intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment. Harassment is unwelcome, immoral, and reprehensible and will not be tolerated in the school. It subverts the mission of a faith-based education and threatens the careers, educational experience, and well-being of all affected persons. Harassment of any sort is unacceptable.

Harassment, includes, but is not limited to, the following behaviors.

1. Unwelcome and persistent behavior that makes a person feel threatened, humiliated, uncomfortable or unsafe.
2. Verbal contact such as racial slurs, the use of vulgar or obscene language, derogatory jokes or comments, social ostracization, and/or personally damaging statements made about others.

3. Behavior that is sexual or lewd in nature, including sexual advances, physical contact, and other verbal, physical, or visual conduct of a sexual behavior.
4. Behavior that is intimidating, including, but not limited to, threatening gestures, assault, unwanted touching, and blocking of normal movement that interferes with another student's work, study, or play.
5. Bullying and cyber-bullying.
6. Retaliation for having reported or threatening to report harassment.

Discipline and Guidance of Children

Guidance or discipline is a means of accomplishing the goals for children, especially the goal of children developing their sense of self-control. Children who have opportunities to exchange viewpoints and make decisions about their behavior become adults who are responsible and demonstrate initiative and integrity.

The staff is well trained in skills of positive redirection. The staff members work as a team in creating an environment of love, understanding and consistency so that a child can develop self-discipline and acceptable behavior. Guidance techniques used in Nativity Academy include: Validating children's feelings and talking through possible solutions to conflict and problems; Encouraging children to think of alternative solutions and possible effects of using these alternatives; Allowing natural consequences to occur; Leading children toward logical consequences; Modeling verbalization of feelings: demonstrating coping skills and problem solving abilities.

Physical punishment, blaming, criticizing, and shaming are not used at Nativity Academy.

Suspension and Expulsion

Nativity Academy is a religious entity. The Principal makes decisions about discipline, suspensions and expulsions, giving important weight to the Program Purpose, the Mission Statement, the Nine Mission Effectiveness Standards, the policies in this Handbook, and the Family Agreement. Decisions about discipline, suspensions, and expulsions are internal affairs to be managed solely by Nativity Academy. Violence, threats of violence, bullying, harassment, and disturbances are all serious violations contrary to the the Program Purpose, the Mission Statement, the Nine Mission Effectiveness Standards, the policies in this Handbook, and the Family Agreement, and each is subject to discipline, suspension, and expulsion. The Principal has final authority to expel a student, even without prior notice or proceedings.

Suspension may be invoked (with or without prior notice) when a student is in serious violation of the discipline code or commits a major offense. Should it be necessary to invoke suspension, if the Principal deems notice appropriate, notice will be given to the student and the parents/guardians. The suspension may be either in-school or out-of-school at the discretion of the Principal. In-school suspension means that the student will not be allowed to attend classes with fellow students, but is required to complete regular class work in another setting. An in-school suspension may last up to five days. Out-of-school suspension requires that the student remain away from school under parent/guardian supervision. School work will be assigned and completion of all assigned work will be required for the student to return to class.

Expulsion is an extremely serious matter. Generally, every other possible solution will have been explored with the student and his/her parents/guardians prior to taking this action, but the Principal may, in the Principal's sole discretion, choose expulsion without prior notice. The Principal may determine that a student's continued enrollment at the school will be subject to his/her meeting the scholastic and behavioral standards set by the Principal.

If the Principal decides that the student should be expelled, the Principal, in the Principal's sole discretion, may arrange a conference with the parents/guardians of the student and explain to them the reasons for the expulsion. Generally, but not always, a written notification of the expulsion, stating the circumstances and dates of the matter will be documented.

Immediate expulsion may take place when:

1. a student is selling or distributing harmful substances
2. a student has a weapon on his/her person or in his/her possession
3. a student assault results in serious physical injury to another student or any school personnel
4. a student continually disregards school policies

The above are examples only, and the Principal will have sole discretion to determine when expulsion is appropriate.

Grading

PreK3-Kindergarten

Nativity Academy uses standards-based grading which is a method of grading that measures and communicates how students are doing in meeting the standards in each grade level. A score is given for each standard, so students receive multiple scores

in each subject area. Students and parents will then be able to see a list of standards and how the student is doing within each standard. The score does not come from the averaging of different assessments. Work habits, behavior, participation and homework are scored separately so that there is a clear indication between these and academic achievement.

Numbers will be given for each standard within a subject using the following indicators.

- 1 = Not meeting grade-level standards
- 2 = Approaching grade-level standards
- 3 = Meeting grade-level standards
- 4 = Exceeding grade-level standards

Grade 1 and above

A numeric grading scale is used for each subject area in Grade 1 and above. Grades on specific assignments will be averaged for a quarterly report card grade using the following scale:

- A – 90-100
- B – 80-89
- C – 70-79
- D – 60-69
- F – 59 and below

Conduct and Enrichment grades are as follows:

- E – Excellent
- S – Satisfactory
- N – Needs Improvement
- U – Unsatisfactory and Unacceptable

Promotion and Retention

The principal has direct charge of promotion, retention, and placement. In making such decisions, the principal, will take into consideration the recommendation(s) of the teacher(s) and the parent(s) of the student under consideration.

Homework

A balanced amount of homework may be assigned to students on a daily basis. Homework is not optional; it is a critical aspect of learning and attending school. Parents and students are expected to take homework assignments seriously. In addition to homework specifically assigned by teachers, each student is expected to read or be read to each night to continue to improve literacy skills.

If a student is absent, he/she is still expected to complete all homework in a reasonable period of time after returning to school. Teachers will clarify homework policies to students in their courses. In most cases, students will be given some extra time to complete assignments missed while absent. Teachers will make every effort to gather materials and write down assignments for an absent student. When possible, parents or guardians should make arrangements with teachers to come to the school to pick up assignments on the day the student is absent.

Volunteer Hours

Parents are required to complete the 15 hours (for one student) or 20 hours (for two or more students) of volunteer commitment to the school per year. Families will be charged \$10 per volunteer hour that is not completed by the last day of school. These hours help the school tremendously and are a witness to our students of the importance of working together to help the school run efficiently and smoothly. Service hours may be given during or after regular school hours. Opportunities for service hours are made available throughout the year.

School Year

All students are required to be in attendance for the entire day and participation in all programming is mandatory. Participation in Nativity Academy's extended year academic program helps to assure greater academic success. The school year will also include a summer program. All current students are REQUIRED to participate in the programs designed for their grade level. Acceptance into the next grade level at Nativity Academy is dependent upon success in the required summer programs.

Arrival

All parents and children will enter the school using the school's Main entrance. A staff member will be there to greet you and receive any special instructions you may have. On time arrival is important to your child's day and to the routine of the classroom. Students arriving tardy disrupt the morning routine. Arrival begins at 7:30 am and students are tardy after 8 am. Parents of students who have 5 or more tardies per month will be assigned additional volunteer hours.

Dismissal

Dismissal will begin at 3:20 pm. Parents picking up via carpool should use the Renwick entrance and loop around to pick up their child in front of the school. Please turn off your cell phone. Be conscious that the parking lot is a shared area and residents will be in the parking lot even during dismissal hours. Parents will walk to the main entrance to get children. They should follow staff member's directions when picking up children as ensuring safety for staff, families and children is the top priority. Students must be picked up on time daily. Parents may be charged a \$10 late fee if students are not picked up by 3:30 pm.

Authorized Release

It is very important to be on time to pick-up your child. No child will be released to a person not authorized by a parent in writing. We must have written authorization of all changes to the list. No child will be released to an unauthorized person even if the child knows the person. Written permission is mandatory. We will ask for identification such as Texas Drivers License.

No child will be released to a parent, guardian, or parent designee if the school personnel believes the person to be impaired (such as inebriated) and, therefore, unable to care for the child. Another person from the student's release list will be called.

Child Custody

Nativity Academy will refer to appropriate Court Orders governing rights and duties of parents in regard to their child(ren). Divorced and/or separated parents are required to file with the school certified copies of the most recent Court Orders together with all amendments, modifications and supplements. Parents are to ensure that the school has a complete and unaltered set of copies of the applicable Court Orders. Failure to follow this policy may result in the involuntary withdrawal of the child(ren) from the school. Additionally, the school will endeavor not to take sides in disputes between parents in recognition of the crucial role of both parents in the lives of their children. If a court order is unclear about how to handle a situation or decision, Nativity Academy will use its sole discretion how to handle the situation until presented with a clear court order or an agreement of the parents.

Visitors

Visitors (including parents/guardians) arriving on campus must report directly to the main office for authorization. Anyone that needs to proceed from the office to any other part of the campus will be issued a visitor badge. Visitors without a badge who are unattended by a member of the faculty will be asked to return to the front office for a visitor badge.

Visitors may be asked to show identification. This is a safety measure intended to protect the students, staff and guests of Nativity Academy. For the safety and security of our students, anyone seen on campus during school hours without a visitor's badge will be reminded to obtain one or asked to leave campus.

Gang Free Zone

San Francisco Nativity is a Gang Free zone. Under Texas Penal Code any area within 100 feet of a child-care center is a gang free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to a harsher penalty.

Weapons

No weapons of any type are permitted on the grounds of Nativity Academy. There is a zero tolerance policy for possession of weapons on Nativity Academy property.

Attendance Policy

Daily school attendance is the best way to assure continued progress for each student. Classes are in session for over 190 days (state law requires a minimum of 180 days). Students are expected to be in school unless they have a valid excuse. Parents/guardians are asked to report a student's absence to the office by 9:00 AM. If a student misses more than ten (10) days, excused or unexcused, then promotion to the next grade may be jeopardized. Failure to comply may result in the dismissal of the student from Nativity Academy.

The following are accepted excuses for absences: death in the family and any emergency situation approved by the principal. All other absences are considered unexcused. Recreational trips taken outside of the regularly scheduled vacation periods are strongly discouraged, particularly in cases where the student's academic performance is marginal. If a student misses school for vacation outside of regularly scheduled vacation periods, the parent is responsible for making arrangements with his/her teachers prior to the absence. Teachers may or may not provide work for travel related absences.

Any student who arrives after 8:00 AM is tardy. Important morning routines are disrupted when a student enters class late and tardy students may miss important announcements. Students who are dropped off late must be accompanied by a parent/guardian into the building to sign them in at the school office. Students will not be permitted to go to class unless this is done.

Early dismissal of students is discouraged in order to maximize instructional time. Please make every effort to schedule medical

and dental appointments after school hours. If necessary, students may be picked up early from school. Parents must send a note to their child's teacher stating the time they wish to pick up the child. Parents/guardians must come to the office to sign their child out of school. The office will call students from the classroom when parents arrive for pickup. Students who return to school the same day must be signed back in through the school office.

School Closure

The health and safety of children and staff is the main factor in any decision to close or delay the opening of the school. Information regarding closure will be posted on the school website www.nativityhouston.org. An email and/or text message will also be sent if possible. Parents should also consult local media.

Please refer to local news and radio for information about potential school closures. Nativity Academy will typically refer to Houston Independent School District when considering a school closure due to severe weather. If the school is closed, all school sponsored activities are also canceled. All families should have up to date contact information for communication with Nativity Academy.

Nativity Academy will use the following criteria for school closure.

Facility Related

Conditions which impact the health and safety of children and/or employees

Examples:

- Without electricity for more than 3 hours
- Without water for more than 2 hours.

Weather Related

Weather conditions such as area flooding, icing, snow accumulations, etc, which would prevent safe arrival and departure of employees and children.

Immediate area under a hurricane watch

In the case of inclement weather, San Francisco Nativity will follow the decision of the Houston Independent School District (HISD). Parents should consult local media.

Health Related

Area Public Health officials recommend or order closure of the program to spread of illness

Medical Emergencies

If your child needs immediate medical attention, the school may call your child's physician, and an authorized person will take your child to the nearest emergency room, or the school will call an ambulance. This is the reason the school must have your authorization for emergency medical care and health care information on file.

Parent Involvement

Parent involvement is crucial to providing a high quality program to our students. Nativity Academy provides a variety of opportunities for parents (even those who work and/or are very busy) to take part in our school. Opportunities such as helping to maintain the campus, read to your child's class, and serve on committees for various school activities. Parents of children enrolled in Nativity Academy are welcome to visit and help in the classroom. All visitors must check into the office and follow proper procedures for checking in.

Parents involved in an activity should:

- Sign In at the Reception Desk, and put on a Visitor Badge.
- Let the teacher or assistant know that you have arrived so they can transition the children for the activity.
- Wash hands before participating in classroom activities.
- If reading a book to the class, please make sure that you have read the book in advance.
- Use positive redirection for all. Examples: We walk inside. Chairs are for sitting. Bottoms on the floor. Keep your hands in your lap. One person talks at a time.
- **IMPORTANT:** Any observation or information concerning children and families that you may gain while volunteering is to be kept confidential and should not be shared with other parents in the class or the school.
- Review emergency procedures posted in classroom

Parent Communication and Notification

We believe it is important to each child's development that they see parent and teachers engaged in regular and friendly exchanges. Teachers and staff work with parents to establish and maintain regular on-going communication. We make every effort to have the information flow both ways, including:

- Teacher Notes
- Newsletters

- Teacher email/text

Teachers and administrative staff are valuable resources for parents. All staff members have access to articles and books on various topics of interest to parents. Teachers are also a valuable resource for specific child development questions such as discipline, learning, and other important issues.

Additionally, an email and text message will be sent to inform parents of all-important information. Written notifications will also be sent home in addition to the electronic communication for all event information, outbreak of a communicable disease. Parents will be called when their child has been hurt or ill and/or receive written notification. We will also inform parents at arrival and dismissal time of any urgent information.

You may feel free to discuss matters with the Administration at any time. Parents may review and discuss any questions or concerns about the policies and procedures of Nativity Academy by contacting the principal. To avoid delays, it is usually better to call for an appointment prior to coming. If you wish to talk to a teacher, you may make an appointment by requesting a conference and a time will be arranged that is convenient to both parties. Teachers will not be called from their rooms to talk to a parent/guardian while classes are in session.

Telephone Calls

Permission to use the telephone is restricted to emergencies. Forgotten items or assignments are not considered emergencies and students will not be given permission to call a parent/guardian in these instances. Parents/guardians are asked not to call the school for the delivery of messages to students except in cases of emergencies. Students are not allowed to bring cell phones.

Nativity Academy will notify custodial parents of the following:

- If their child has a sign or symptom of a contagious disease
- If their child is injured and requires medical attention. Less serious injuries will be reported at dismissal time using the "Boo Boo" Report.
- If the child has been involved in a situation that placed the child at risk. Ex. The child wandered away from the school unsupervised.
- If the school or the child's class has had an outbreak of lice
- If a child has been exposed to a communicable disease that requires reporting to the Texas Department of Health as specified in 25 TAC 97 subchapter A.

Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences

Formal parent/teacher/student conferences are held at least twice a year. Parents, teachers, and students will discuss the child's progress and receive a summary of their child's progress during the year. Teachers are available for additional individual conferences as needed. Parents may schedule additional conferences with their child's teacher.

Uniform Policies/Grooming

All students are expected to be in the full regulation uniform on all school days unless otherwise noted.

Girls	Navy blue skort, pants or walking shorts Blue polo shirt (gray for MS students) White knee socks or fold over (no low-profile)	Boys	Navy blue pants or walking shorts Blue polo shirt (gray for MS students) White fold over socks (no low-profile)
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- ONLY WHITE SOCKS may be worn. No low-profile socks are permitted. The rim of the entire sock must be visible over shoe tops.
- Walking shorts, skirts, and skorts must be an inch above the knee. The Principal will notify a student and parents/guardians if garments are too short or too tight.
- No personal monograms of any kind are permitted on the uniform.
- No outer garment, other than the school sweater, sweatshirt, or jacket is to be worn in the buildings.
- Shoes must be athletic or gym shoe type. All students in PreK3 must have shoes that are velcro only. Shoes of all other grades must be tied or Velcro. They are to be solid colored with rubber soles. Decorated, light up plaid, polka dot etc. are not permitted. No "wheelies" (shoes with removable wheels) or high tops are allowed. Sandals and boots are NOT allowed.
- No lenses with unnatural eye color are permitted.
- Only simple jewelry may be worn. One ring per hand, small stud earrings (one per ear), and/or a simple chain with a cross or religious medal are permitted. No hoop earrings or bracelets are permitted for safety reasons. A watch may be worn. No other jewelry of any kind is permitted.
- No make-up or fingernail polish is allowed, including tips.
- Students are expected to maintain a neat appearance. The Principal reserves the right to address inappropriate or questionable hairstyles. Body piercing, exposed tattoos, and inappropriate hair dye are not permitted, highlights in

- the hair is discouraged – natural color dyes only.
- Boys may not have mohawks or hair deemed excessively spiky. Hair must be well-groomed and may not be excessive in length or unusual in style. Boys must wear their hair so that it does not touch their shirt collar, hang over the ears or eyebrows.
- All hair color must be natural. Highlights are not permitted.

Dress Down Days

On designated free dress days, students are expected to appear in neat appropriate attire. If you are uncertain as to the appropriateness of any article of clothing, do NOT wear it. If a student is inappropriately dressed, students will wait in the office until parents/guardians bring the school uniform to the office for the student to change. All dress down attire is subject to the approval of the administration.

These guidelines are to be followed for dress down days:

- No shorts, except walking shorts
- No skirts more than one inch above the knee in length
- No leggings, yoga pants or bicycle pants
- No baggy pants, skinny jeans or jeans with rips or holes
- No backless, off-the-shoulder, or sleeveless dresses or tank tops
- No T-shirts with inappropriate slogans
- No sandals or boots of any kind
- The uniform jewelry regulations apply

Parents are expected to support the uniform policy of the school, by ensuring that each child is in proper uniform each morning. Should a child be in violation of the uniform code, the parent/guardian may be asked to come and bring the appropriate uniform for the student. Repeated uniform infractions may warrant a conference with the principal.

Guidelines for Outside Play:

The children will remain indoors when the following conditions exist.

- The temperature or wind chill is below 32 degrees
- The temperature or heat index is above 100 degrees Shortened lengths of play when heat index is between 96-99 degrees
- The Current Air Quality Index for the 77081 zip code is Orange or higher.
- Raining

Insect Repellent and Sunscreen:

Staff members can apply insect repellent and sunscreen to students at a parent's request. The sunscreen and/or repellent must be provided by the family and will be applied prior to going outdoors when deemed necessary by the staff member (ie, after a rain where mosquitos are more prevalent).

Birthdays

Nativity Academy welcomes the opportunity to celebrate your child's birthday. Birthday celebrations may consist of a birthday cookie, ice cream cup or some other small suitable item. All items must be commercially prepared and still in the original unopened container. Food which has been prepared at home OR is not in its original packaging cannot be served. Full meals and decorations are not allowed.

Food Programs

Nativity Academy will serve snacks and meals daily. Breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack will be provided by outside food programs and will be prepackaged and/or prepared off-site. Parents will not be required to supply any food. Breakfast is served each morning starting at 7:30 a.m. and a lunch will be served daily. If a student has special dietary needs, parents are asked to indicate the request at the beginning of the year, in writing to the Principal and every effort will be made to accommodate special cases. Nativity Academy will ensure that the nutritional needs of the children are met on a daily basis by ensuring that the menus provided by vendors meet those needs.

Medication

Any medications brought by parents for their children must:

- Be in the original container.
- Be labeled with the child's name.
- Be labeled with the date (if prescription medicine).
- Include written instructions for administration of the medication.
- If prescribed, include the name of the physician.

All medications must be brought to the reception desk and parents or authorized representative must fill out a Medication Authorization Form. Over the counter medications may be given only with the parents' signed consent, which is completed with the annual application.

Health and Safety

If your child is ill, call the school office to notify the principal and teacher. For the health and welfare of your child, as well as the other children in the program, keep your child home if he/she has:

- A fever now or has had a fever (99.6F or above) in the previous 24 hours
- Heavy nasal discharge
- Diarrhea or vomiting within the previous 12 hours
- Any symptoms of a communicable disease or condition. You may be asked to provide the school with a doctor's note before returning to the classroom, certifying they are able to return to school.

Children must be healthy enough to participate in outdoor activities before returning to the school.

Each student entering Nativity Academy must be in compliance with all required immunizations as set forth by the Texas Department of Health, Immunization Division. All immunizations should be completed by the first day of attendance. Enrollment requirements for first-time students include a current immunization record on all required immunizations.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Nativity Academy is required by Texas Law to report suspected child abuse and neglect to the Children's Protective Services (CPS) or the local law enforcement agency. Parents are also urged to report child abuse to the principal and call the DFPS Child Abuse Hotline at (1-800-252- 5400). Parents can learn about the signs of child abuse and neglect at www.preventchildabuse.org are just a few. Information regarding child abuse and neglect including warning signs that a child may be a victim of abuse or neglect as well as prevention techniques for child abuse and neglect will be distributed at parent orientation. The school will also work with the DFPS licensing representative to stay up to date on workshops and training.

Accreditation and Inspection Information

Parents may review a copy of Nativity Academy's most recent fire inspection and a copy of the school's Accreditation Report at any time. The principal will be happy to share this information with parents.

Valuables/Electronics

For safety reasons, students are not allowed to bring electronics of any kind onto the campus. Any electronic devices, including cell phones that are brought onto campus will be kept in the office. If an electronic device is confiscated, it will be returned at the discretion of the Principal. Additionally, it is highly discouraged that students bring any other items to school that are particularly valuable to prevent possessions from either being lost or misplaced.

Parent Education

Throughout the year, parent workshops are held with teachers and other speakers on topics related to education, parenting, and the well-being of the school community. These are offered throughout the year and can be credited towards parent volunteer hours. However, there may be some specific parent sessions that are required.

Technology Usage Policy

In order to promote the ethical and responsible use of technology, regulations are established for the good of the individual and the Nativity Academy community. Facilities where computers are located are meant to be areas of learning. Students are to be considerate of others who are using the computers for work.

The implementation and upgrading of technology is costly. Students will be instructed in the proper and careful use of computers and other forms of technology. Food and drink are not to be taken to areas in which computers are located. Students are not to tamper or be destructive with computers and other hardware. Students are required to care properly for all equipment. Students will be held responsible for damaged or lost property which belongs to the school or another student or faculty member.

If inappropriate use of hardware or software programs leads to damage, the student(s) will be charged for the damages or replacement of the hardware or software. Taking equipment that belongs to the school or to a student or faculty member without permission of the owner is stealing and is subject to disciplinary action.

Whether occurring within or outside of school, when a student's use of technology jeopardizes the safe environment of the school, staff or students or is contrary to Gospel values the student can be subject to the full range of disciplinary consequences including the expulsion of the student. Students are responsible for appropriate behavior on the school's computer network just as they are in a classroom or on a school playground. Communications on the network are often public in nature. General school rules for behavior and communications apply. The students are expected never to access, keep, or send anything that

they would not want their parents or teachers to see.

Violations of regulations regarding the proper and responsible use of technology shall be reported to the Principal who will follow disciplinary action as outlined in the Student-Parent Handbook. In addition to disciplinary consequences, a student will subject him/herself to the possibility of losing the privilege of using the technology available because of irresponsible, unethical, or illegal usage.

Media Release

Nativity Academy may take pictures and/or video of students in the classroom or during special events. The school will always keep student safety as the priority when publishing these images and refer to the media release signed by parents during the registration process.

Conflict Management

Nativity Academy administration requires parents to meet with the teacher first in order to resolve a potential difference of opinion. It is ideal that these matters can be resolved by the parties involved. If necessary, the Principal should be consulted to facilitate further discussion in order to reach an agreement. Parent/teacher meetings may be set up by telephone or email. If the parent-teacher meeting has proven unsatisfactory, an appointment may be made with the Principal to further discuss the problem.

Special Needs Students

Legal References to Special Services The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that local school districts locate, identify, and evaluate all private school students suspected of having a disability. This "Child Find" process must be conducted in consultation with private schools representatives to ensure equitable access for private school students. In IDEA, these children are often referred to as "parentally placed private school children with disabilities," and the benefits available to them differ from the benefits for children with disabilities enrolled in public schools.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504 educational section (frequently call "Section 504), provides that no otherwise qualified individual with a disability shall, solely by reason of his/her disability, be excluded from the participation in any program receiving federal assistance. Educators strive to recognize and address the needs of all those who seek a Christian education. Within our resources, schools will offer services to eligible students with special needs, when possible. However, private schools are not required to significantly alter their programs, lower or substantially modify their standards to accommodate a child with special needs. Private educational institutions are only required to make minor adjustment to accommodate eligible students.

Records for Special Needs Learners All psychological and educational evaluations/reports regarding special needs testing of students received from local public schools, persons, or agencies are forwarded to Nativity Academy School, upon request. These records are kept on file at the school for a period of seven (7) years after the exit of the student. These records are kept in a secure file and area accessible only to the principal, the Intervention Specialist, the Counselor, and any other appropriate staff member working with the student. Parents may view their child's record at any time. These records may not be forwarded to any other individual or agency.

Criteria for Acceptance of Students with Special Needs In making a determination regarding the admittance of a particular student, the school will review the child's ability to meet the school's academic, behavioral, and physical qualifications. Each school determines its ability to meet the need of the student applicant. Consideration will be given to the following:

- Student's demonstrated ability to meet grade level requirements;
- Record of student's ability to follow school rules and regulations; and
- Students' ability to meet the physical requirements of attendance.

Special Needs Learners New Students – When the Admission Office or the principal is notified that an incoming student may have special learning needs, the principals and other appropriate school staff review current academic, social, medical, and psychological evaluations to determine if the applicant is qualified to enroll, with or without his/her disability. If the applicant is qualified for enrollment, the principal will then determine if reasonable adjustments can be made to the educational program which will accommodate the student's needs. If an admission is determined the school will begin the procedures with parents to discuss an Accommodation Plan.

Currently Enrolled Students – If a teacher (or parent) is concerned about a child's academic, behavioral, or emotional progress and feels that testing may be needed, he/she will discuss concerns with the parent/family and the Principal, and then meet as soon as possible. We work as a team to do what is best for the child and will discuss:

- The student's current educational status, including attendance records, grades, assessment data, and classroom observations;
- Previous educational efforts and strategies provided for the students and the results;
- Documentation of recent vision and hearing screenings;
- Updated general health history inventory; and
- Other information provided by the parents or teachers.

Parents will be expected to disclose any pertinent information that may assist us in educating the student. The principal and staff are responsible for recommending educational alternatives and/or referral to the local school district and/or private agency of the parent's choice for further evaluation. In some cases, the campus may not have the resources necessary to help the child be successful. The principal and teacher will then assist the family to locate an appropriate educational program for the child.

Documentation for all referrals must be kept on file. This documentation will be included in the student's records. If an evaluation determines the student requires minor accommodations the school will begin the procedures with parents to discuss an Accommodation Plan. Accommodations for a child will be noted on the report card and in the child's permanent folder.

Student Success Expectations for Special Needs Learners All available school resources shall be utilized to promote student success. Lines of communication will be kept open to inform parents of student progress in all areas. Concerns about a student will be addressed initially by the classroom teacher and parent. School success can only be attained through cooperation between parents and educators. Parents are expected to disclose any pertinent information from private resources (diagnoses and recommendations) that would be of specific educational value in programming adequately for their children. If it is determined that the school's resources cannot meet the needs of a student, or if parent(s)/guardian(s) fail to act on the school's recommendations for remediation or diagnostic evaluation, the principal may request withdrawal of the student or deny admission for the following year.

Accommodations for Special Needs Learners The purpose of an accommodation of any type is to provide the appropriate instruction according to the individual student's special needs. As a result of a diagnostic evaluation, a student meets certain criteria to qualify for accommodations to his/her schoolwork. In many instances, accommodations (changed in methods of instruction) can be made in the classroom for students with special needs or for struggling students. Students who are diagnosed with a learning difference or who are diagnosed with a special need through the public school system, private doctors, or through special agencies may be referred for special assistance with the Principal after the administration has verification of the student's recommended accommodations. (Curricular modifications are not provided because modifications require alterations of curricular objectives.) The number of intervention sessions per week, length of sessions, and goals will be determined by the teacher,, tutor, principal, and classroom teacher after all available information has been reviewed.

Standardized Assessment for Students with Special Needs Standardized assessments are one of several means of evaluating student performance. All students participate Standardized Assessment for Students with Special Needs Standardized assessments are one of several means of evaluating student performance. All students participate in the standardized assessment program. Students with disabilities identified through IDEA may require assessment accommodations. These accommodations should be provided on a weekly basis through the classroom teacher. These testing arrangements must be planned for in advance through a meeting with the principal and teacher.

Acknowledgement

The school and/or the principal retain the right to amend this handbook for just cause. Parents will be given prompt notification if changes are made. Your enrollment into Nativity Academy is an acknowledgement that you have read this handbook. It also means that you have discussed with your child/children the appropriate items from the handbook, and that you and your child/children agree to abide by the school procedures, regulations and policies discussed in this handbook.

Parent Handbook 2024-2025

All enrolled families are given a copy of the Parent/Student handbook for the school year.

Initial each line below:

_____ I have received a copy of the Parent/Student Handbook.

_____ I will read and refer to the Parent/Student Handbook.

_____ I will follow the policies and procedures in the Parent/Student Handbook.

_____ I will seek clarification from the Principal for any policies and procedures if unclear.

Parent/Family Name

Child(ren)'s Name(s) Grade

Parent Signature

Child(ren)'s Name(s) Grade

Date

Child(ren)'s Name(s) Grade

Child(ren)'s Name(s) Grade