

Mary Queen of Apostles



SCHOOL

MARY QUEEN OF APOSTLES SCHOOL

PRESCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK

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Mary Queen of Apostles Preschool Parent Handbook

The philosophy and mission statement of Mary Queen of Apostles School are the cornerstone of our program and environment. Through our beliefs and values we determine our policies and procedures. Through our documents, we encourage our families, our students, and our staff to act and interact so that we are responsible members in a community of learners, witnesses to our faith, and reflections of Christ.

*Catherine M. Collett
Principal*

Preschool Parent Handbook Contents

[Philosophy and Mission](#)

[School Governance](#)

[Admissions](#)

[Application and Admission](#)

[Arrivals and Departures](#)

[Calendar](#)

[Communication](#)

[Conferences and Report Cards](#)

[Curriculum](#)

[Delays/Closings](#)

[Discipline Policies](#)

[Dress](#)

[Emergency Cards](#)

[Emergency Early Dismissal Procedures with Crisis Plan Basics](#)

[Health Regulations](#)

[Inspection Notice](#)

[Lunch](#)

[Parties](#)

[PowerSchool's Parent Portal and PowerAlert](#)

[Public Relations](#)

[Safety Drills](#)

[School Community Group](#)

[Snacks](#)

[Student Services](#)

[Tuition](#)

[Tuition Credit](#)

[Visiting](#)

[Volunteers](#)

[Web Site](#)

[Understanding of Parent Handbook](#)

[List of Forms Provided at Parent Orientation](#)

QUEEN OF APOSTLES SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

“Christian education is intended to make our faith become living, conscious, and active through the light of instruction.”

We, at Mary Queen of Apostles School, focus on educating the total child. We stress the academic and spiritual development of each child in a Christ-centered learning community through relationships and actions that model Christian values and beliefs.

As caring professionals we provide a solid foundation in the fundamentals with a challenging and extensive curriculum evolving to meet the needs of the students in an ever-changing world. We foster social justice, instill Catholic, Christian morality, encourage an appreciation for the Catholic Church, and an integrated love of all God’s creation. We encourage service to God through service to others.

We strive to maintain high standards of conduct and heightened accountability in academics and the development of age-appropriate skills. We guide the spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, and social growth of children and youth. We provide a safe and nurturing environment, promoting respect for the dignity of each person and emphasizing individual responsibility.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Mary Queen of Apostles School is to form a new generation of disciples of Jesus Christ by educating the total child – developing minds, building character, and strengthening faith. In a Christ-centered learning community, we offer a solid foundation in the fundamentals with a challenging and extensive curriculum evolving to meet the needs of students in an ever-changing world. We provide a safe nurturing environment, promote respect for the dignity of each person, emphasize individual responsibility, and encourage service to others under the guidance of our patroness, Mary, the first and model disciple of her Son.

The Mission of Catholic Education

It is the mission of the Diocese of Greensburg Catholic schools to inspire and prepare the students in our care to become the next generation of spiritual and intellectual leaders by immersing them in a Christ-centered environment that encircles an exemplary education focused on Catholic faith, rigorous academics, outstanding sports and activities, and service to the global community.

Beliefs ~

We believe that:

- 1. Catholic education is a responsibility shared by all members of the family, parish, school, and Diocese of Greensburg.*
- 2. Catholic Schools are centered in Christ's teachings and Catholic doctrine.*
- 3. Each student is created with unique talents and intellect.*
- 4. Our rigorous curriculum challenges students to achieve their potential as they strive for excellence within the formation of the faith, academics, and success in life.*
- 5. Students have a right to a safe, positive, nurturing learning environment with mutual respect demonstrated throughout the school community.*
- 6. Catholic schools encourage students to serve the Church and the greater community, through lifelong evangelization.*

Graduates of the schools of the Diocese of Greensburg will be:

Knowledgeable ~ Students have mastered a strong academic foundation and are able to apply skills, facts, and knowledge in real world environments.

Future Ready ~ Students are able to think critically, solve problems, use information, communicate and innovate. They are flexible, adaptive, collaborative, creative and globally aware and are able to compete in a global society.

Educators ~ Students will find ways to share their faith and academic knowledge with others.

Leaders ~ Students will be able to work cooperatively for the good of all, accepting the freedom and responsibility leadership brings. They will be encouraged to act with integrity, and to make ethical, responsible, and moral decisions.

Disciples of Christ ~ Students will evangelize through their words and actions.

Problem Solvers ~ Students will develop their natural curiosity and encounter the world and embrace the future with a sense of imagination and wonder. They will acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They will apply thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems and develop solutions.

Catholic Social Teachers ~ Students will show empathy, compassion, and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They will have a personal commitment to service, and to making a positive difference in the lives of others.

Life Long Learners ~ Students will work to build personal growth and are intrinsically motivated to continue the learning process throughout one's life.

Handbook of Policies, Office of Catholic Schools, Diocese of Greensburg

School Governance for Mary Queen of Apostles School

Bishop of Greensburg

-The chief shepherd of the diocese, who authorizes the creation and continued operation of Catholic School.

Board of Members

-Pastors of the parishes that sponsor the School and the Superintendent of Catholic Schools, who oversee the School's mission, set policy, manage the School's business, property, and financial affairs according to the policies of the Diocese of Greensburg. A Pastor serves as President to head this governing body.

Administration

-The Principal, appointed by and accountable to the Board of Members, who serves as the educational leader of the School and oversees the faculty and staff.

-The Principal, following the Policy Handbook of the Diocese of Greensburg, assumes the responsibility for designing and directing a sound educational program and for coordinating the efforts of all the people involved in the school community in such a way as to create and foster an environment in which the Catholic faith can be learned and lived. The Principal maintains an educational climate by providing professional and spiritual growth of both staff and students.

School Advisory Council

- The SAC is an advisory group appointed by the Bishop to advise the Administration on matters of marketing, development, enrollment, and fundraising following the by-laws established by the Diocese.

Nothing contained in the Preschool Parent Handbook is intended to, or shall be construed to, create contractual obligations, expressed or implied, on the part of the parishes, the Diocese of Greensburg, or Mary Queen of Apostles School. The contents of this handbook are subject to alteration or modification by the school or diocese as circumstances may require.

Absences

Illness, Emergency, or Bereavement Absences

In case of absence, please call the school or email the teacher AND the secretary at FRS. If possible, when your child returns to school bring a doctor's excuse or a hand-written note. If you sent an email instead of calling, the email can serve as the excuse upon return.

Vacations or Trips

In case of travel, please contact the principal, teacher, and the secretary at FRS about your plans and the length of your trip. An approval reply from the principal will serve as the excuse.

Acceptable Use Policy and Public Relation Photos and Materials

- o Parents must sign an Acceptable Use Policy for Technology and Communication. This gives permission to access PowerSchool and, *unless denied by parent/guardian in writing*, permission for MQA to use photographs and materials in our brochures, flyers, web site, etc. This policy is read online and signed in an electronic form. Access to the policy and form is found on our school web site.
- o In addition the website will have another form for your signature giving permission for the school to use texting as means of communication. This is part of our emergency broadcast system.

Application and Admission and Re-enrollment of Current Students

Application for the fall term begins in February for the 3-Year and 4-Year Preschool. *Once a child in enrolled at MQA the family completes re-enrollment through FACTS online. An email with a link to the form is sent to the parent responsible for enrollment.*

Students are admitted to Mary Queen of Apostles School in this order and for wait-listing:

1. Students currently enrolled
2. Catholics from the five sending parishes
3. Catholics from the Diocese of Greensburg
4. Catholics from other Dioceses

5. Non-Catholics

Admissions is a two-fold process. First a parent must complete an application through FACTS system. That application is reviewed and if accepted, a link is sent from FACTS to complete the enrollment process. Admission requires proof of vaccinations, copies of health records, birth certificate, and proof of residence. Students attending preschool must be self-sufficient in the restroom. The child should be 3-years or 4-years-old by the first day of school for the K-8 students. This is usually the Monday before Labor Day, or the last week in August.

Admission to MQA is considered complete when the application form and fee are returned *and* when the Payment Option Form is returned and tuition payments begin. Students do not go to class until these things are current.

As Mary Queen of Apostles School is a private, non-public institution, the administration reserves the right to terminate the enrollment of a student for any reason and at any time. Any disciplinary policies and procedures are simply guidelines that the school generally follows. The guidelines do not impede this right by administration to terminate the enrollment of a student for any reason at any time.

Arrivals and Departures

Preschool Arrival

Preschool students are invited into the building by an aide or teacher between 8:20-8:30 each morning. Morning students begin their day with rituals and procedures that are taught. These include hanging your coat, emptying your book bag, bringing your folder (which may have notes) into the classroom, etc. Afternoon students should arrive between 11:50 and 12:00. Attendance is recorded daily.

Drop off for the morning session is at the lower entrance of the school building. Drop off for the afternoon session is at the upper main entrance of the school building.

Please exit the drop-off area as quickly and safely as possible with respect for others traveling the school grounds.

If you need to come into the building with your child, please park in the lot along Young Street, walk to the main entrance, ring the bell for admittance, and sign in at the office.

If you arrive after the allotted time, please bring your child to the main door. Ring the doorbell, identify yourself, and the secretary will have you sign your child in for the day and escort him/her to the classroom. The attendance codes for late arrivals will be entered by the secretary.

**See Preschool Arrival Map online*

Preschool Departure

Preschool students are dismissed at the lower entrance of the school building. The morning 3-year session dismisses at 11:00. The 4-year session for half-day students dismisses at 11:30. The all-day 4-year session dismisses at 2:25.

The preschool aides will dismiss the students. Please come to the door and escort your child to your car. Exit the dismissal area as quickly and safely as possible with respect to others traveling the school grounds. If a child's car transportation does not arrive, the child will be brought to the office so arrangements can be made.

If your child needs to be dismissed early, send a note to the teacher stating the time of the dismissal. Report to the office to collect your child.

**See Preschool Dismissal Map online*

If a court order exists specifying restrictions of to whom the child(ren) may be released, a copy of the court order is to be presented to the principal.

Dismissal Notes/Changes

Any change in dismissal for any child(ren) must be communicated to the school through a note and presented to the teacher. Phone calls requesting an *unplanned or emergency dismissal* MUST BE CALLED IN to the school office at 724.335.5911. A change of dismissal notice sent through email to a teacher may not be read during the course of the day. It would be uncertain that the teacher would receive the message in time. Call the office, please.

Because attendance is taken each day, any student that is not going to be in school, should be reported off by the parent/guardian with a phone call or email to the teacher and secretary at FRS. An alert is sent from PowerSchool to anyone in the school community with an unreported absence.

Calendar

A basic school calendar is emailed to families. General information is found at the end of the calendar. The Mary Queen of Apostles School main calendar can be found online on the school's web site. This is the calendar that is current with any additions or deletions or changes made to Event and Activities Calendar. Our calendars have sub categories, so choosing preschool will show only those events pertaining to the preschool program.

Communication

- o Communication between school and family is vital.
- o It is very important that there be good communication between the parent and teacher. Parents may contact the teacher to schedule a phone conference or meeting with the teacher. Please send a note or email to the teacher.
- o Home/school communication should be addressed to the person for whom it is intended. To ensure proper handling of orders, forms, etc. brought from home, envelopes should be used as needed and be marked with the contents.
The following are examples of home/school communications:

Notes to teachers	Medical forms
Notes to Mrs. Collett	Scrip orders
Early dismissal notes	Conference requests
- o One formal conference is scheduled each year. The conferences are set in February for the 3-year and 4-year olds. Notification of conference time will be sent prior to these meetings.
- o *In cases where the child does not reside with both parents, both parents are able to receive school information. This is done by providing the school with a mailing address and an email address for the parent that does not have physical custody.* Parents have the right to see their child's records and communicate with the teacher. If a court order restricts this, it is the parent's responsibility to provide a copy of the order to the principal.

All school communications from the main office will be sent via email or will be posted on the school web site at www.mqaschool.org . If you do not have Internet access, please contact the school offices so that an alternative to email is provided for your family.

Conferences & Report Cards

- o Conferences for 4-year preschool and 3-year preschool are held in February. These conferences are scheduled throughout the school day. Children do not report to preschool that day.

- o Conferences may also be held any time throughout the year when parents or teachers deem them necessary. Scheduling conferences should be done through contact between the teacher and parent/guardian.
- o Report cards are issued in December, February, and May for the 4-year program.
- o Report cards are issued in February and May for the 3-year program.

Curriculum

The preschool curriculum is based on the Preschool Continuum for Learning and Early Childhood Standards of the State of Pennsylvania. The document is available for review in the school office. The preschool day includes:

- o Prayer, Bible stories, faith development activities
- o Creative, dramatic, and interactive play
- o Fine motor/Large motor activities
- o Art, music, and movement activities
- o Language activities including oral language and listening skills, phonological and phonemic awareness, word building and vocabulary development, writing and spelling
- o Math and science activities
- o Socialization activities
- o School appropriate behaviors through following directions, working with others, active listening, taking turns, etc.

Delays and Closings

- o In case of severe weather conditions or any other emergencies, an announcement specific to preschool, and to the classes meeting that day will be sent over the School Messenger Broadcast System. Text alerts, phone call, and email are all sent as soon as the delay is called.
- o General announcements of the delay will be made over KDKA (radio and TV), WPXI (radio, TV and web site), and WTAE television. No specific information can be listed on these stations.
- o Mary Queen of Apostles School follows the weather delays and closings for the New Kensington Arnold School District. Mary Queen of Apostles School will have its own announcement of delays and closings.
- o If school is delayed 1 hour, preschool will begin with the K-8 population at 9:00 am. Dismissal will follow the normal routine.
- o If school is delayed 2 hours, all preschoolers will report at 10:00 am with the K-8 population. Dismissal for all half-day students, 3-year and 4-year will be at 11:30. All-day students will dismiss following the normal routine.

Discipline Policies

All children are expected to behave appropriately for their age and for a school setting. The manner and respect taught at home are extended to the school community including faculty members, priests, volunteers, custodians, aides, visitors, and all children. Above all, children must be taught to respect themselves, their materials, the school, and the possessions of others.

Mary Queen of Apostles School reserves the right to discipline students who, through their lack of responsibility, inappropriate behavior or comments, poor attitude, or disrespect infringe upon the rights of others in the school community. It is expected that parents will be supportive of the teachers/school in these matters.

Mary Queen of Apostles School follows the Handbook of Policies of the Diocese of Greensburg. These policies include:

- *Sexual Harassment Policy*
- *Substance Abuse Policy*
- *Weapon Policy*
- *Wellness Policy*
- *Technological Resources and Communication Policy*

Information on these policies can be found in the Parent/Student Handbook found at www.mqaschool.org .

Dress

It is suggested that children wear casual, comfortable clothing suitable for the weather so that they can work and play in complete comfort. All removable clothing should be clearly labeled with the child's name. Also be aware that we will be using clay, glue, paint, etc.

Your child will be bringing papers home from school that he/she would like to share with you. Therefore a backpack is recommended. **Please be sure to check backpacks each day because important notices from the office or our own classroom may be sent home with your child.** All backpacks should be a reasonable size and should be labeled with your child's name.

Your child should wear closed shoes like tennis shoes. They should be able to complete gross motor activities safely and travel the hallways and stairs safely.

At this age it is not uncommon for the children to have accidents. Please send an extra set of clothes in a (Ziploc) bag **with your child's name on it**. This is a requirement for the 3-year olds and the 4-year olds.

Emergency Cards

Each year an emergency card must be filled out for the office. The cards are kept on file in the school office. The preschool classroom also has its own emergency card that you will be asked to complete.

Emergency Early Dismissal Procedure and Crisis Plan Basics

In the event of an emergency early dismissal due to inclement weather, severe weather/natural disaster, or crisis situation, please refer to the basics of Mary Queen of Apostles Crisis Management Plan described below. The emergency card asks for specific directions in regard to emergency dismissals.

Inclement Weather

1. If an early dismissal is called by New Kensington Arnold SD due to weather, Mary Queen of Apostles will also announce an early dismissal. The announcement will be broadcast via School Messenger and on WTAE, WPXI, and KDKA. We will dismiss according to the information on the emergency card.
2. When an early dismissal is called, follow the procedures listed at the end of this section.

Severe Weather/Natural Disaster

1. Students, teachers, and administrative staff participate in a severe weather drill annually at each site.
2. Students, teachers, and staff report to an inside space at the lowest level remaining in the building they occupy at the time of the drill or emergency. At the Freeport Road Site, this is the hallway of the basement floor in the main building.
3. Emergency cards, first aid kits, crisis kits, and cell phones are taken to these areas.

4. Only EMS personnel will be permitted to enter the building. Parents are to refrain from calling the school and are to wait for the all clear given by the Emergency Medical Service.
5. If an early dismissal is called by New Kensington Arnold SD, Mary Queen of Apostles will also announce an early dismissal. The announcement will be broadcast on School Messenger, WTAE, WPXI, and KDKA. We will dismiss according to the information on the emergency card.
6. When an early dismissal is called, follow the procedures listed at the end of this section.

Fire

1. Students, teachers, and administrative staff participate in fire drills monthly at each site.
2. Students, teachers, and staff exit the building using the closest exit and move away from the building and fire lanes.
3. Emergency cards, first aid kits, crisis kits, and cell phones are taken to these areas.
4. Only EMS personnel will be permitted to enter the property. Parents are to wait for the all clear given by the Emergency Medical Service and Fire Department.
5. If an early dismissal is called by MQA, the announcement will be broadcast via School Messenger, WTAE, WPXI, and KDKA. We will dismiss according to the information on the emergency card.
6. When an early dismissal is called, follow the procedures listed at the end of this section.

Crisis Situations

Crisis Situations are handled in one of two ways. Either the entire site goes into a lock-down or the site is evacuated to another location. The evacuation site is determined by the nature of the crisis and time frame.

- The primary evacuation site is Mt. St. Peter Church on the property.
- The alternative evacuation site is St. Mary of Czestochowa Church at 857 Kenneth Avenue.

Lock-Down

1. Students, teachers, and administrative staff participate in a lock-down drill each semester at each site.
2. Outside doors are checked; restrooms and hallways are checked.
3. Classrooms are locked. Students and teachers are positioned in the safest place within the room. Windows and blinds are closed; lights are off.
4. If possible, classrooms are monitored from office. Office is also in lock-down mode.
5. Protocol for crisis is followed according to the diocesan and school Crisis Management Plans and determined by the nature of the crisis.
6. Only EMS personnel will be permitted to enter the property. Parents are to wait for the all clear given by the Emergency Medical Service, Police Departments, and/or Fire Department.
7. If an early dismissal is called by MQA following the all clear, the announcement will be broadcast via School Messenger, WTAE, WPXI, and KDKA. In this case, we will dismiss according to the information on the emergency card.
8. When an early dismissal is called, follow the procedures listed at the end of this section.

Evacuation

1. Students, teachers, and administrative staff participate in an evacuation drill annually at each site.
2. Students, teachers, and administrative staff are evacuated to one of two locations depending on the nature of the crisis.
3. Emergency cards, first aid kits, crisis kits, and cell phones are taken to these areas.
4. Protocol for crisis is followed according to the diocesan and school Crisis Management Plans and determined by the nature of the crisis.

5. Only EMS personnel will be permitted to enter the evacuation site. Parents are to refrain from calling the school and are to wait for the all clear given by the Emergency Medical Service, Police Departments, and/or Fire Department.

If an early dismissal is called by MQA following the all clear, the announcement will be broadcast via School Messenger, WTAE, WPXI, and KDKA. In this case, we will dismiss according to the information on the emergency card. If the location for dismissal is changed, another message will be sent via School Messenger.

6. When an early dismissal is called, follow the procedures listed at the end of this section.
7. If, in an unusual, emergency circumstance, we need to bus the students to a reunification location, we will alert you to the site. For most situations, the location will be the Greenwald Site or one of our sending parishes of St. Mary, St. Joseph, or St. Margaret Mary. The protocol will be to have anyone who is charged with collecting your child to arrive prepared to show ID. No child is released without ID, even to parents, in an emergency situation.

Early Dismissal Procedure Directions

1. Announcements will be made through School Messenger, WTAE, WPXI, and KDKA.
2. Each child's dismissal is determined by the options listed on the Emergency Card, which is completed annually by parents/guardians at the beginning of the school year.
3. Car riders will be dismissed as their parents/guardians/responsible person arrives at the site.

Health Regulations

Emergency Cards

- o Emergency health cards are kept on file for each child. Please verify the information on the emergency card. Make changes as needed and return it to the teacher.
- o Emergency cards allow us to contact a designated person in the event of an emergency concerning your child.
- o Keeping this information up to date is a necessity. Please inform the school immediately of any change in address, telephone number, family status, or emergency contact person.

Nurse

- o We do have the services of a school nurse from the New Kensington-Arnold School District. The nurse will be at the Freeport Road Site and the Greenwald Site as needed. She is in frequent contact with the Nurse Paraprofessional who will be at each site at scheduled times.
- o The nurse is responsible for the medical records and directs the annual Vision, Hearing, Physicals, Dentals, BMI, and Scoliosis Screening as they are scheduled for each site.
- o A Nurse Paraprofessional who is a RN will work closely with the certified school nurse of the New Kensington-Arnold School District

Health Records

- o School health records MUST be kept current and include immunization records.

Illness

- o Please inform the office if your child has been exposed to a contagious disease.
- o Parents are asked to respond promptly and meet the child at the office if their child becomes ill.

Medicine Policy

- o When a child's health demands medication during the school day, the medicine must be brought to the school office along with a Medication Permission Form as soon as the child arrives at school. The medication will be kept in the locked medicine cabinet at each site.
- o Teachers do not assume the responsibility for any medication.
- o Medicines will not be administered without the following information as indicated on the form:

- The medicine to be taken.
- The parent or guardian's signature.
- The proper daily dosage marked with the child's name and the time it is to be administered.
- The original container or package of the medication.
- Prescription medication must be accompanied with the original order by the physician.
- *Over the counter medication (OTC) must also have a physician order to administer to all elementary students.*
- *The nurse paraprofessional will call the parent to administer if the guidelines are not maintained.*

**See Administration of Medication Permission Form online*

Inspection Notice

NOTICE TO ALL PARENTS, LEGAL GUARDIANS, TEACHERS, AND STAFF MEMBERS

Pursuant to the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA), our school was inspected by a certified AHERA Inspector. A Management Plan was developed and submitted to the State of Pennsylvania Department of Education.

- A copy of our Asbestos Inspection Report and Management Plan is on file in the administration office of our school.
- Our school is re-inspected by a certified AHERA Inspector twice a year.

Lunch & Recess

All-day 4-year pre-kindergarteners eat lunch and have recess. Pre-k students must pack a lunch each day. Milk is available for purchase from the cafeteria.

The recess period begins at 11:30 and ends at 11:50. After washing their hands, the children will collect their lunch boxes and report to the cafeteria. Classes resume after lunch.

Memorandum of Understanding

A Memorandum of Understanding must be signed by parents or guardians prior to admission and at the beginning of each school year. This Memorandum of Understanding pledges support for the Catholic identity and mission of the school and holds parents accountable for following the principles and policies of the school and the Catholic faith.

Parties

Classroom parties are a part of the school experience. Parents may volunteer to be a party coordinator by signing up for a party at the beginning of the year. Parties are one and half hours in length and begin an hour after start of the session. *Siblings are not permitted so the adult's attention remains on the tasks at hand and the children.*

- Only the volunteer parents provide the snack, craft, game, and story for the party.
- Snacks are to be healthy and simple.
- Other families are not permitted to send in additional items.
- **All party plans are to be reviewed with and approved by the teacher before the party.**

Birthdays are special days that should be recognized at home and school. If you would like to send in a simple birthday snack (no cake or cupcakes) that is acceptable to the teacher and conforms to the Wellness Policy found online, please contact the teacher to make arrangements prior to the birthday. If a child's birthday falls in the summer months, contact the teacher to make special arrangements to celebrate during the school year.

Invitations for home parties will only be distributed in school if they are going to every child in the class.

PowerSchool

Mary Queen of Apostles School is part of the PowerSchool, student management system used in the Diocese of Greensburg. PowerSchool is used in the school for managing classes, schedules, emergency information, and demographics. A daily school bulletin is also prepared each day. PowerSchool is used for attendance, too. While used primarily in grades 1-8 for its full range of services, the Parent Portal and School Messenger email/phone communication system is used for the preschool program. The Parent Portal is an online connection that provides parent access to their child(ren)'s grades, attendance, lunch balance, teacher email contact, and the Daily Bulletin.

- o PowerSchool provides each parent with a user name and password for creating his/her own Parent Portal login. A temporary user name and password is given along with a Student Access ID for each child in our school. That Student Access ID is used only once to connect that child to the parent(s)' account. Once this is done for each child, each child is connected to the parent's/parents' login. This remains the same from year to year. As children enter school, additional connections can be made for each child entering with their Student Access ID.
- o Parents can view, and/or set automatic delivery of the Daily Bulletin with access to the current day, the day before and the day after. The daily bulletin lists things that are happening for the day including clubs, field trips, activities, assemblies, etc.
- o Attendance is kept using PowerSchool. Parents can see patterns of tardiness, the number of absences, and dates of early dismissals. Teachers are able to keep class attendance, too. If they choose, they can track student's absences or late entries for any given class.
- o School Messenger is used to announce school closings/delays, early dismissals, general school or grade level announcements or news, or emergency alerts. Emergency alerts are sent to every phone and email regardless of what is selected by the parent(s).
- o School Messenger is also used to contact parents about absent students. If a parent does not contact the school about a daily absence, the system will send a notification alerting you of the recorded absence.
- o PowerLunch is used to deposit and track spending at lunch and snack in preschool and pre-k. A deposit into your child's account is made, spending tracked, and if the balance falls to \$0 or below, an alert will be sent via School Messenger.
- o In grades 1-8, PowerSchool is also the way to review grades and any assignment score.

Report Cards

See Conferences and Report Cards

Safety Drills

- o The law requires a Fire Drill once a month in order to instruct and train the students how to exit the school building quickly and quietly without confusion or panic to a safe area.
- o A Severe Weather Drill is conducted in the spring for the same reason with the children moving to the hallway of the lower floor.
- o Crisis Drills are conducted three times a year as proactive measures so that children and their safety will always be the first priority in any situation.

Snacks

A small carton of milk or water is provided by the school for the daily snack. The teachers will have crackers, pretzels, etc. in their classroom to distribute for snack. There is a \$5.00 a month fee for snack. It will be charged to the PowerLunch account. Please send in a check or cash to have a starting balance for snack. Label the envelope with your child's name, Snack, and the amount enclosed.

It is imperative that you alert the teacher and principal to any food allergies.

School Community Group

The School Community Group (SCG) is an organization to which all parents/guardians belong. Its function is to promote the school and to provide opportunities for school families and those interested in MQA a chance to get acquainted, be informed, and work for the school's success and viability. It is a volunteer group.

Student Services

Services to preschool students can be arranged with the Westmoreland Intermediate Unit. This is done by a parent contacting the Early Intervention Desk. Services include Speech, Development, Language Services, and Psychological Testing Services.

Tuition

- o Parents choose a Catholic education for their child(ren) and therefore, choose the financial responsibility that accompanies that choice.
- o A limited amount of Pre-Kindergarten Tax Credit money is available as financial aid. A F.A.C.T.S. Financial Aid application must be filed. Additional tuition assistance is available to families through local sources. Please contact the school office at 724.339.4411 for more information.
- o Payment of tuition must be submitted in accordance with the payment schedule chosen by parents. A Payment Option Form is due to the office July 10. The options available include a full tuition payment made by July 20 or monthly payments/multiple-payment options through F.A.C.T.S. Tuition Management program. The F.A.C.T.S. form is due to the office July 10. Information on F.A.C.T.S. is available in the school office.
- o Tuition is pro-rated by the quarter if a child does not return to MQA and transfers out during the school year.

Tuition Credit

The school offers opportunities for families to earn tuition credit toward the next year's tuition. This includes purchasing MQA grocery cards to the area stores, purchasing gift cards through the SCRIP Program, and participating in other tuition credit opportunities.

A Retail Rebate Agreement form is signed by anyone who wants to help a family earn tuition credit. The form has three options, is signed once, and is only changed by request of the person making gift card purchases. The form is available online and in the school office.

An administrative fee is set for all programs. The remaining profit from the retail gift card sales is divided between the school and the family receiving credit.

Adopt-a-Student is a way for families to recruit others to participate in this program for the sake of your child. Just invite family, friends, and pew mates to consider purchasing MQA grocery cards in your family's name. The Greenwald Site office can help you set this up.

Visiting

- o Visitors, even parents, sign in and wear a badge for their visit.
- o Classes are not to be interrupted with visiting.
- o No parent may go directly to a classroom, speak with a teacher, or see a child without making his/her presence known at the office, signing in, and receiving a Visitor's badge. This is a part of our safety plan.
- o Visiting during teacher preparation periods, including the morning arrival period and/or lunch period, is not permitted unless prior arrangements have been made. Conferences can easily be scheduled, even at a day's notice, and is the preferred way to speak with a teacher.
- o A child is never permitted to let anyone into the building by opening a secured door. Please do not ask a child to do so even if they know you personally.
- o No adult volunteer on site is permitted to give entrance to another adult. All people are to enter the site through the main door with the knowledge of the secretary or principal.

Volunteers

- o At this level, volunteers are those who come to plan and organize preschool class parties.
- o All volunteers sign in at the office and wear an identification badge.
- o Volunteers are to be mindful of their job when supervising children. Talking to teachers, other adults rather than attending to groups of children limits the effectiveness of the volunteer.
- o Volunteers are not permitted to visit another classroom without permission of the principal and without alerting the office to their location.
- o To be a volunteer, the following clearances and trainings are required.
 - Apply for Act 34 (Criminal Record) and Act 151 (Child Abuse) clearances.
 - Sign an Act 24 form.
 - Sign the Diocesan Code of Conduct form after reading it.
 - Either have their fingerprints taken and provide the principal with information to access the results or file an affidavit in lieu of fingerprinting if you have lived in Pennsylvania for 10 years.
 - Complete two online trainings, Virtus and Mandated Reporter Training.
- o The online Volunteer Interest Form describes ways in which parents can volunteer through the school or the School Community Group, or SCG.
- o All the links for all the documents, trainings, and clearances is found on the school website under Family Resources, Volunteer, Quick Links.

Web Site & Social Media

All information, including this handbook, can be found on the school web site. The site is found at www.mqaschool.org.

MQA has a Facebook presence and a Twitter account.

Understanding of Parent Handbook

Please review this handbook. Each family is to sign the Understanding of Parent Handbook Form annually provided in the first day packet. Please return the signed form to your child(ren)'s teacher. The form is filed in the office.

**The Understanding of Parent-Student Handbook Form*

These forms are available online as needed.

Preschool Arrival Map

Preschool Dismissal Map
Administration of Medication Permission Form
Volunteer Interest Form