

Philosophy of Villa Maria Elementary

Villa Maria Elementary School owned and operated by the Sisters of St. Joseph for over 100 years in the Diocese of Erie is part of a master plan created by the Sisters of St. Joseph for alternate use of the former Villa Maria College facilities. The community has created a design for Villa Maria Campus which includes educational services and resources.

Villa Maria Elementary School offers students of all faiths a Catholic education in a school that is enlightened by faith and deeply committed to God and humanity.

The partnership of the school, parents and community provides an atmosphere that empowers learning and develops leadership, trust and self esteem.

We strive to create a Christian educational environment conducive to the spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional, and physical growth of each student committed to the care of Villa Maria Elementary School.

Villa Maria Elementary School fosters a climate of mutual respect imbued with spiritual and moral values and with an appreciation of life in its fullest and deepest sense. The School fosters and celebrates values, diversity and excellence.

Education is viewed as the achievement of academic excellence through the personal and communal development of the gifts and talents of each student.

Villa Maria Elementary School is committed to the empowerment of a community of life-long learners who will make responsible moral choices, contribute to society and become loving and caring members of their church, family and society.

Villa Maria Elementary School Handbook

SCHOOL HOURS:

Grades: K-4 8:00 a.m. - 2:40 p.m. Dismissal at 2:40 p.m.

Grades: 5-8 8:00 a.m. - 2:55 p.m. Dismissal at 2:55 p.m.

Students not picked up by 3:15 p.m. will be sent to after care for parent pickup.

Our school doors open at 7:30 a.m. when teachers are on duty to supervise your children. For your children's safety, we do not admit students into the building before 7:30 a.m.

We encourage children to be punctual in coming to school and classes. This is a courtesy to the teacher and students, and develops a sense of responsibility in the child. In addition, this helps children focus on their schoolwork, as they are not entering the classroom after an assignment has been discussed or instructions have been given. Parents who wish to walk their children to class: we ask that you drop your child off at the classroom door, enabling your child to prepare him/herself for the day. If you wish to speak with the teacher please set up a time to meet before or after school (7:30-7:45 a.m. or 3:00 – 3:20 p.m. This will ensure the teacher's ability to attend to students' needs as they enter the classroom each morning.

If your child is tardy (after 8:00 a.m.), a written excuse is required. Children are not considered tardy if they are arriving late due to a doctor or dentist appointment.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

7:30 a.m. - 8:00 a.m. Parents will enter from 8th Street and drop off students in the drop-off area. Parents interested in walking their children to class, please park in the parking lot and enter through the front doors.

7:45 a.m. Teachers will be available to assist students out of vehicles to enable parents to remain in cars and continue on to 8th Street.

11:30 a.m. Preschool half-day program dismissal will occur at West and Main Door for. Parents will come in and sign students out through West Door. Pre 4 students will be picked up at the main entrance.

2:45 p.m. Parents line up in their cars from 8th Street ONLY, through parking lot, down driveway to pick up area. Parents remain in vehicles awaiting their child's release from the teacher. All Preschool thru 4th grade students will be dismissed from classrooms to the main door for car pickup or the east door for bus pickup via announcement.

2:55 p.m. All 5th to 8th grade students are dismissed from classrooms to the main door for car pickup or east door for bus pickup via announcement. STUDENTS WILL NOT BE RELEASED TO VEHICLES THAT DO NOT HAVE NAME CARDS ON THEIR DASHBOARD! Parents without a card wishing to pick up students must park in the parent parking lot and come into the school.

Parents who wish to enter school to pick up their child may do so after they park their vehicle in the parent parking lot and walk across to the main door.

Students riding a bus will be released by their teacher out the east door, upon the arrival of their bus.

Students not picked up by 3:15 p.m. will be sent to after care for parent pickup.

Delayed Starting Time:

The Millcreek School District may implement a two-hour delay starting time when severe weather conditions exist. The delayed starting time will permit school district officials to better evaluate road and weather conditions before the school is closed on days when uncertainty about the day's forecast exists. School is usually not canceled unless a significant safety risk has been created by unusual circumstances. **If Millcreek Schools are on a two-hour delay, Villa is also on a two-hour delay. If Millcreek Schools are closed due to weather, Villa is also closed.**

When the delayed start is initiated, all starting times will be delayed by exactly two hours. The school will be opened at 9:30 AM. **There will be no early supervision on these days.** Please do not bring your child to school prior to 9:30 AM as no school personnel will be available.

The school day will end at the regular time and the cafeteria will operate as usual when the starting time is delayed. Parents are to use their own discretion in sending students during severe weather conditions.

Parents are advised to listen to radio or TV reports for information regarding delayed starting times or closing. **If a delay or closing is announced for Millcreek Schools, Villa is included in that announcement! Follow the directives for the Millcreek Schools.** Please do not call the school or the Millcreek Education Center. When a decision is made to delay or close school, a Parent Broadcast message will be sent.

The delayed starting time affects all students who attend Villa. Students who reside in the city and other school districts are to report to school at 9:30 a.m. whenever we have a two-hour delay. Please do NOT arrive prior to 9:30 a.m. as school personnel will not be available.

Emergency Closing While School is in Session:

If a weather emergency or some other emergency comes up during the school day, the school districts will announce early dismissal through the media. A Parent Broadcast will be sent immediately if this decision is made. After the media announcements, children will be dismissed when their buses arrive. All other children will remain in school until a parent or designated person arrives to pick up your child.

On snowy, stormy days please try to keep a radio on throughout the day so you are aware of school closings. Please be sure your child is aware of procedures to be followed on these days.

The Parent Broadcast System will be used to alert parents of a delayed starting time or school closing. Please be sure the school has your correct phone number, and be alert to answer your phone if the weather is severe.

Early Dismissal Days: 12:30 p.m. Dismissal

(No Lunches are served on early dismissal days)
After School care is available for all students. A fee is charged for this service.
All K-4 students are dismissed via the front doors. All students in Grades 5-8 and their Pre – 4 siblings are dismissed via the east door (12th Street entrance.)

Bicycles:

Students are not permitted to ride bikes to and from school. The school cannot assume liability for the safety or security of bikes on the property. Fire regulations prevent us from having bikes in the halls and/or entranceways.

VISITORS/PARENTS:

All parents/visitors **must** sign in at the reception desk upon entering the building. Visitors are welcome to visit the school. Visitors/Parents may not go directly into any classroom during school hours. If you are dropping off an item for your child or teacher, please leave it at the receptionist's desk and she will get it to the appropriate classroom.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS/TELEPHONE:

It is very important that every student file has current information. Notify the school immediately if you have a change of address or phone number during the school year.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE:

Your child's regular and punctual attendance at school is essential beginning with the first day of school. Regular attendance is necessary to a student's success in school. Most subjects are taught in sequence, requiring the understanding of each concept in the order of its presentation.

Acceptable excuses for absence are for personal illness, death in the immediate family, doctor appointments, and educational field trips. Vacation during school time, although permitted, is discouraged as absence can affect the child's academic progress. Family vacations must be limited to only one such absence per year.

When a student is absent, the parent must call the school attendance line (838-5451, x555) by 8:45 a.m. to verify the child's absence and send a written, signed excuse within three days of the absence or the absence will be considered unexcused. We are concerned about the safety and whereabouts of your child. If you do not call the attendance line, you will receive a call asking you to verify your child's absence.

Excused Absences for Appointments:

If it is necessary for a student to have a professional appointment during the school day, the appointment should be scheduled at a time that is least disruptive to the academic day; that is, early morning, over the lunch hour, or toward the end of the day. The parent/guardian must sign the student in and out at these times. A sign-out book is available at the reception desk. Parents must come into the building for the student. Students are responsible to make up missed schoolwork.

Family Vacation:

When requesting an extended leave for the child to accompany the family on a vacation or educational trip during the school year, the child will be given one week after returning to school to make up missed work and assignments. Some assignments may be given ahead of time, but it is difficult for teachers to give all homework in advance since the amount of work covered in each subject area is dependent upon the students' comprehension of the materials being presented, interruptions, schedule changes, cancellations, etc. It may be advisable for the child to take books along on the trip and read the chapters which may be covered during the absence.

Homework for Absent Students:

Normally if your child is ill he/she will not be able to do the make-up work until he/she returns to school. Please do not request work until your child is absent for 2 or more days. Work may be picked up at the reception desk after dismissal or sent home with another child. Children must be kept home until they have fully recovered from the illness. Working parents must make arrangements for home care of children who are ill. The school cannot provide this service. A student who does not attend school and receive credit for attendance will not be permitted to participate in any school-sponsored activity or practice on that day, for example, Ski Club or sports activity. Upon the student's return, a written excuse for the absence, signed by the parent/guardian, must be provided to the homeroom teacher on the day the student returns.

HEALTH SERVICES:

A school nurse is assigned by the Millcreek School District. Villa is assigned a school nurse on a part-time basis determined by the number of students in the school. The following services are provided by the certified school nurse:

- Vision, height and weight screening annually for all grades.
- Hearing screening annually for pupils in K, 1, 2, 3, & 7.
- Medical examinations with the school physician in Kindergarten and Grade 6. The requirement for physical examination may be met by returning a completed physical form to the school nurse. Parents are notified the spring prior to the exam and are given a blank physical form.
- Dental screening will be given to children who have not returned a completed dental form. Dentals are done in Grades K, 3 and 7 by the school dentist. Dental forms are sent home the spring prior to the exam.
- Scoliosis screening is provided annually for all students in Grade 7.

Medication:

The Millcreek Township School District medication policy is followed at Villa Maria Elementary. An authorization for medication form must be filled out by the physician and also signed by the parent if students must take medication during the school hours. School employees may not administer medication unless the appropriate form is signed by the parent and is in the school files. Student medications are kept locked in the health office and are administered by the nurse or designated school employee. Children are not permitted to have medication with them. Forms are available in the school office. We regret that no medication can be given if the form is not signed.

Medication must be marked with the child's name, medication name, correct dosage, and physician's name. Medication must be in the original container.

Illness Guidelines:

After an illness your child may return to school only:

- If the temperature has remained normal at home for 24 hours without medication
- Chicken pox: 6 days after the last crop of vesicles has erupted, the temperature is normal and eruptions are dry and crusted.
- Head lice: after the student is checked by the school nurse or family doctor and is found to be free of nits and lice.
- Pinkeye or strep throat: 24 hours after beginning medication prescribed by a physician.

Illness During School Hours:

If a student becomes ill during school hours, the school will contact parents by phone and ask that they make arrangements to come to school and pick up their child. **It is essential that Villa has updated home and work numbers on the emergency form.** We have limited facilities to help comfort a sick child while he/she is waiting to be picked up by a parent. The Millcreek School District does not provide a full-time nurse for Villa. Consequently, sick children cannot be taken care of or supervised during the school hours.

HOMEWORK:

Homework is an integral part of our curriculum. It is an extension of the learning that takes place in school. Homework can provide practice and drill that reinforces classroom learning and can provide opportunities for independent study, research, and creative thinking. Parents can help their children by arranging a quiet, comfortable place for the children to work and by seeing that assignments are completed. Homework on weekends is possible as well as tests assigned on Mondays, although these would be the exception, not the rule, as we respect the need for family time. Grades 5 - 8 may have long- term projects that extend over the weekend, but students will know about these projects in advance.

Extra Help:

Teachers are available to give individualized help when and where needed. Many teachers may choose to schedule a specific day, either before or after school, to provide special help on a weekly basis. Other teachers will schedule special help weekly based on the needs of the students or prior to giving a test.

EMERGENCIES

Closings While School is in Session:

If a weather emergency or some other emergency comes up during the school day, the school districts will announce early dismissal through the media. A Parent Broadcast will be sent immediately if this decision is made. After the media announcements, children will be dismissed when their buses arrive. All other children will remain in school until a parent or designated person arrives to pick up your child.

On snowy, stormy days please try to keep a radio on throughout the day so you are aware of school closings. Please be sure your child is aware of procedures to be followed on these days.

The Parent Broadcast System will be used to alert parents of a delayed starting time or school closing. Please be sure the school has your correct phone number, and be alert to answer your phone if the weather is severe.

BUS TRANSPORTATION:

All buses operate on the first day of the school year. Pupils eligible for bus transportation are given bus assignments by the school district transporting the student. Students are not permitted to ride on different buses. Students are only permitted to board the bus to which they are assigned. Students must get off at their designated stop assigned by the school district.

City of Erie students in Grades K - 8 qualify for a bus pass. Bus passes are usually available before the first day of school. Bus passes not picked up beforehand are distributed the first day of school. Students who still do not have their bus pass by the end of the second week should have their parents contact the school office. It is the responsibility of the parent to call EMTA for specific bus information (bus number, pick up and drop off times and place). All school districts have Villa's school calendar and are available to transport students to and from Villa according to the school calendar. Early dismissal days are the exception.

There are certain rules that are designed for the discipline and safety of the occupants of the bus. It is the pupil's responsibility to obey these rules. A violation may result in the suspension of riding privileges. The students riding the bus are expected to show courtesy and respect to the bus driver. Bus riding is a privilege and those who ride must abide by the rules. Children must remain seated at all times and speak at a conversational level with the person sitting closest to them. Improper language will not be tolerated. There is no pop, gum, or food permitted on the buses. Please let your children know clearly what you expect of them in this regard.

BIRTHDAY TREATS DURING SCHOOL HOURS:

The school announces the names of students who are celebrating birthdays during the morning announcements. It has become impossible to celebrate over 300 birthdays each year during the school hours. Birthday treats for primary level students (Pre - Gr. 2) may be arranged with the homeroom teacher. Parents should be aware that Villa follows the Diocesan Wellness Policy; snacks should be healthy, low-fat and low-sugar. For the convenience of our parents, you are also able to buy ice cream treats for the class through the cafeteria. **Balloons, gorilla grams, flowers and the like will not be delivered to students during school hours for any reason.**

THURSDAY ENVELOPE:

All school related information is sent home on Thursday of each week. The Thursday envelope will also contain information from the Family Association and Athletic Director. Our school newsletter, "On the Wings of VME," will be enclosed in the Thursday envelope periodically throughout the school year. This will contain pertinent school-wide information.

PROGRESS REPORTS:

Students' progress reports are distributed three times a year - November, March and June. At the end of the first school term, the parents of all students are requested to attend a parent/teacher conference to discuss student progress with the homeroom teacher. Midterm reports are issued in October, January and April.

Parent/Teacher Conferences:

The conference at the end of the first term is strongly encouraged for all parents. This conference is arranged on a scheduled basis. Parents will have the opportunity to select a conference time at the September Parent Information Night. We strongly encourage both parents to attend the conference whenever possible. Parents are requested to call or write for appointments with a teacher. Due to their teaching schedule, teachers are not available to meet with parents without an appointment. Conferences may be arranged at any time during the school year at the request of parent(s) or teacher.

Parent Information Night (K - 8):

Parent Information Night will take place in September. This meeting will provide parents an opportunity to attend an information meeting planned by the teachers. The purpose of the meeting is to share information with parents regarding the course of study, the philosophy, procedures, and grading system of each particular grade/level.

SPIRITUAL ACTIVITIES:

In addition to the formal classroom instruction that provides the fundamental principles of our faith, additional experiences allow the student to grow in their relationship with God and each other:

Monthly Liturgies	Annual retreats
Daily school wide prayer	Individual classroom prayer services
Character education program	No-bullying program
Service projects throughout the year for local and global needs	

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK:

Catholic schools week is celebrated each year beginning the last Sunday in January to promote an appreciation of Catholic values and the academic excellence provided in the Catholic Schools. The VME faculty plans a number of events for the school during the week and the Family Association offers opportunities for school families to meet socially.

VOLUNTEERS:

The school utilizes volunteer help in the following areas: cafeteria, library, pool, field trips and primary grade classrooms. At any time teachers may request volunteers to assist in special events or projects. Parents are encouraged to become Lead Parents for a classroom to assist with these opportunities. A volunteer form is sent home at the beginning of each school year designating areas that always need your assistance.

Volunteers are required to help in the cafeteria. A monthly schedule is provided. Please make arrangements for a substitute if you are unable to help on scheduled days.

If you have a particular area of interest and would like to suggest a presentation or activity for students, please contact your child's classroom teacher or the principal.

All volunteers are required to complete an application and watch an inservice video on the protection of children. Occasional volunteers (those who help in the cafeteria, pool, or classroom once a month or less) must complete the "Occasional Volunteer Form." Any volunteer who helps at the school more than once per month is required to complete a "Statement of Compliance" and also acquire Act 34 (Criminal Record Check) and Act 151 (Child Abuse Clearance) clearances to be kept on file at the school.

VME is working hard to be in compliance with the requirements of the Office for the Protection of Children and Youth. Thank you for helping us provide a safe school environment for our children.

MEMORY BOOK:

A school memory book may be purchased by the students in the spring of the year. This keepsake contains class pictures, faculty and staff pictures, and group photos of various activities in which the children participate.

UNIFORM EXCHANGE:

Students are required to follow the school uniform requirements. Please be aware that Villa provides a uniform exchange, and parents are welcome to bring in outgrown items as well as select items from the exchange. Students in grades 5-8 who are in violation of uniform requirements may be sent to the uniform exchange during the school day to select an appropriate item.

GUM:

Gum is not permitted in the building at any time. This rule is simple: NO GUM !

ELECTRONIC ITEMS:

Walkmans, stereo boxes, cell phones, iPods, MP3 players, etc., may not be used during the school day. These items must be kept in back packs, book bags or lockers upon entering the school. The school will not be responsible for lost items.

USE OF TEXTBOOKS

Children are given textbooks to use. These books are the property of Villa or the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. All books must be covered and carried in a book bag to and from school to protect them from the elements. Students who lose or damage a book will be expected to pay for it. Please do not use sticky covers.

BACKPACKS

Backpacks may not be used during the school day. Students will carry only the necessary books and materials from class to class.

SCHOOL PHONE/CELL PHONES:

Students are **not** permitted to use the telephone for personal calls. Teachers and students will not be called to the telephone during the school day. Important messages will be relayed.

Use of cell phones is not permitted during the school day. All cell phones must remain in back packs, book bags or lockers. They may not be kept in a purse if the purse remains with the student during the school day. Students who use cell phones during the school day will be required to leave their phone with the classroom teacher each morning; repeated violations will result in a call to parents to come to the school to retrieve the phone and consequences detailed in the Code of Conduct will be enforced accordingly.

LEAVING SCHOOL PROPERTY:

Students are not permitted to leave the school grounds during school hours for any reason without the knowledge and consent of their teacher.

REGISTRATION/TUITION:

Registration and re-registration ordinarily takes place during the month of February. Open House for new families takes place in early February. Appointments with new families may be made at anytime by calling Villa Maria Elementary School to make an appointment and take a tour of the facilities.

The tuition rates are reviewed annually and are announced in early spring. Arrangements for monthly payments may be made through the FACTS Tuition Program. Families may also make direct payment to the school.

TUITION ASSISTANCE:

Villa families are eligible for tuition assistance based on need from the STAR Scholarship through the Diocese, the Villa Maria Elementary Scholarship Fund, and private donation. Application forms are available at the school office and must be completed and returned by the deadline dates published each school year.

Parishes in the Erie area that do not have an elementary school assist parents with tuition assistance. Parents must be active members of the parish. It is necessary to notify Villa if you wish to receive parish assistance. In recent years, the parishes have contributed \$450.00 for each child in Kindergarten through grade 8.

Scholarships are awarded on a nondiscriminatory basis and are ranked in priority according to the level of financial need of the student.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS / SERVICES:

Lunch Program:

Hot lunches are served on a daily basis beginning with the first day of the new school year. The school menu is distributed monthly. We encourage parents to take advantage of the hot lunch program. Students are expected to show good manners and follow cafeteria procedures at all times. The same general rules for behavior apply in the cafeteria as in the classroom. Glass containers are not permitted in the cafeteria for safety reasons. Students are asked to carry lunch in a reusable container. Brown paper bags are discouraged.

After School Program:

Villa's after school program begins the first day of the school year. Villa students in Pre- Gr. 8 are eligible for the program. The program operates from dismissal to 5:30 p.m. on school days only. Villa Maria Elementary School faculty members supervise the program. Additional information and registration forms are available in the school office.

Summer Day Care Program:

Villa's Summer program is available to students entering Grades K - 6. The program begins one week after the end of the regular school term and ends two weeks before the new school term begins. The program is from 7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Villa Maria Elementary faculty supervise the program. Additional information and forms are available in the school office.

Field Trips:

Field trips supplement the academic curriculum by providing enrichment activities for the students. Parental approval is necessary for a student to participate in a field trip. Parents must sign the Villa Maria permission slip. Information will be sent home prior to the field trip.

Standardized Testing:

The Stanford Test of Basic Skills is the standardized testing program used in the Diocese of Erie. Diagnostic tests in the main subject areas of reading, language skills, mathematics, science, social studies and study skills are included in the testing program. Students in Grades 2-8 are tested each year. Students in Grades 3 and 6 are also given the Cognitive Abilities Test. The Cognitive Abilities Test measures the student's ability to perform schoolwork and gives an abilities index number to each student. The Stanford Test results are weighed against the child's performance in the Cognitive Abilities Test to try to obtain an indication as to whether the child is working to his/her potential. The Stanford Tests are administered in October. Parents receive copies of their child's test results.

Math Exemplars:

Exemplars is a student-based math performance assessment program. It is designed to reflect state and national standards, as well as, grade level expectations. Assessments are given twice a year to grades K-8. The goal is to help students to become better problem solvers and to communicate mathematically both verbally and in written form.

DIBELS:

DIBELS, or the “Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills”, is an early literacy assessment used primarily in our Kindergarten and First Grade classes. The assessment is used three times a year to determine whether students are at risk for reading difficulty, and to monitor student progress over time. It includes the following areas: recognizing initial sounds, naming alphabet letters, segmenting the phonemes in a word, reading nonsense words, reading a passage orally, and retelling of the passage.

Writing Assessments:

These assessments are administered to all students in grades K-8 three times per school year. The writing prompts created by a diocesan committee of educators, provide teachers an opportunity to assess students’ writing abilities and to plan instruction to promote their strengths, as well as, to work on weaknesses. Because writing is such an important means of communicating, the teachers and students value the importance of these writing prompts.

Government Funded Programs

Diocesan schools participate in and receive funding from a variety of federal and state programs.

- **Act 90/195** provides for books, workbooks, periodicals, kits, equipment, dictionaries, library books, learning and instructional materials for use by the pupils.
- **Act 89** provides for testing, psychological services, home-school visitor services, Reading and Math remediation, speech and hearing therapy.
- **Title 1** provides remediation in the areas of Math.
- **Act 372** provides free busing by the school district in which the elementary student resides. Elementary students must reside at least one and one-half miles from the selected school.
- **School Health Services (S1402 of the School Code)** Vision, hearing, TB testing, height and weight measurement, some immunizations, medical examinations and comprehensive health appraisals, dental examinations and maintenance of comprehensive health records are provided for nonpublic schools in cooperation with their public school district.

DRESS CODE:

Villa Maria Elementary School has a uniform code to provide direction and cohesion in school attire and to promote a noncompetitive atmosphere to unify the image expected of a Villa student.

We have two uniform suppliers, Flynn & O'Hara and Land's End. Not everything in the Land's End catalog is acceptable. Information from both companies will be sent to parents in the spring of each year. Additional copies are available in the school office.

Students who wear clothing that does not meet the uniform requirements or that is inappropriate will be required to go to the Uniform Exchange to get an item that is in compliance and the parent will be contacted concerning the infraction.

BOYS' UNIFORM

Slacks Khaki dress slacks. No Dockers, Bugle Boy, or any other type of slacks that contain labels

Shirt Navy turtleneck, mock turtleneck, or VME polo shirt. Shirt must be neatly tucked in.

Socks Navy or khaki only. Must cover the ankle. No sneaker socks or no-show socks.

Shoes Dress shoes with non-marking soles. Shoes giving the appearance of being an athletic shoe or boot, or clogs are not permitted.

Sweaters Navy VME sweater or vest; VME sweatshirt

Shorts Khaki dress shorts

GIRLS' UNIFORM

Jumper (K-4) / Skirt (5-8) VME plaid. **The VME plaid jumper and skirt are only available through Flynn and O'Hara.** All skirts & jumpers must be no shorter than 2" above the knee at any time during the school year. *We suggest that you buy skirts & jumpers longer so that they will still fit when your daughter grows!*

Slacks Khaki dress slacks. No Dockers, Bugle Boy, or any other type of slacks that contain labels

Skorts Khaki dress skort. No Dockers, Bugle Boy, or any other type of skort that contain labels

Shirt Navy turtleneck, mock turtleneck, or VME polo shirt. Shirt must be neatly tucked in.

Socks/Tights Navy or khaki only. Must cover the ankle. No sneaker socks or no-show socks.

Shoes Dress shoes with non-marking soles. Shoes giving the appearance of being an athletic shoe or boot, or flip flops or clogs are not permitted.

Sweaters Navy VME sweater or vest; VME sweatshirt

PHYSICAL EDUCATION ATTIRE

Tee-shirts, sweatpants, shorts. No tank tops, no jeans. Sneakers with non-marking soles

GENERAL DRESS CODE RULES

- Students are expected to arrive at school in their uniforms. Girls may wear long pants on cold days under their skirts or jumpers, but the pants are to be removed upon arrival. *We suggest that girls wear slacks or navy tights on cold days.*
- Hair is to be clean & neat in a natural hair color. Spiked, dyed, or outlandish hairstyles of any kind are not permitted.
- Makeup is not permitted. Only neutral-colored nail polish is permitted.
- No jewelry is permitted except for watches, rings, and small earrings for girls. No other piercings are permitted.
- Visible tattoos are not permitted.

Choices from the Land's End Catalog:

Navy turtleneck, mock turtleneck, or VME polo shirt

Khaki chino slacks (not cargo)

Any navy sweater or vest with VME logo

Khaki plain skort (not pleated or cargo)

Navy tights or navy or khaki socks above ankle

Dress Down Day:

Uniforms are to be worn at all times with the exception of designated “dress down days” or in conjunction with a field trip or holiday, as specified by the teacher. **Dress down days for Villa will be the 2nd Wednesday of each month, September through June.**

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:

Students participating in sports and other activities such as band, chorus, theater, etc., must work to their academic potential. Students who do not work to their ability may be removed from the activity until improvement is shown.

Athletics

The purpose of athletics is to promote the physical, mental, moral, social and emotional well being of each player. Within the framework of the school athletic program, the responsibility for good sportsmanship is vested in all those associated with the program. Sportsmanship is defined as that quality of responsible behavior characterized by a spirit of generosity and genuine concern for an opponent.

Villa's athletic program is coordinated by the director of athletics at no cost to the school. All funds used to support the various programs are generated by student participation fees and various fundraising activities during the school year. Parent participation is vital to the success of the program.

Fall Sports

- Cross Country - all students - Grades 5-8
- Fun runners - Kindergarten - Grade 4
- Basketball - Junior Varsity girls - Grades 5 & 6
- Tennis - Grades 5-8

Winter Sports

- Basketball Junior Varsity boys - Grades 5 & 6
- Varsity boys - Grades 7 & 8
- Varsity girls - Grades 7 & 8
- Swimming Coed - Grades 1-8
- (Students must be able to swim one length of pool)*

Spring Sports

- Soccer Junior Varsity boys - Grades 5 & 6
- Junior Varsity girls - Grades 5 & 6
- Varsity boys - Grades 7 & 8
- Varsity girls - Grades 7 & 8
- Golf Grade 5-8
- Cheerleading - Girls/Boys Grades 5-8

Ski Club

The members of the ski club travel to Peak 'n Peek in Clymer, New York. VME students ski one day per week for a contracted number of weeks. Cost of the program is determined by the Peak. One hour of instruction and three hours of recreational ski time as well as bus transportation is included in this cost. Membership is open to any Villa student (usually in Grades 5-8) who exhibits responsibility and falls within the policy for any extracurricular activity.

CODE OF CONDUCT:

Villa Maria Elementary School strives to provide a safe positive learning climate for each student.

No Bullying Policy:

We recognize bullying as words, looks, signs, or acts that inflict or threaten to inflict physical or emotional injury or discomfort upon another person's body, feelings, or possessions repeatedly and over time to someone who has difficulty defending himself or herself.

To maintain a safe, secure school environment, free from bullying and violence we pledge to:

1. See Christ in everyone by reaching out to others and treating each person with respect.
2. Empower students to recognize and report bullying behaviors.
3. Intervene and strictly enforce rules and consequences in a consistent manner. Educate the school community including parents on establishing a positive school climate.
4. Tolerate no bullying in our school.

School-wide Goals

- A. All children will be included in school activities such as recess, lunch and small groups.
- B. Respect the personal space and belongings of others.
- C. Speak only kind words to and about others.
- D. Act in kind ways toward each other.

Teachers have the authority and responsibility to maintain discipline in the classroom. Students are under the supervision of many teachers during a given school day. Each teacher will have his/her own requirements and students must learn these and abide by them.

Each student is expected to show good manners, consideration for others and to follow safety rules. The formation of a Christian character is a vital concern of the school and will exact from each student Christian behavior at all times. Any behavior that interferes with the student's progress or another student's progress is simply not acceptable.

When using the hallways, students are to stay to the right and maintain silence.

Serious misconduct such as stealing, vandalism, profanity, fighting or disrespect to a teacher or another student, possession of weapons or other dangerous objects, possession or use of tobacco or any controlled substance could result in suspension or withdrawal from Villa.

Verbal or written threats by students will be taken seriously.

While traveling to and from school, while on school sponsored trips or sport activities, students are expected to be on their best behavior and show consideration for others at all times.

All adults working with students will be aware of the expectations for behavior. If they notice any inappropriate behavior they will advise the student of the expectations. If a student chooses to ignore the advice given by an adult, the teacher will be notified. Consequences will be managed by the teachers and/or principal.

Beyond rules and regulations, however, the school expects all its students to offer students and teachers, staff members and their families both courtesy and respect. This expectation is one of the most important characteristics of a Villa student.

Consequences

If a student chooses not to act responsibly and respectfully, according to the expectations above, the following consequences will occur:

- Verbal encouragement to act responsibly
- A letter or phone call to the parents explaining the behavior and the consequences
- A loss of privileges at school
- Some privileges include but are not limited to: special activities, assemblies, treats, field trips, etc.
- In-school suspension
- Other consequences will be at the discretion of the Administration and will be determined by circumstances.

Major infractions of the code include, but are not limited to, the following behaviors:

- Repeated inappropriate behavior (e.g., disrespect for No Bullying Policy)
- Cheating
- Stealing/Vandalism
- Inappropriate language
- Verbal threats
- Written threats
- Assault of another
- Destruction of property
- Possession or use of tobacco products, drugs, alcohol, flammable materials or weapons.
- Use of any object as a weapon

Major infractions of the code will result in one or more of the following:

- Detention
- In-school or out of school suspension
- Expulsion
- Any of these behaviors will result in parents being called to come and immediately remove their child from the building
- Other consequences will be at the discretion of the Administration and will be determined by circumstances.

Weapons Policy:

It is forbidden for anyone to possess a weapon of any sort in the buildings, on the premises or within the geographic boundaries of Villa Maria Elementary and Villa Maria Campus or at any school sponsored activity. A weapon brought to school by a student, e.g. a gun of any nature, ammunition for a gun or anything of a defensive nature such as, but not limited to, knives, clubs, mace, martial arts equipment, etc. is to be considered a very serious offense.

Any student found in violation of this policy will be dealt with as follows:

1. The supervising adult will confiscate the weapon.
2. Parents will be notified and be required to come to the school immediately.
3. In accordance with the Pennsylvania Crime Code, Section 912, the local police will be notified and the student suspended into the custody of a parent or guardian. The Diocesan Vicar for Education will also be notified.
4. As a result of the investigation, the student is liable to further disciplinary action and/or expulsion (Diocesan Policy Manual).

Harassment Policy:

Respect for the dignity and worth of each individual is a basic precept of the Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Erie. Each faculty member, staff member, student or other individual who is in a working relationship with the school is entitled to work or attend school in an environment free from fear and discriminatory practices, including sexual harassment, verbal or written threats, and harassment based on race, creed, color, age, disability or religion. All will be held to standards of conduct which ensure that the school is free from illegal harassment.

Students are encouraged to report any complaints or concerns regarding threats or harassment by adults or students to their teachers or to school administrators for investigation and possible disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

It must be noted that verbal and/or written threats will be taken seriously and will be considered as a serious offense.

Wellness Policy:

Section 204 of Public Law 108-265, the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act, requires that all Local Education Agencies participate in and implement a local Wellness Policy beginning with the 2006-2007 school year. The Erie Diocese formed a Wellness Committee during the 2005-2006 school year to help write a Diocesan-wide policy. Villa Maria Elementary School submitted our approved Local Wellness Policy to the Diocese prior to the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year.

The Wellness Policy requires the school to promote health education, healthy snacks, physical activity, and regular physical education programs as well as after school opportunities for the students to get involved with a number of extracurricular activities.

Villa has been fortunate to have had a Wellness and Physical Education/Swimming instructor for over 16 years. We will continue to provide these services knowing that it is a real benefit for our students. Health classes have been included in the responsibilities of the instructor in Grades K-8. After school activities are provided to all students beginning with cross country and swimming for those under Grade 4 and those activities plus basketball, tennis, golf, skiing, and soccer for those in Grades 5-8.

Drug, Alcohol, and Tobacco Policy:

Policy Statement

Possession or use of tobacco in all forms, illegal drugs, chemical solvents, and drug paraphernalia are forbidden on school property or at school related activities.

The Villa policy of Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco is based on the following beliefs:

- chemical use, abuse, and dependency impair one's ability to develop their full potential,
- chemical use, abuse, and dependency affects the ability of all members of the school community to achieve school and personal goals.
- chemical use, abuse, and dependence is a life threatening problem that affects people spiritually, morally, emotionally, physically, intellectually, and socially.

Procedures:

I. Searches & Disposition of Recovered Items

- A. The Principal or any faculty member(s) who has reasonable suspicion to believe that a student possesses or is under the influence of a prohibited item(s) may conduct a search of that student (or group of students) in order to confiscate the item(s). Any items recovered will be delivered to the Principal for disposition, which includes forwarding of items to the police.
- B. A search may include but is not limited to the inspection of clothing (worn or

hung), pockets, boots, shoes, purses, lunch boxes, wallets, book bags, gym bags, knapsacks, lockers and desks.

- C. Any search shall be conducted by at least two (2) administrative or faculty members.
- D. A student may not be asked to remove any clothing, except for coats. If a student is suspected of hiding any prohibited item in underclothes, then the student shall be detained in the custody of school personnel until the parents can be notified and be present to conduct a more detailed search. Any items recovered shall be delivered to the Principal for disposition, which may include forwarding of items to the police.
- E. The Principal is authorized to conduct an inspection of student's belongings for the presence of prohibited items, irrespective of any reasonable suspicion for that inspection.

II. Prohibited Items

- A. Alcohol, Tobacco, and other Tobacco products.
- B. Drugs-Controlled substance as defined by Pennsylvania's Controlled Substances.

Action to be Taken:

- When the principal has determined that a student has been in possession or under the influence of alcohol and/or illegal drug(s), the student shall be suspended for 5-10 days. He/she will be referred to a trained and qualified drug and alcohol counselor for an assessment and evaluation. The results of the assessment/evaluation are to be made available to the principal with the full understanding that the facts will be held in confidence and used only to help the student overcome the problem.
- A second offense will result in immediate suspension and/or expulsion.

This policy is in effect for any student found using, possessing, distributing or suspected of being under the influence of alcohol/illegal drugs while attending, as a participant or spectator any school-sponsored event held at any location.

STUDENT RECORD POLICY:

Notification of rights under FERPA for Elementary and Secondary Schools

In order to operate our educational program we must keep records of the objective information that parents and eighteen year old and older students give us permission to acquire. The following statement constitutes our annual notification of rights: disclosure to these parents. The *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. They are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the school receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school

principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask the school to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception which permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including intermediate unit staff, health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person or company with whom the school has contracted to perform a special task such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist, or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. It is the policy of the school to not release directory information except as specified in the above statements or without providing parents an opportunity to deny such releases.

4. The right to file a complaint with the O.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office
US Department of Education
600 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-4605