

OUR LADY OF HOLY CROSS SCHOOL  
KASOA

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Knowledge, Compassion, Service

PARENT HANDBOOK

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Our Lady of Holy Cross School

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## Introduction

### ***Brief Description of School***

Our Lady of Holy Cross School (OLHCS) is sponsored and operated by the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross. The School consists of a pre-school, Primary and Junior High School- JHS (Basic) and admits all children who are eligible to attend school. The educational experiences in both the preschool, primary and JHS sections mainly focus on character formation, for example, to take care of oneself, to develop caring attitude, to be kind, to treat others with respect, to work and play with others, to have positive attitude toward learning, and to develop listening skills. The educational experiences are shaped by and built around the interests and needs of the children.

In the Pre-school, the daily schedule is planned within integrated day of the open classroom approach to learning; a creative day that has minimum timetabling.

In the Basic School section, there is a timetable detailing various activity times. Specifically, the activities include lessons in basic numeracy and computation, language and literacy, art and creativity, Citizenship Education, Social Studies, Basic Design in Technology, Integrated Science, Religious and Moral Education, Information Communication and Technology, Music, Sporting activities, and Excursion. Our programmes are built on the Ghana Education Service's approved curriculum and prepares the student for the Basic Education Curriculum Examination.

The daily schedule provides opportunity in a planned learning environment for the spiritual, social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and aesthetic growth of the child at his/her own rate of development.

Our Lady of Holy Cross School (OLHCS) is conducted from 7.30 am to 3:45 pm each day from Monday through Thursday and on Friday school closes at 2:30 pm. The contact hours for academic

work is extended for an hour, four days in a week to enable teachers complete the syllabus and to also give attention to student who need extra time to catch up on the day's work.

### **Mission Statement**

Our Lady of Holy Cross Basic School, operated by the Sisters of the Holy Cross, is a Catholic basic educational institution serving all people. The School provides quality holistic education through committed and dedicated staff in a safe and enabling environment. Working in collaboration with the parents and the community, we educate children who will make a difference in society.

### **Philosophy**

Our Lady of Holy Cross School has shared beliefs to provide quality education.

- It is the responsibility of the administration and staff to develop the whole child and to encourage the child to grow spiritually, physically, intellectually, psychologically, and emotionally.
- Parents play an important part in a child's education. Throughout the year, OLHCS will create opportunities for parents to participate in the education of their children. For example, parents will be encouraged to volunteer their time, talents, and gifts to enhance the school's programmes.
- Communication between OLHCS and parents is essential in achieving the mission of the school. The school will pursue open communication with parents to promote and foster stakeholder participation in the school.
- All children are capable of learning. The school will provide opportunities that support the children's motivation to learn and assist them to develop positive dispositions toward learning.

### **Goals and Objectives**

- To provide quality education to children in the CP-Roman, Kasoa and its suburbs.
- To have an inviting place and a safe environment for children to receive education.

- To teach children character formation and critical thinking.
- To create a quality child development programme that facilitate the child's progress from 2 years old through to JHS.
- To provide opportunities for college and high school graduates to volunteer services at OLHCS.
- To provide opportunities for parents to participate in the education of their children.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### ***Admissions***

Our Lady of Holy Cross School along with and in compliance with the tenets of the Catholic Church has a non-discriminatory admission policy: no child will be discriminated against on the basis of religion, disability, financial status, tribe, or ethnic group. Admission to OLHCS will be offered to all children; however, the school administration reserves the right to refer a child to another educational institution to serve the best interest of the child.

Admission age for Pre-school:

Two-year old children (must be 2 years on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> in year of admission)

Four-year old children (must be 4 years on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> in year of admission)

Five-year old children (must be 5 years on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> in year of admission)

Admission age for primary school:

Students admitted to the primary school must be 6-years or older. Education experience at the kindergarten is a prerequisite for primary school admission.

### ***Curriculum***

The curriculum at OLHCS is student centered. The learning experiences at OLHCS are developed to meet the interests and needs of the students. Students will combine learning with play in an educational programme run by professionally trained staff. The daily programme will consist of

the following areas of the curriculum: physical development, play, music, social skills, mathematics concepts, health, science and discovery, free choice activities, art, cooking, and language development. Faith development based on Catholic teachings will be an integral part of the curriculum. Holy Mass will be offered periodically in the school for all staff and students. A daily schedule will be posted in each classroom.

The curriculum for the lower primary will have more time allocated for Reading, Writing and Arithmetic. The School will integrate Religious and Moral Education and Natural Science in the Reading programme. Basic 4 through Junior High will follow the normal Ghana Education Service Curriculum.

### ***School Uniform***

The school uniform for pupils in Nursery through Kindergarten 2 will consist of blue black pinafore and school-print blouse and a dress for girls (print provided by the school) and blue-black pair of shorts and school-print shirt for boys. Footwear, preferably a pair of BLACK CLOSED SHOES AND A PAIR OF WHITE SOCKS. A pair of white tennis shoes and white socks must be worn with the P.E kits to school.

Children who are in the Pre-School programme are required to have a complete change of labeled clothes in their school bag. The extra clothes will be used in unforeseen situations to help the child avoid embarrassment; that is, the child will change into clean and dry clothes. Parents should make sure all clothes, book bags, and other items have the child's name on them. By age three children are expected to be completely POTTY trained, however, during the first month of the beginning of the academic year, it is required that one clean diaper be put each day in the bag of the Two and three-year-old nursery children who are coming to school for the first time.

### ***Arrival and Departure Procedures of Pupils***

Our Lady of Holy Cross School is on an enclosed campus. Children are not permitted to leave the school grounds at anytime during the day unless the provisions in the *Parent Handbook* have been met (see Departure procedures).

## **Arrival**

School begins at 7:30 am each day from Monday through Friday. Students who ride on the school bus will be picked up at the designated locations. Students should not be left alone, unsupervised at the designated pick-up locations. Teachers will escort students who arrive on campus by the school bus to their classrooms. Parents (or guardians) who bring their children to the school are required to escort their children into the building, sign in, and then hand the children over to an assigned teacher. Punctuality to school is highly encouraged and parents should bring their children to school on time. Please, note that classes are disrupted by late arrivals.

## **Departure**

School ends at 3:45 pm each day from Monday through Thursday. On Friday, school ends at 2:30 pm. Students who ride on the school bus will be taken to the designated drop-off locations. Parents (or guardians) are required to meet their children at the drop-off locations. Students will be brought back to school if parents are not there to pick them up. In such situations, parents must arrange to pick up their wards from the school.

Students who do not ride on the school bus will be picked up from school no later than 3:55 pm. Children will be released only to the adults listed on the authorized-to-pick-up form. Teachers on duty will not release a child to anyone without previous arrangements made by parents/guardian in person. A photo (or positive) identification will be required for child pick up. If a child has to leave school before the official closing time, the parent (or guardian) must seek explicit permission from the headmistress or her designee. Late pick ups will attract a fine.

## **Visitors to the School**

All visitors (including parents or guardians) to the school must report to the visitors' office and sign the visitors' book. Visitors to the school are not permitted to go to the classrooms, except with the expressed permission of the headmistress and accompanied by a staff member.

## ***Absence from School***

If a child will be absent from school, parents are required to notify the school office. Parents are encouraged to call the school office between 7:30 to 8:00 am on the morning of the child's absence, if prior notification has not been sent to the school. Upon their return to school, parents are advised to send a note with the child explaining the reason for the absence.

If a child has a contagious disease (e.g., ringworm, cough, strep throat, mumps, measles, chickenpox), parents should ensure that the child is free of the symptoms for a day before the child returns to school. Also, parents are not to send the child to school with signs of illness (including, but not limited to fever, rash, diarrhea, running nose, and cough).

Fees (tuition, feeding, and bus) will not be prorated for any absences from school.

### ***Withdrawal of Students from School***

The school administration acknowledges the right of parents (or guardians) to withdraw their children from the school. However, in such situations the school administration requires advance notification of at least 2 months.

### ***Payment of School Fees***

Parents (or guardians) are to cooperate with the school by making prompt payment of school fees. As a rule, at least 50% of the fees must be paid by the first week school re-opens at any branch of Barclays, Ecobank and ADB bank. All fees must be paid before the start of the final examinations for the term.

A parent (or guardian) requiring an alternate arrangement should contact the headmistress to facilitate the process.

### ***Communication with Parents***

The school will send periodic notes with students to the parents (or guardians). It is important that parents (or guardians) read the notices sent home by the teachers and the school administration and respond appropriately. Parents are to arrange to be part of the class WhatsApp platform of the

child for important events and information. Information also will be posted on the bulletin board in the school or on the PTA WhatsApp platform during the school year.

### **Conferences**

The school will conduct informal conferences with parents (or guardians) to assess and evaluate the child's progress at school. Such conferences will be arranged between the child's teachers and parents (or guardians). The headmistress shall be informed of dates and times for such conferences. Formal conferences (i.e., Parent-Teacher Association meeting) will be held once in every school term. An open day to show and tell the activities of OLHCS and the progress of the pupils will be organized thrice in every school year. Parents (or guardians) are required to attend the formal conferences.

The final progress assessment of pupils will be given to the parents (or guardians) at the end of each term. A copy of the assessment report will be placed in the child's file or progress record book. Students will take home a report card on the last day of school in every term. Senior classes will bring home an academic and moral report on the last day of school every term. All parents who wish to pick up the end of term reports themselves should notify the school two weeks before vacation day.

### ***Students Discipline***

Our Lady of Holy Cross School will discourage all forms of unacceptable behaviors by maintaining a positive school environment. Corporal punishment, threatening gestures, and harsh language shall not be used with the students. Students will be corrected using reinforcement of positive behaviours and re-direction of unacceptable behaviors. The school administration will invite parents (or guardians) of students exhibiting persistent destructive behaviours to meet with the school counselor. The intended purpose of such conferences will identify if the manifested behaviour of the student is linked to other factors outside of the school.

### ***Crisis Management***

Emergency drills will be held once a term to acquaint the students with the emergency procedures of OLHCS during crisis (e.g., fire outbreak, severe weather, accident, injury). The drills will be used as learning tools to teach the pupils about safety procedures.

### **Accident/Injury**

The school will take measures to ensure the safety of the students both in the classroom and at the playing ground. However, during the natural flow of child play, children may get hurt. All incidents involving injury will be documented and parents (or guardians) duly informed. In the case of serious injuries, the school will make immediate contact with the parents (guardians) and take steps to ensure that appropriate action is taken. All parents (or guardians) shall provide the school with emergency contact information including contacts of proxies.

### **Abuse of Students**

In consideration of the best interest and wellbeing of the child and in compliance with government and congregational policies, the school will communicate any suspected cases of child abuse, molestation, or neglect to the appropriate authorities (i.e., Department of Social Welfare, Police).