

*Guadalupe*  
Regional Middle School

STUDENT & FAMILY  
HANDBOOK  
2022-2023

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# MISSION STATEMENT & ENDS POLICY

## **Mission Statement**

### **Mission**

Guadalupe Regional Middle School provides a tuition-free, quality Catholic education to boys and girls in grades six, seven, and eight whose families desire but cannot afford a Catholic education. This academically challenging school teaches its students how to live the gospel values of love, justice, self-discipline and respect for others with the goal that they become the future leaders of the Brownsville civic and church communities.

### **Philosophy**

The philosophy of Guadalupe Regional Middle School draws upon the traditions of the three religious congregations that sponsor the school - the Edmund Rice Christian Brothers, the Marist Brothers of the Schools, and the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament - our educational philosophy is embodied by the following four pillars:

*Religious Formation:* Guadalupe Regional Middle School provides its students with an environment where the Good News of Jesus Christ is proclaimed. Through a formal religion program in the Roman Catholic tradition, students are given opportunities for regular worship, retreats, service and prayer. We call ourselves and our students to a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. We foster a community of faith in which students are free to grow and be challenged to take responsibility for their own learning and the life of the community. We take time to honor the value and dignity of each person created in the image and likeness of God. We seek to develop an awareness of injustice within the world and provide opportunities for advocacy for peace, justice, global awareness, and the care of the Earth.

*College Preparatory Instruction:* Built around the framework of the Nativity/Miguel School model, GRMS provides a tuition-free Catholic education to young men and women from families that would not otherwise be able to afford one. We seek to promote a strong college preparatory curriculum integrating Catholicity that fosters the growth of the whole person, higher-order thinking, and life-long learning. Instruction emphasizes and builds core knowledge and fundamental academic skills, including, but not limited to, the written and oral expression of ideas, problem-solving, critical thought, and the competent use of technology.

*Educating the Whole Person:* A complete Catholic education seeks to educate the whole person by developing character based on Gospel values, physical health and fitness, aesthetic sensibilities, and kinesthetic, artistic, social and emotional skills. These needs are addressed in academics as well as through the mandatory after school activity period.

*The Christian Learning Community:* Guadalupe Regional Middle School continually strives to build an authentically Christian community in which students are offered love, acceptance, discipline, and challenge. The living example of our faculty and the care, attention and respect they give to students contribute significantly to this atmosphere. In turn, students are expected to treat faculty and each other in a similarly loving and respectful manner and to extend that to their involvement in the larger Brownsville community.

### **Expected Outcomes**

1. Students are academically proficient and prepared for high school and beyond.
2. Students are literate in reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
3. Students are able to think critically and solve problems.
4. Students are knowledgeable of Christian beliefs, traditions, values, and behaviors embraced within the Catholic faith.
5. Students are loved, valued, guided, and respected.
6. Students are responsible, respectful, and service-oriented leaders.
7. Students interact across diverse communities with social competence.

## PARENT AS PRIMARY EDUCATOR

The educational philosophy of Guadalupe Regional Middle School is based upon the belief that parents are the principal educators of their children and that the school can provide significant enhancement to the home learning environment, but cannot replace it.

The purpose of this handbook is to familiarize you with the school, its philosophy, its rules, its curricular program, and its activities. It is our hope that through mutual cooperation and through identification of goals between home and school, we help our students to develop their talents and abilities as well as to grow in their faith.

We request that you study the contents of our Student & Family Handbook and that you keep it as an available reference. The administration, faculty, and staff of Guadalupe Regional Middle School look forward to collaborating with you in support of your child's growth and education.

## ADMISSION POLICIES

### **NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

Guadalupe Regional Middle School admits students of any race, color, gender, religion or national origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. The school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability or genetic information in the administration of its education policies, admission policies or other school-administered programs and school activities.

### **FINANCIAL FEES**

Guadalupe Regional Middle School is a tuition-free school in which each student receives an approximate \$7,000 annual scholarship. However, each family is asked to pay a monthly participation fee to contribute to the educational process. The exact fee paid by each family is based on overall family income and will be reviewed annually by the school administration. Families are sent monthly reminders regarding participation fees, which are due by the 28th of the month.

## **AGREEMENT OF ENROLLMENT**

The registration of a student at Guadalupe Regional Middle School is deemed to be an agreement on his/her part, and on the part of his/her parents or guardians, to comply fully with all the policies, rules and regulations of the school. Guadalupe Regional Middle School reserves the right to make revisions to its policies, rules and regulations. Parents and students will be given notifications of such changes or additions. Observance of any such change is expected by all as soon as the change is made known to the school community.

## **PURPOSE AND LIMITATION OF STUDENT & FAMILY HANDBOOK**

When a parent enrolls their child in Guadalupe Regional Middle School and signs the handbook acceptance form, the parent agrees to be governed by, abide by and follow its policies and procedures. This Handbook does not establish a contractual relationship between Guadalupe Regional Middle School and its students or their families. This Handbook only serves to highlight Guadalupe Regional Middle School's policies, practices, and procedures for your personal benefit and cannot be construed as a legal document of any kind. Any grievance procedure contained within this Handbook is strictly intended to provide all students and their families an opportunity to resolve grievances that may arise from time to time. Such procedures are not intended to represent the precise formula to be followed in every dispute which may arise.

## HISTORY AND SPONSORSHIP

**Catholic Diocese of Brownsville.** Guadalupe Regional Middle School is part of the Catholic Schools under the administration and authority of the Catholic Diocese of Brownsville led by Bishop Daniel E. Flores. The Superintendent of Catholic Schools is Sr. Cynthia Mello, SSD and through the Diocese's sponsorship, the school shares the buildings on site at Our Lady Of Guadalupe Catholic Church. Through the generosity of the Diocese of Brownsville, GRMS is recognized as a private Catholic school in the Catholic school system. GRMS was founded in 2002 and celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2022. The mission of the school continues to impact and influence the lives of hundreds of students.

**The Congregation of Christian Brothers.** In 1802, the city of Waterford, Ireland, had only recently been freed to practice the Catholic faith. Edmund Rice, the widowed father of a handicapped daughter and a wealthy businessman concerned at the lack of Education for the Catholic poor, used his wealth to establish schools for the children of the streets. Soon he was joined by others willing to give their lives to prayer and the education of people. The congregation of Christian Brothers conducts educational ministries around the world. The

brothers in the United States conduct 27 schools in America and three in Peru. Guadalupe Regional Middle School is fortunate to have a community of Christian Brothers housed on site at Guadalupe Regional Middle School and have the Brothers as direct leaders for our students. Throughout the year, GRMS partners with other Christian Brother schools to build unity across our world.

**The Marist Brothers.** In 1817, the Marist Brothers of the Schools were founded by Saint Marcellin Champagnat in rural France in response to the needs of the children of his time who lacked schools, capable teachers, and the opportunity to know and learn about Jesus. Today, there are six thousand Marist Brothers providing Catholic Education in seventy countries around the world and in the United States. The Marist Brothers arrived in Brownsville in 1906 to begin their ministry of educating the young people of Texas and continue to do so today through their presence at St. Joseph Academy. Many of the GRMS students are fortunate to continue their Catholic school education into high school by enrolling at St. Joseph Academy.

**The Incarnate Word Sisters.** Jeanne Chezard de Matel, born in Roanne, France in 1596, became in her 73 years of life, a mystic, writer, teacher, spiritual director, and theologian – at a time when women were not recognized in these roles. From the time she was a young child, Jeanne was hungry for the things of God. In love with the Incarnate Word, the passion of her life became a desire to “extend the Mystery of the Incarnation,” the purpose for which she founded the Order of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament in 1625. Twenty years before public schools were started in Brownsville, at the request of the Most Rev. John M. Odin first Bishop of Texas, four Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament came from Lyon, France to teach. Since French was their native language the sisters spent a few months in Galveston learning English and Spanish to be able to write textbooks and teach in their new languages. After their arrival in Brownsville the first school Incarnate Word Academy was opened on March 7, 1853.

#### **Our Model: The History of Nativity Schools in the United States**

The Nativity Model began with the Jesuit-sponsored Nativity Mission School in 1971 in the lower east side Manhattan area of New York City. The original model was a neighborhood-based school to help low-income and at-risk children. Traditionally Nativity Schools have an extended day including an evening tutoring program, and an extended year including a summer camp. The original Nativity model limited class size to no more than fifteen students in a class.

From 1971 to 1989, Nativity Mission School was the only school based on this model. Since 1989, this school model has inspired an educational movement as several religious congregations strengthen their commitment to working with the economically poor. More than sixty schools have opened from coast to coast. Today, Guadalupe Regional Middle School is the only school in Texas that is a recognized as a Nativity Miguel Coalition model.

### **The Administration of Guadalupe Regional Middle School**

Guadalupe Regional Middle School is a designated Catholic School in the Diocese of Brownsville and is under the leadership of Bishop Daniel E. Flores and the Superintendent of School, Sr. Cynthia Mello. The school is sponsored by the Congregation of Christian Brothers, the Marist Brothers of the Schools, and the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament. Ultimate authority abides in the Board of Trustees for Guadalupe Regional Middle School. The school is managed locally by the President who in turn appoints the school Principal who manages all internal affairs. The trustees likewise appoint a local school board that is charged with promoting and preserving the mission of Guadalupe Regional Middle School.

## CHRISTIAN CODE OF ETHICS AND DISCIPLINE

### **CHRISTIAN CODE OF ETHICS**

It shall be an understood condition of enrollment that the student behaves in a manner at all times, both on and off campus that is consistent with the Christian principles of the school as determined by the school in its discretion.

It shall be an understood condition of enrollment that the parents/guardians of a student shall also conform themselves to standards of conduct that are consistent with the Christian principles of the school, as determined by the school in its discretion.

These Christian principles include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Parents/guardians are expected to work courteously and cooperatively with the school to assist the student in meeting the academic, moral, and behavioral expectations of the school.
2. Students and parents/guardians may respectfully express their concerns about the school operation and its personnel. However, they may not do so in a manner that is discourteous, scandalous, rumor driven, disruptive, threatening, hostile, or divisive.
3. These expectations for students and parents/guardians include, but are not limited to, all school-sponsored programs and events (e.g., extended day, family events, field trips, etc).

The school reserves the right to determine which behaviors are determined contrary to our Christian Code of Ethics and to determine an appropriate consequence. The school reserves the right to determine, in its own discretion, when conduct is of such severe nature as to warrant immediate action without a warning and/or without an intermediate step short of withdrawal.



## **CATHOLIC FAITH FORMATION**

Guadalupe Regional Middle School is a Catholic school first and foremost. Religion course is required in each grade level and is considered a ‘core’ content area. The Religion class is extended into the school’s weekly mass and in the liturgical calendar of events. Students are expected to take an active role in the school’s weekly mass to demonstrate their knowledge of our faith.

In addition, students in Grade 8 will be administered the ACRE Assessment “Assessment of Children/Youth Religious Education). The ACRE helps evaluate the faith knowledge and attitudes of students in Catholic schools. As an integrated assessment tool, ACRE provides faith knowledge questions and questions related to religious beliefs, attitudes, practices and perceptions.

Throughout the school year and in daily course work, faith formation, formal and informal prayers, prayer corners, and celebration of the Liturgical Calendar will be a part of the school day and school year. All students are expected to participate, demonstrate respect to the church and its teachings, and encourage the sharing of their faith with the school community and extend it into their homes with their family.

## **WEEKLY MASS**

Guadalupe Regional Middle School takes great pride in its responsibility to the faith formation and the development of Catholic Social Teachings and values. As part of our celebration of our Catholic faith, a weekly mass is held in the adjacent and historic Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church.

Students are the primary role models and participants in the mass, and the school welcomes its visiting community priests who celebrate mass for the school. Parents are encouraged to attend the weekly mass when able and witness their students put into practice what they are learning at this Catholic school.

To build our young students into practicing Catholic that will then extend into their adult life and encourage them to be the leaders of our Catholic faith in the future is one of GRMS major goals.

## **CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHINGS AND BASIC THEMES**

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops have identified the following basic themes that will be incorporated into all content areas and classes to build the understanding of these basic rights and our responsibilities to our brothers and sisters.

- The Life and Dignity of the Human Person
- The Rights and Responsibilities of the Human person
- The Call to Family, Community, and Participation
- The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers
- The Options for the Poor and Vulnerable
- Solidarity

## **COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Students will be encouraged to participate in a community service project once a semester with either a House group of students or a student organization/club.

## **STUDENT DISCIPLINE**

The essence of Christian discipline is self-discipline. The student must be free to choose one form of behavior or another, and to take upon him/herself the consequences of that chosen action. Respect, order and self-control are an outgrowth of good teaching at home and at school. A self-disciplined child is one who takes responsibility for his/her actions and has control over them. A child first learns self-discipline at home. The faculty will maintain good order and discipline at all times: the classroom, on school grounds, and at all school events. Ultimately, students are taught to adhere to the “golden rule” given to us by Jesus: “Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.”

Discipline in the Catholic School is to be considered as an aspect of moral guidance and not a form of punishment. The purpose of discipline is to promote pupil development, to increase a sense of awareness and sensitivity for others, to assist in the growth of inner discipline, and to provide an environment conducive to learning.

There should be a clear understanding of “classroom management” and “student discipline” by the teacher so as to continue the maintenance of classroom authority by the teacher.

- Classroom management include routine classroom procedures, consistent implementation of expected behavior, and may include teacher-issued consequences when violations continuously occur, even after redirection and opportunity for self-correction.
- Student Discipline requires the support and intervention of the campus Principal after teacher re-direction and opportunity for self-correction have been issued.

## **Discipline with Purpose**

Opportunities to teach children self-discipline skills abound within any school day. Because teachers believe that confrontation (coming face to face) is part of their task as disciplinarians, they welcome opportunities to help children help themselves. All disruptive behavior is routinely handled on the spot by the adults in the school.

Broad rules that affect the daily living together of all members of the school community include these:

1. Respect yourself, others and things
2. Contribute to the learning environment
3. Follow school and classroom procedures

Each classroom teacher has adopted some version of these three rules. The teachers work with the students to make sure the rules are understood and the reasons for the rules are taught.

In addition, each classroom teacher has an established Classroom Discipline Cycle that lists consequences for not following the rules. The Classroom Discipline Cycle is as follows:

### **Guadalupe Regional Middle School Discipline Cycle**

#### **Step One:**

- Verbal Warning: Chance to Self-Correct

#### **Step Two:**

- Discussion: Direct Communication with student for immediate corrective discipline. Teacher has the prerogative to additionally assign detention during lunch and/or snack time to be supervised by the issuing teacher.
- Teacher communication with Parent/Guardian (documented) in the Parent/Teacher Contact Log with a clear “outcome” of the discussion.

#### **Step Three:**

- Administrative Contact : Teacher will communicate with the Principal the concern regarding inappropriate behavior by the student(s). Shared information should include documentation of outcome of parent communication, and/or information on the severe and immediate discipline requiring administrative intervention.

Note: Reaching Step 3 of the Discipline Cycle will start the Administrative Discipline cycle.

Occasionally removal from the group is necessary to protect a student and/or the learning environment of the school. If possible, the adult who removes the student will work quickly to help the student regain self-control. If this happens the two parties can continue to work together to redirect the inappropriate behavior.

If regaining control does not happen, the student will be sent to the Administrator's office and the three-step Administrative Discipline Cycle will be set in motion.

Reasons for immediate office referral include the “**Big Three**”:

(1) Physical or Emotional Danger (e.g. fighting, throwing objects, bringing weapons, drugs or matches to school, making threats, leaving school without permission, sexual assault, gang affiliation)

(2) Abuse in Words or Actions (e.g. harassment, making others feel unsafe or uncomfortable, bullying, cyberbullying, extreme disrespect to another person, profanity, vandalism)

(3) Out of Control Behavior (e.g. purposeful and consistent misbehavior, unwillingness to follow directions, repeated violation of classroom rules)

### **Administrative Discipline Cycle**

#### **Step One:**

- The student will be sent to the office with a notification of the reason for the referral, including documentation of the Outcome reached during the Parent/Teacher communication on the matter previously addressed together.
- The Student will meet with the Administrator for discussion of the referral.
- If deemed necessary, the Administrator and/or the student will inform a parent of the incident by phone or note.
- The student may receive detention.
- The Administrator will follow-up with the referring staff member as necessary.

**Step Two:** If a student who has already completed detention is sent to the Administrator again within the six weeks or in extreme cases when the Administrator determines the seriousness of the action warrants starting at step Two.

- The student will meet with the administrator
- A conference with the teacher, parent, student and Administrator will be scheduled.
- A probationary contract will be drawn up listing actions that will be taken by each participant in the conference.

**Step Three:** A committee comprised of faculty and staff members may make a recommendation to the Principal to remove the student from Guadalupe Regional Middle School.

- The decision to terminate a student rests with the Principal
- If termination is the decision, the student's parent will be notified, the reasons for the dismissal will be given.

- Serious infractions such as possession of drugs or weapons or physical or moral misconduct could result in an immediate move to Step Three of this cycle

**Students must observe the following disciplinary expectations at all times:**

1. Students are not allowed in the classroom at any time without adult supervision.
2. Running through passage ways and ramps is prohibited for safety reasons.
3. Classrooms are places of study. Any disruptive behavior is unacceptable.
4. Gum chewing is forbidden on the school premises or at school functions.
5. The school grounds are to be kept clean and free from litter.
6. All students will be responsible for the protection and preservation of school property. Any damage to school textbooks, library books or school property is to be paid for by the person causing the damage. The cost will be determined by administration.
7. Restrooms and drinking fountains are to be kept clean. Loitering or playing in the restrooms is not permitted, and students are to keep the area free from personal belongings beyond the school day.
8. Students are expected to use polite language. Name calling, profanity, or obscenities are not allowed.
9. Bullying, including cyberbullying, is strictly prohibited and should be reported immediately by anyone who is aware of the situation, or who witnesses the bullying.
10. Radios, tape recorders, cameras, personal stereos, electronic games, iPods, electronic equipment and other valuables are not permitted at school without proper authorization. When special permission is given, the school will not accept responsibility for the damage or loss of these items.
11. Gambling, buying, selling, or trading of any kind of items by students is prohibited.
12. Cell phone use during school hours is strictly prohibited. Confiscated cell phones will be sent to the Main Office and distributed back to the student's parents at the discretion of the Administrator.

**DISCIPLINARY POLICIES**

*Failures of Good Order* – The following infractions of good order are examples of actions which are considered to be serious infractions and will be dealt with accordingly.

1. Disobedience, disrespect, insubordination, or rudeness to a member of the administration, faculty or staff.
2. Language or behavior which is seriously immoral, profane, vulgar or obscene.

3. Possessing, selling, giving away, using, or being under the influence of a controlled, mood-altering substance on the campus, at school functions, or at a time and place directly involving the school.
4. Theft, graffiti or vandalism.
5. Obscenities - oral, written or gestured.
6. Truancy, including excessive tardies.
7. Dishonesty of any kind, including cheating and plagiarism.
8. Possession of indecent books, websites, pictures or objects.
9. Fighting, bullying/cyberbullying, injury or harm to persons or serious threat of same.
10. Outrageous, scandalous, or seriously disruptive behavior.
11. Public Displays of Affection – handholding, kissing and other displays of romantic affection.
12. Possessing, using, or threatening to use any weapon including all types of knives.
13. Membership in a gang or participation in a gang-related activity.
14. Conduct at school or elsewhere which would reflect adversely on Guadalupe Regional Middle School and be detrimental to the reputation of the school or the Catholic Church.

## **SANCTIONS**

The following sanctions may be imposed on students:

**Detention:** Detention is held for a determined length of time either before or after school, during break or lunch, or on Saturdays. Detention takes precedence over any after-school activity. Detention must be served when assigned. Switches will be made only for very serious reasons, and students who “cut” detention are liable for serious disciplinary action (i.e., added days of detention, Saturday detention, suspension). Students who are repeatedly assigned detention may be suspended and/or placed on probation. The student will be readmitted to school after there has been a conference with the Administrator, the parents and the student.

**Suspension:** A student may be placed on suspension for serious misconduct, whether on or off the campus, or for serious misconduct after having been placed on probation. Suspension is the isolation of the pupil from some or all school activities. Thus, the pupil may be required to report to school during normal school hours, but be separated from his/her ordinary classes and be expected to continue school work on an independent or private study basis. In some instances, the pupil may be barred from school entirely. Except in unusual cases, the suspension should not exceed one (1) week. Suspension is ordinarily invoked to prevent disruption of the school environment and to assist the affected pupil in overcoming a disciplinary problem.

**Probation:** Parents will be notified that their son/daughter, because of relatively serious infraction of school regulations or of repeated minor incidents, has been placed on probation for a portion of the school year. If the parents wish to discuss the matter with the Administrator, they are requested to phone for an appointment.

**Expulsion:** This is the final and irrevocable dismissal of the student from the school. Expulsions incurred by misconduct of a very serious nature (e.g., theft or fighting) calling for immediate dismissal without suspension or by repetition of conduct leading to one or more suspensions.

The students' interest in receiving a quality, morally based education can be served if students, parents, and school officials work together. Normally, differences between these individuals can be resolved. In some rare instances, however, the school may find it necessary, in its discretion, to require parents/guardians to withdraw their child.

### **ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY**

Guadalupe Regional Middle School is committed to provide a learning environment that is free from harassment in any form. Harassment of any student by any other student, lay employee, volunteer, or religious is prohibited. The school will treat allegations of harassment seriously and will review and investigate such allegations in a prompt, confidential, and thorough manner.

A charge of harassment shall not, in and of itself, create the presumption of wrongdoing. However, substantiated acts of harassment will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Students found to have filed false or frivolous charges will also be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Harassment occurs when an individual is subjected to treatment or a school environment which is hostile or intimidating because of the individual's race, creed, color, national origin, physical disability, or sex. Harassment can occur any time during school or during school related activities. It includes, but is not limited to, any or all of the following:

- **Verbal Harassment:** Derogatory comments and jokes; threatening words spoken to another person in person or through electronic media;
- **Physical Harassment:** Unwanted physical touching, contact, assault, deliberate impeding or blocking movements, or any intimidating interference with normal work or movement;
- **Visual Harassment:** Derogatory, demeaning or inflammatory posters, cartoons, written words, drawings, gestures, text messages, websites, social networking sites, or through other electronic media, and

- **Sexual Harassment:** Includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when any or all of the following occurs:

1. Submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly as a term or condition of a student's academic status or progress;
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by a student issued as a basis of academic decisions affecting the individual;
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic performance or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.

**Specific examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:**

1. Making unsolicited sexual advances and propositions;
2. Using sexually degrading words to describe an individual or an individual's body;
3. Displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures;
4. Telling inappropriate or sexually related jokes;
5. Making reprisals, threats of reprisals or implied threats of reprisals following a negative response to sexual advances.

**It is the responsibility of Guadalupe Regional Middle School to:**

1. Implement this policy through regular meetings with all administrators, faculty and staff, ensuring that they understand the policy and its importance;
2. Make all faculty, staff, volunteers, students, and parents aware of this policy and the commitment of the school toward its strict enforcement;
3. Remain watchful for conditions that create or may lead to a hostile or offensive school environment;
4. Strive to create a school environment free from discrimination, intimidation, or harassment.

**It is the student's responsibility to:**

1. Conduct himself or herself in a manner which contributes to a positive school environment;
2. Avoid any activity that may be considered discriminatory, intimidating, or harassing;
3. Consider immediately informing anyone harassing him or her that the behavior is offensive and unwelcome;
4. Report all incidents of discrimination or harassment to the Principal;
5. If informed that he or she is perceived as engaging in discriminatory, intimidating, harassing or unwelcome conduct, to discontinue that conduct immediately.



## **BULLYING**

Bullying is prohibited and is defined in state law as a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that:

- Has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property;
- Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student;
- Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or school; or
- Infringes on the rights of the victim at school.

Bullying includes cyberbullying. **Cyberbullying** is defined by state law as bullying that is done through the use of any electronic communication device, including through the use of a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an internet website, or any other internet-based communication tool.

The school will investigate and issues consequences related to instances of Bullying that:

1. occurs on or is delivered to school property or to the site of a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property;
2. occurs on a publicly or privately owned school bus or vehicle being used for transportation of students to or from school or a school-sponsored or school-related activity; and
3. Cyberbullying that occurs off school property or outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity if the cyberbullying interferes with a student's educational opportunities or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, school, or school-sponsored or school-related activity.

Bullying is prohibited by Guadalupe Regional Middle School and could include hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name-calling, rumor-spreading, or ostracism.

If a student believes that he or she has experienced bullying or she has witnessed bullying of another student, it is important for the student or parent to notify a teacher, school counselor, principal, or another school employee as soon as possible to obtain assistance and intervention. The administration will investigate any allegations of bullying or other related misconduct.

If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying has occurred, the administration will take appropriate disciplinary action. Disciplinary, dismissal from the school, or other action may be taken even if the conduct did not rise to the level of bullying. The administration will also contact the parents of the victim and of the student who was found to have engaged in

the bullying. Available counseling options will be provided to these individuals, as well as to any students who have been identified as witnesses to the bullying. Any retaliation against a student who reports an incident of bullying is prohibited.

### **SANCTIONS FOR CHEMICAL SUBSTANCE USE AND ABUSE**

The following chemical substance policy will cover all school activities on and off campus:

- a. Selling any controlled, mood-altering substance (alcohol, drugs, etc.) may be dealt with by immediate expulsion from the school.
- b. Possessing or being under the influence of any controlled, mood-altering substance may be dealt with by immediate expulsion from the school.

## ACADEMIC LIFE

**Introduction & Philosophy of Academics at Guadalupe Regional Middle School:** Guadalupe Regional Middle School is an institution of academic excellence with a rigorous and supportive learning environment. The intention of Guadalupe Regional Middle School is to prepare each student for entrance into a competitive high school and college of his/her choosing.

**Curriculum:** Students enroll in the following Core Content area classes: Religion, English Language Arts, social studies, math, and science. Campus based electives of physical education, and technology are also provided to each student with the required 200 minutes per week. Students in middle school also participate in clubs and activity-based groupings.

Students are provided the Academic Curriculum as developed by the Catholic Diocese of Brownsville and each core content area follows the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). The Religion Curriculum is also established by the Catholic Diocese of Brownsville.

**Academic Grading:** Each teacher establishes a grading policy for each individual class and is expected to fully explain this policy at the start of the academic year. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of the grading policy and requirements in a particular course. Grading policies will be given to the students on Orientation Day. Should a student or parent wish to see or review a specific teacher's grading policy for a particular class, the teacher should be contacted.

At least one grade will be recorded per week and inputted into JupiterEd for weekly academic Progress Report and monitoring purposes.

**Progress Reports:** Students receive weekly progress reports in the Monday folder with current grades in all academic classes, as well as marks for conduct and effort. Parents are expected to review the progress report with the student and indicate receipt through the Monday folder.

**Report Cards:** Report cards are issued at the end of each six weeks. There are six report cards issued per year.

**After School Tutorial Program:** Four days a week, an extended After School Tutorial Program is provided where students may remain on campus from 4:30 pm to 5:30 pm with at least one teacher. Students are encouraged to utilize this time for any extra study time, homework assistance, make up work, or if they are experiencing difficulty in the content area.

**Monday-Science and Social Studies  
Tuesday-English and Technology  
Wednesday-Religion and Math  
Thursday-Study Group Scheduling available**

**Academic Probation:** a student may be placed on Academic Probation if any grade in any subject falls below a 70%. A meeting will be scheduled with the student's teacher, the Counselor and/or the Principal to determine a plan for academic growth. Students will be placed on probation and will be required to show improvement academically and in the areas of effort and conduct in the following marking period. The academic council will review and determine the student's standing at Guadalupe Regional Middle School at that time.

**Standardized Testing:** The Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) is administered based on the guidelines of the Diocese of Brownsville. All students must take standardized testing in the fall and spring as part of the annual school requirement.

**Promotion/Retention:** At the end of each year, the faculty and administration will determine whether each student has demonstrated mastery of skills necessary in order for promotion to the next grade level.

Academic promotion is determined by the mastery of all scheduled courses with a yearly average of 70 or above. A student who fails one course may be considered for academic "placement" based upon other factors such as behavior, attendance, outstanding circumstances, and academic performance in the other courses. Students failing more than two courses may not return to Guadalupe Regional Middle School for the next school year and will not be promoted to the next grade level.

A student who fails the overall school year may not return to Guadalupe Regional Middle School for the following year. A parent/teacher/administration conference will be held to determine consideration of retention/placement during the spring semester when data becomes evidence of an academic concern

A student who gives evidence of consistently poor performance during the school and little indication of probable improvement, may, in the student's best interest, be asked to withdraw from Guadalupe Regional Middle School prior to the end of the academic year.

All students are reviewed at the end of each year for determination of re-admittance with the exception of exiting 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

**Credit/Course Recovery:** Guadalupe Regional Middle School provides weekly academic monitoring for students which enables students to proactively improve their grades prior to the end of the marking period. Grades are final at the end of every marking period. Any student who has extenuating circumstances may be provided additional time to recover a failing grade. Students needing summer school programs for academic advancement will be referred to other school entity programs which may or may not accept the student. This decision is outside of the authority of the GRMS Administration and Staff, and both student and parent must make decisions in the best interest of the student when failing grades are being reported.

**Summer Programs:** Guadalupe Regional Middle School provides summer programs depending on availability of funds. Programs are both academic and social in design, and may be either on site or at another remote location. Any program provided to students will have appropriate exemptions in place as established by the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops summer program guidelines and policies, depending on the program design annually.

Summer reading lists, math enrichment lessons, online supplemental lessons and/or summer projects may be developed and issued to students by teachers to extend learning through the summer days.

Summer Orientation Days are also designed to provide registration and school information to new and returning students. Students and parents are encouraged to attend any announced days/dates, but attendance is not mandatory.

**Graduation Requirements from 8<sup>th</sup> Grade:** Students in grade 8 with a yearly average in any subject area below 70% may require summer school and may not earn a certificate of promotion and are prohibited from participating in any graduation ceremonies, mass, or events.

**Cheating and Plagiarism:** Cheating and plagiarism (copying the work of others and passing it off as one's own) are forms of academic dishonesty which are inconsistent with the principles for which Guadalupe Regional Middle School stands. These are considered to be major academic offenses and will be dealt with in accordance with guidelines set down by the administration. Students who are involved in such infractions, including violations of rules and policy set down by both the administration and classroom teachers which are intended to curb such practices, are subject to academic and disciplinary sanctions

Penalties may include zero on the assignment, academic penalties, and/or dismissal from the National Junior Honor Society, Student Council, other leadership roles or clubs. Penalties may include dismissal from the school if the academic dishonesty occurs more than one occasion.

**Disciplinary Sanctions:** Any member of the faculty or administrator who has reason to believe that a student has violated any school policy may make reasonable inquiry including questioning the student(s) to determine whether an infraction has incurred and bringing the matter to the attention of the campus administrator for further inquiry and investigation.

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework will be assigned to students every day in most subject areas. **Homework is not optional;** it is a critical aspect of learning and attending school. Each student at Guadalupe Regional Middle School is issued a planner/assignment book for recording homework assignments daily and each class should allot time for recording of homework in the planner/assignment book before being dismissed. One class period of “Study Period” time is allotted daily for each student to work on his/her homework assignments and receive support from a staff member or volunteer. Students are expected to take homework assignments seriously. The completion of homework will be factored into the students’ grades. If there are questions about the assignment or concerns about the amount of homework which is assigned, each student is encouraged to discuss this with his/her teacher. Parents are invited to review the student planner/assignment daily to check on student progress.

Homework is an expectation for all classes. Students who struggle with homework must be responsible to communicate with their teachers their need for help. If good work habits are not developed at home where the parents are the primary educators of their children it may be determined that Guadalupe Regional Middle School is not the correct fit for this student. When this issue has been addressed and the teachers and administration do not see progress a student may be asked to withdraw to find another school more suitable to his/her needs. The teachers and administration will do everything possible to help the student. This help will only produce results if the student and his/her family are in agreement and are taking steps for improvement.

A student who chooses not to complete homework on 3 days in a marking period may be removed from activities period and assigned to an extra study period. Those who choose not to complete homework may be asked to withdraw their child from Guadalupe Regional Middle School.

If a student is absent, he/she is still expected to complete all homework in a reasonable period of time after returning to school. Teachers will clarify homework policies to students in their courses. In most cases, students will be given one extra day to complete assignments missed while absent. Teachers will make every effort to gather materials and write down

assignments for an absent student. When possible, parents or guardians should make arrangements with teachers to come to the school to pick up assignments on the day the student is absent.

***In addition to homework specifically assigned by teachers, each Guadalupe Regional Middle School student is expected to read for at least 30-40 minutes daily to continue to improve literacy skills.***

### **CARE OF MATERIALS & EQUIPMENT**

Each student will be provided with many of the reading books, library books, work books, calculators, hotspots, iPads, e-readers, laptops, net books and text books necessary for a successful learning experience. These materials and equipment are valuable to the school experience. Each student must take responsibility for each of these items. Each must be handled with care by students to avoid damage or unreasonable wear. If the administration concludes that school property has been mishandled, lost or damaged by a student, then that student may be charged a fee to replace the item.

Any technology devices that is issued to the students will require a Technology Device Issuance Form to be completed and the student and parents become responsible for any damage and lost items. In addition, the device is not to be utilized for inappropriate usages that are not educationally appropriate regardless if on campus or off site.

Students found to be abusing any school issued equipment may be prohibited from any future use of said items for the partial or the remainder of the school year.

### **STUDENT RECORDS**

#### *Parents:*

If you are a parent of a Guadalupe Regional Middle School student and you wish to review the academic records of your child, GRMS requests that you give the school 24 hours notice (at minimum) to do so.

All parents are encouraged to acquire access to their students grades via the online school grading software program “JupiterEd” in order to have immediate access, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Any assistance in registering for such access is available in the school office.

#### *Non-Custodial Parent/Guardian:*

If you are a guardian of a GRMS student and you wish to review the academic records of your child, Guadalupe Regional Middle School requests to have a copy of the court order indicating your responsibility for the student/child and also a 24 hour notice (at minimum) to review the files.

Upon exiting procedure clearance, students records will be provided to the new/next school enrolled. Any 'holds' or outstanding issues will prevent the release of records until cleared.

### **INCENTIVES, AWARDS AND HONORS**

**Weekly Incentive:** On occasion, students who have demonstrated academic success and positive behaviors are given the opportunity to wear jeans on Friday of each week. To be eligible, a student needs to be passing all classes free from office referrals and any other disciplinary violations.

**Honors Recognition:** Students will be honored with academic recognition and certificates at the end of each six weeks with the "Honors" recognition.

- First Honors: Students with a grade average of 90% or above with no grade below 85%.
- Second Honors: Students with a grade average of 85% or above with no grade lower than 80%.

**Perfect Attendance:** Each six weeks, students who have perfect attendance for the entire school day are recognized with a recognition and incentive reward. Those students at the end of the school year with Year-long Perfect Attendance will be recognized in the Awards Ceremony as well.

**Graduation Awards:** During the graduation ceremony, the faculty and administration take great pride in presenting distinguished awards.

## GENERAL EXPECTATIONS & PROCEDURES

All students at Guadalupe Regional Middle School are required to comply with all rules and regulations found in this Student Handbook. The school expects its students to reside with parents(s) or approved guardian(s) while enrolled at Guadalupe Regional Middle School and live in the United States.

### **ATTENDANCE**

All students are expected to be present at school daily, to be on time for school each day, and to be prompt in arriving for scheduled classes. This is essential if the student is to derive the full benefit of his/her education at Guadalupe Regional Middle School.

Students are expected to be on campus each morning by 8:15 a.m. The campus prides itself as a Catholic school and at this time, morning announcement and morning prayer are recited.

The student's participation in morning prayer is as important as their academic classes. Attendance is taken at 8:30 a.m. daily. Students may arrive as early as 7:30 a.m. Students arriving at 7:30 a.m. should report to the designated courtyard or cafeteria area. Loitering in restrooms or around campus is prohibited. Students **should not** arrive at school before 7:30 a.m., because student supervision is not available before that time.

Any student arriving to school after 8:30 a.m. is tardy. Students who are late to class or tardy to school incur progressive steps for disciplinary action. Excessive tardies will incur a parent/administration conference and interruption of the late arrival may be curtailed by the student having to remain in the front office.

All routine matters concerning attendance are handled through the Main Office. Cases of non-routine nature will be referred to the Principal. If it is expected that a student will be absent for a prolonged period of time, the parent or guardian must immediately contact the Main Office to explain the situation. In the case of prolonged absences for medical reasons, the school will assist the family in designing a plan. Parents are expected to meet with the Principal for any anticipated absences of more than 3 days.

#### **Compulsory Attendance-Failure to Comply**

All school employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student absent from school without permission from school; from any class; or from required tutorials will be considered in violation of the law and subject to disciplinary action.

#### **Attendance for Credit (Courses for High School Credit)**

At GRMS, students who are enrolled in a course that would award them high school credit are subject to the following legal requirements, or they shall jeopardize their opportunity to earn the high school credit all together. Currently the following courses are offered for high school credit: Algebra I.

To receive credit or a final grade in a class, a student must attend the class at least 90 percent of the days it is offered. A student who attends fewer than 90 percent of the days the class is offered will be denied the high school credit and will have to repeat the course in high school.

#### **UNEXCUSED ABSENCES**

Students and parents are expected to observe the published Guadalupe Regional Middle School Calendar in matters of vacations and days off from school. In the event that a student is taken out of school for personal reasons, the parents and student must assume full responsibility for this action and for the academic consequences entailed. Neither the school nor the teachers can assume responsibility for special assignments, tests, etc., to make up for what is missed in class during this type of an absence. Guadalupe Regional Middle School



may be required to report any non-health related absence to The Administration for Children's Services.

### **OFFICE PROCEDURE FOR ABSENCE AND TARDINESS**

If your child is absent from school or tardy to school, please follow these procedures:

- (1) The parent or guardian is to phone the school office (**956-504-5568**) between 8:00 am and 8:30 am to report any absence from school.
- (2) If a student is absent for multiple days, the parent must call each day.
- (3) Upon returning to school the student **must** present a note from the parent/guardian as required by state law containing:
  - (a) date or dates of absence
  - (b) date note is written
  - (c) reason for absence
  - (d) signature of parent/guardian.
  - (e) doctor's note (as explained below)
- (4) This note must be presented at the Main Office before 8:15 am on the returning day.
- (5) A student who is late for school or for any particular class during the day or who misses any part of a class (eg., medical appointment) must report to the Main Office and obtain an Office Pass for admission to the classroom. Please attach a Doctor's Note if required.

Failure to comply with any of the regulations concerning absence and/or tardiness may result in disciplinary actions. **Excessive absences and/or tardiness may jeopardize a student's enrollment at Guadalupe Regional Middle School.** In the case of questionable or non-health related absences, the administration may investigate and, if necessary, will ask public authorities (i.e. Human Services, truant officer, etc.) to become involved.

**Medical, Dental or Special Appointments:** If students must attend medical or dental or other special appointments during school hours, the student must present a note from his/her parent/guardian requesting that the student be dismissed from school for the appointment. The time of the appointment, name of doctor and phone number is to be clearly stated. **This note is to be presented to the Main Office before 8:15 a.m. on the day of the appointment.**

When a student returns to school after an appointment, he/she must present a note from the doctor, dentist, etc. Most medical offices have a special form for this purpose. This note is to be presented to the Main Office as soon as the student returns to school. The student is responsible for any work missed during this time.

## **CAFETERIA AND LUNCH PROCEDURES**

Students are expected to keep the cafeteria and their eating areas clean. They are responsible for cleaning up after themselves; they are not to leave garbage or debris behind them. There are microwaves available for student usage to warm up their lunch meals and the microwaves should also be kept clean and orderly. Only microwave allowable dishes are allowed in them.

Lunch is to be brought from home each day and may be kept in the child's possession or turned in to the cafeteria between 8:15 a.m and 8:25 a.m. An afternoon snack will be provided to students daily if available.

Students are not permitted to have food delivered or brought to them from any fast food establishments. All packed lunches should be free from commercial fast food restaurant packaging. If packaging is noted, the student will be asked to eat in the office area away from their peers. Commercial sodas are not appropriate for student daily lunches. Students may have juice boxes, sports drinks, water, etc.

## **BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS AND SPECIAL OCCASSIONS**

The school will not accept any special deliveries for students during the school day. Delivery of balloons, cakes and other miscellaneous gifts are strictly prohibited.

## **DISMISSAL**

The school day ends at 4:30 p.m. On occasion, the school day ends at 12:00 p.m. for teachers to attend their faculty/staff meeting.

All students must be picked up by 4:50 p.m. (12:15 p.m. on early dismissal Fridays) unless involved in an after-school activity. There is no extended care program at Guadalupe Regional Middle School. Students are expected to be picked up on time. Frequent violation of this expectation may result in a parent conference and/or the students not begin invited back the following year.

Students in an after-school activity must be picked up within fifteen minutes of the activity's conclusion. For the safety of all students, if parents find themselves consistently unable to pick up their child within the fifteen minutes after events, their child may be required to discontinue participation in these activities. **Frequent violation** of this expectation may result in students not being invited back the following school year.

## **TELEPHONE / EMAIL MESSAGES**

Telephone messages can be delivered to a student while at school if an emergency arises. Parents, guardians, and other persons are asked to communicate their daily plans to their child before their child leaves in the morning. Parents should not expect to contact their

child by cell phone during the day because cell phones are not allowed to be used during the school day. Students with cell phones must house them in their school locker from arrival to departure and are prohibited from accessing them at all.

Any student found with a cell phone on their possession will have the item confiscated and turned into the front office. Parents will be required to come by the office and pick it up either at the end of the school day, or the school week.

**Students have access to phone in office if needed.**

All families are required to provide one parent's or other family member's (other than student) email address in order to receive official emailed messages from the school through the JupiterEd messaging system.

**CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR PHONE NUMBER**

The Main Office of the school is to be notified immediately of **any change of address and/or change of phone number** of each student's parent or guardian. This is essential in order to keep school records accurate and in order to be able to contact the parents or guardians in the event of an emergency.

**PERSONAL APPEARANCE / DRESS CODE& UNIFORM**

Students are required to wear a uniform every day at Guadalupe Regional Middle School. This rule will be enforced by staff and faculty. If there is a dress code violation, disciplinary actions may be enforced. All uniforms should be labeled with student name on the inside collar, tags, etc. in permanent marker to avoid loss or confusion of personal property.

**Boys Uniform Description**

- Navy uniform pants with black belt (no baggy pants, cargo pants with extra pockets, or jean like fabric pants)
- White short-sleeved uniform polo shirt with school logo
- Blue short-sleeved uniform polo shirt with school logo (**mandatory**)
- White short-sleeved button down collared shirt (**mandatory**-required for Mass and Special Events)
- Navy cardigan sweater (may be required for Mass and Special Events)  
*Note: sweatshirts are not allowed*
- Shoes-single color, non-distracting athletic or dress shoes may be worn (no sandals or florescent shoes)
- White crew socks (must cover ankle bone completely)

**Girls Uniform Description**

- Navy skirt, no more than two inches above the knee (required for Mass and Special Events)

- Navy twill uniform pants with black belt
- White short-sleeved uniform polo shirt with school logo
- Blue short- sleeved uniform polo shirt with (**mandatory**)
- White short-sleeved blouse (oxford style-**mandatory** required for Mass and Special Events)
- Navy cardigan (may be required for Mass and Special Events)  
*Note: sweatshirts are not allowed*
- Shoes-single color, non-distracting athletic or dress shoes may be worn (no sandals or florescent shoes).
- White socks that are knee-length.
- Navy or White tights are also appropriate and encouraged on cold weather days.

### **Boys and Girls Gym Uniform**

**All athletic shirts/shorts/gym bags should be labeled with student name in permanent marker!**

- Navy uniform shorts with school name
  - Blue T-shirt with school name
  - White athletic socks
  - Sneakers (one solid color)
- **Only white t-shirts** may be worn under the uniform shirts.
  - Navy sweaters, skirts for girls, dress shirts.
  - House stoles for girls and House neckties for boys are required for Mass and Special Events.
  - Shirts must be tucked in at all times.
  - Pants with a belt must be worn on the waist.
  - Holes in uniform should be repaired immediately.
  - Clothes on Jeans or Dress Down Days should cover the parts of the body normally covered by the school uniform and should reflect our identity as a Catholic school.

### **Grooming**

- Students should be neat and well groomed at all times.
- Boys hair should be groomed and above collar.
- Hair should be the student's natural color and should not cover the student's eyes.
- Any form of dress or hairstyle that is extreme will not be permitted.

**Not allowed:** The following items are not to be worn at school: platform or high heeled shoes, sandals, open-toed shoes, slip-on or backless shoes; no jewelry (*except one religious necklace for boys and small post earrings and/or one religious necklace for girls-watches for boys and girls are permitted*), make-up or nail polish (*clear nail polish is allowed*); fake nails, hats, lip gloss, gel shoes, gang-related jewelry, gang-related manner of wearing clothes

or shoes, t-shirts with inappropriate slogans or pictures, or sleeveless shirts. No multiple piercings and no hoops or dangling earrings. Boys may not wear earrings or studs.

**NO gum, candy or soda in the school building:** Eating candy is not appropriate in the school environment because it diminishes the student's ability to communicate effectively and represent him/herself maturely. Furthermore, discarded candy can be damaging to property. Gum is not to be chewed on school property at any time (this includes breaks and lunch time and before and after school.) This also includes other properties when borrowed for school activities (including parish hall, church building, etc.) Additionally, gum is not allowed at school-sponsored events such as field trips and other off-campus activities.

**Electronics:** For safety reasons, students are discouraged from bringing electronics of any kind onto campus, including personal music/video players like iPods, CD players, radios, cell phones and/or digital cameras. Any electronic devices, including cell phones, that are brought onto campus **MUST** be turned to the "off" position and left in student locker immediately upon arrival to school. Confiscated electronics will be sent to the Main Office and distributed back at the discretion of the Administrator.

### **SEVERE WEATHER-SCHOOL CLOSING**

In case of severe weather condition, students are to listen to local radio/TV broadcasts and the GRMS Facebook page to learn of the school's closing and reopening. Breaking News Updates will also be posted on the schools website, [www.guadalupeprep.org](http://www.guadalupeprep.org) . Generally, Guadalupe Regional Middle School **will** follow the plan of Brownsville Independent School District.

### **SCHOOL CLOSING**

In the case of a crisis medical situation and/or on orders from official Diocesan, city, county, state, or national authorities; the school may be ordered into immediate closure. All students and families will be notified and protocols in the GRMS Medical Emergency Plan of Action will be followed.

To ensure that notification is appropriately received, all parents should ensure that their personal contact numbers and email addresses are updated with the front office.

### **SCHOOL PROPERTY**

GRMS is housed at the historic Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church which was founded in 1927. As the site nears its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, students must keep in mind that the church facilities are to be always respected.

Any student damaging, destroying or removing school property from the school is liable for repair or replacement of the property, in addition to any other disciplinary sanction determined by the Administrator.

### **FIELD TRIP POLICIES**

Student participation on field trips is a privilege, not a right. A student could be denied participation if he/she fails to meet behavioral requirements. A parent also has the right to refuse to let his/her child go on a trip. Parents should indicate this desire on the Field Trip Permission Slip form which will be sent home in the Monday Envelope.

The policy of the Diocese of Brownsville requires that completed and signed permission slips are on file for each field trip taken by the student. A new permission slip will be sent home before each trip. A 'blanket' permission slip cannot be used.

Some field trips will require documentation of legal status. Birth certificate or Visa is an acceptable form of identification.

### **COMPUTER AND INTERNET USAGE**

Computers are available for student use on campus and most have access to the internet. To access the internet and computers on campus, a student must obtain school and parent consent by completing the Guadalupe Regional Middle School Acceptable Computer Use Policy Agreement.

Use of computers and the internet is a privilege. Any use of the computers or internet that is in violation of Guadalupe Regional Middle School's Acceptable Computer Use Policy Agreement will subject the student to disciplinary action and a withdrawal of this privilege. Students are strictly prohibited from using Guadalupe Regional Middle School's name, initials, logos, pictures, or representations of the faculty, staff, or other individuals that, in the determination of the school administration, is degrading, lewd, threatening or inappropriate. Deliberate publication or posting of **inappropriate material on the internet on or off campus** may result in serious disciplinary action including dismissal from the school. Illegal downloading on a school computer will result in the student losing the privilege of using computers and the internet on campus any may result in disciplinary sanctions.

**Cyberbullying** : See page Section entitled BULLYING

### **ACTIVITY PERIOD**

Students will be able to participate in a unique and changing activity at the end of the school day, each six weeks. Options vary for student selection and teachers will supervise the group. Group assignments are made on a student choice but also on a first come/first served bases to keep the group a manageable size. Activities often include chess, board games, physical fitness, sporting groups, art, book club, choir, etc. All activities are rotated throughout the

year and students may continue to participate as long as their grades remain in good standing otherwise, they will be placed in a study hall group during Activity period.

### **HOUSES**

Celebrating the Founding Congregations, each student will be placed into a “House” during the first weeks of their sixth grade year. These House assignments will continue all three years of enrollment unless of special circumstances. House Captains will be voted upon by the student group and with the guidance of their monitoring teacher/sponsor; the Houses will enter into competitions with other Houses, conduct community service projects, and lead the school in representation of the values of their sponsoring congregation.

### **ATHLETICS**

Based upon the number of interested students, competition athletic teams will be organized under the supervision of the GRMS Athletic Coordinator-Mrs. Alma Martinez. Opportunity for team volleyball, basketball, track, and soccer is available with GRMS and the opportunity for boys to join the St. Joseph Academy 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade football team is also available. Parent permission for any team participation is required.

### **PERMISSION TO USE STUDENT PHOTOS/VIDEOS**

During the first weeks of school, parents/guardians are asked to complete a consent form giving Guadalupe Regional Middle School permission to periodically take photos/videos of students on campus or when participating in school sponsored activities for use on the official school website or in school publications. The school reserves the right to use any and all photos. Any parent who wishes otherwise or does not want their child’s photos to be made public, must notify the school administration within the first six weeks of the school year.

## PARENT PARTICIPATION

### **PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION**

Parent-teacher communication is an important factor in your child’s education. We encourage parents/guardians to schedule conversations with teachers/administrators about your child’s performance. It is important to stay in touch with the child’s teachers. In order to keep you up to date on what is happening, a school calendar will be given to each family. Calendar updates will be sent home in the Monday folders.

Your observations at home are as important as teaching observations when it comes to your child’s education. Be sure to let the teacher know about special occasions in your family or

any changes that take place in your child's life (birth of sibling, death of a loved one, marriage, separation or divorce of parents, etc.).

While the resources within the school are excellent, there are occasions when the school suggests that a child have additional help, e.g., an evaluation (learning, psychological, speech/language, neurological, etc.). These suggestions are usually made by the teacher, the Counselor, or Principal after consultation and after discussions with the family. Please contact the Principal if an evaluation is requested for your student, so that external assistance can be recommended.

Parent cooperation is essential in a child's education. Current research shows that the more parents are involved in the educational process of their son/daughter, the better their child performs. Parental involvement includes:

- Attendance at the Parent-Teacher-Student conferences
- Showing interest in and checking on homework assignments
- Participating in school events like Christmas, Open House, Assemblies, Catholic Schools Week, and Field Day
- Responding to communication made by the school
- Participating in Parent Meetings
- Contributing monthly participation fees
- Volunteering in the school
- Recruiting new families to Guadalupe Regional Middle School

### **PARENT-TEACHER GROUP (PTG)**

The purposes for which the PTG is organized are as follows:

- To serve as a vehicle, which allows for a strong working relationship among the Principal, school families, and school staff, and assures a forum for open dialogue.
- To support Catholic education at Guadalupe Regional Middle School

The Objectives of the Parent-Teacher Group are:

- To provide community building opportunities for school families.
- To organize fundraising, educational enrichment, and classroom support for the school.
- To serve the general needs of the school community.

All parents who have a child enrolled in the school are members. The PTG membership provides a support system, whereby parents can work together to accomplish tasks, which ultimately benefit the children and administration of the school.



Parents are expected to attend parent meetings. The meetings times will be communicated in a timely manner through the Monday envelope. If a parent is unable to attend a scheduled meeting, the parent is expected to call the main office.

### **PARENT/GUARDIAN VOLUNTEER SERVICE HOURS**

The primary purpose of the Parent Volunteer Program service hour program is to encourage the involvement of parents in their child's education both inside and outside the classroom.

All families are required to perform 20 hours of service to the school for the list of approved events or through their assistance in volunteering throughout the year. Service hours for the school year begin on August 1st and will end on May 31st or before the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Graduation Mass; whichever occurs first. The twenty hours of service must be completed by the scheduled date or the student will be under review for re-admittance to Guadalupe Regional Middle School for the following year.

For any outstanding hours that remain to be completed, parents may be given the option to pay a fee in lieu of the service hours, but that option is only given at the end of the school year once all opportunities for volunteering have been completed. Records will not be released to students graduating without parent volunteer hours complete. Additional hours do not carry over from one year to the next. In the event you have an extenuating circumstance and are unable to meet the required number of service hours, please schedule an appointment with the school principal to discuss your situation.

### **STUDENT SERVICE FEES**

Each family is expected to make a financial contribution to their child's education at Guadalupe Regional Middle School. The exact fee paid by each family is based on overall family income and will be reviewed annually by the school administration, based on forms submitted by families.

Prompt completion of these forms is expected. If a family faces particular hardship in paying the monthly participation fees, communication with the school administration is expected. If necessary, a meeting with the school administration will be scheduled to discuss an alternative plan for monthly participation.

Service Fees are due the 28<sup>th</sup> of each month.

### **WEEKLY PARENT ENVELOPE "MONDAY FOLDER"**

Guadalupe Regional Middle School distributes Communication envelopes which are sent home with students weekly, normally on Mondays. This information keeps parents up-to-date with school related issues and activities. In addition, Progress Reports are sent home through the Communication envelope each week. **Parents must review the contents and**

**then sign this envelope and return it to school with the child the day after it is sent home.** Student will be charged \$1.00 (one dollar) for lost or misplaced weekly Communication envelope.

### **PARENT-TEACHER-STUDENT CONFERENCES**

Parents are always welcome to call the school to make an appointment with a teacher at any time during the year. This communication between parents, students and teachers is very helpful in setting a climate for cooperation between home and school and in letting the children know that parents are interested and actively concerned about their school life. Parents should convey to their children daily the value of education. Parents and students must attend all parent/teacher/student conferences. In some cases, parents and students will be required to come for specific conferences regarding student academic or behavioral progress.

### **PARENT VOLUNTEERS**

Opportunities for parent volunteers include chaperoning field trips, translating at parent meetings, helping in the cafeteria, assisting at special events, and recruiting new families to Guadalupe Regional Middle School.

### **CONFLICT MANAGEMENT**

If there is any difference of opinion between a teacher and a parent, we encourage parents to communicate with the Principal of Guadalupe Regional Middle School about the issue. It is our school procedure that any such occasion must first be dealt with in a meeting between the parent and the teacher. Guadalupe Regional Middle School encourages faculty and parents to resolve concerns and issues at the 'lowest level' possible. For example, parents should first bring the concern directly to the teacher for a discussion. Then, if necessary, the Principal should be consulted to help facilitate the discussion.

Parent/teacher meetings may be set up by telephone, letter or email. If the parent-teacher meeting has proven unsatisfactory, an appointment may be made with the Principal to further discuss the problem.

### **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

A grievance is a complaint based on any alleged violation or inequitable application of policy or a dispute over the meaning or interpretation of the terms contained in this handbook.

This procedure is intended to resolve a grievance informally at the lowest possible administrative level in a Christian atmosphere. Persons with concerns regarding application or interpretation of a policy should first attempt to address the concern with the teacher. Only after such attempts have failed should administrators be contacted.

The following levels of submitting and resolving grievances are:

**Informal Action** – Resolution/Conciliation Level

Level One      Presentation to the Teacher

Level Two      Presentation to the Principal

**Formal Action**

If a satisfactory resolution is not reached at the resolution/conciliation level, the complainant shall state his or her complaint in writing, setting forth the nature of the complaint, all relevant details and the remedy sought. This form should be submitted to the President within (10) working days following the meeting with the Principal.

Level Three    Presentation to the school President. (*All decisions by the school President are final.*)

## SAFETY AND HEALTH

Guadalupe Regional Middle School keeps the safety and welfare of its students, its faculty/staff, and all its families at the forefront of all decisions made in its operation.

Guadalupe Regional Middle School has developed an EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN to guide it through an appropriate response depending upon the crisis level encountered. The EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN has been approved by the Catholic Diocese of Brownsville and plans for the unknown at the time of its development and publishing.

(See Emergency Management Plan as the Handbook Addendum)

### **ABESTOS**

In compliance with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA), Guadalupe Regional Middle School was required to have an inspection of buildings for asbestos containing materials. A licensed accredited consultant inspected all Catholic school buildings of the Diocese of Brownsville and has found Guadalupe Regional Middle School to be free from any exposure to asbestos-containing materials. In addition, staff members have received the annual AHERA required training through a certified AHERA trainer and documentation is available upon request. An asbestos management plan is on file, accessible and updated every three years with the Catholic Diocese of Brownsville, Catholic School Offices.

## **CAMPUS SECURITY**

This campus is closed and cannot allow coming and going of students. Visitors are allowed. Students can leave escorted by an adult if they have early dismissal or specific written consent (signed by a parent/guardian) allowing them to leave unaccompanied.

Supervision is provided by campus staff and the campus is equipped with Blue Point alarm systems in both the downstairs, upstairs, and cafeteria area for reporting of Intruders or Emergencies. The alarm system is directly tied into the local law enforcement agencies for the immediate notification, coordination and response to any emergencies on campus.

## **CHILD CUSTODY**

Divorced or separated parents must file a court-certified copy of the custody section of the divorce or separation decree with the Principal's office. The school will not be held responsible for failing to honor arrangements that have not been made known.

## **CLOSED CAMPUS**

Students are to remain on the campus or in adult supervision off-campus as required for school-sponsored field trips or activities from 7:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

## **LEAVING EARLY**

**No student will be released early from school, after 4:00 PM, unless parent/guardian can provide documentation of a scheduled medical appointment.**

## **MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS**

In compliance with state law, each student at Guadalupe Regional Middle School needs to have a health examination report on file prior to enrollment. Athletic physicals may be required for student participation in organized sports.

Student health records are maintained and are updated for the following:

Vision, Hearing, Spinal Screenings, and Acanthosis nigricans in accordance to the state health requirements and the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Education Department policies.

## **CONTAGIOUS DISEASE**

Students whose absence from school is due to a contagious disease (e.g., Corona Virus, Hepatitis, Chicken Pox, swine flu) may be asked to provide the school with a doctor's note before returning to the classroom, certifying they are able to return to school. Faculty and

staff are trained annually in the handling of bloodborne pathogens and other potentially infectious materials.

### **ILLNESS**

If a child has a stomach flu, sore throat, ear ache, nasal discharge, skin rash, eye infection or elevated temperature of 99.6 F or above, the child should be kept at home. If a child becomes ill during the school day, parents/guardians will be contacted at home or work. Parents/guardians are responsible to have their child picked up and taken home. The child will not be dismissed without an authorized adult to accompany him/her home. The parent or guardian must sign the child out at the school office. In no case should a student merely leave the campus if he/she becomes ill without reporting to the School Office. Students are responsible for work missed in classes that day.

### **IMMUNIZATIONS**

Texas Law requires that every child's parents present to the school proof of immunization from communicable disease. This information must be on file for every student in school. The Department of Public Health requires proof of immunity from: Polio, Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis, measles, mumps, and rubella, hepatitis B, Varicella (Chicken Pox) and Tuberculosis. The school will annually file the *Annual Report of Immunization Status* as required by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

Upon the recommendation of the CDC, all eligible school-aged children are encouraged to receive the immunization for the Corona virus. The Catholic Diocese of Brownsville formally encourages the participation in the available immunization as issued by formal letter of announcement by Bishop Daniel E. Flores, December 2020.

### **EMERGENCY FORMS**

It is of **absolute importance** that we have an **emergency form** on file for each family. The emergency forms should be filled out before the first day of school. If any information on this form **changes during the year, the office should be notified, in writing, immediately.** It is extremely important that the school be able to easily and quickly reach at least one parent or guardian at any time during the school day.

If a student becomes ill or is the victim of an accident during the school day, the Administrator, Main Office Coordinator, or teacher will contact the parent or person indicated on the family's emergency form. If the parent, family physician, or the adult listed on the emergency form cannot be reached, the paramedics will be contacted and the matter will be put into their hands.

## **STUDENT HEALTH**

The School Administration should be made aware of any medical, physical or emotional problem of a student that may, in any way, affect his/her performance in school or school activities—i.e.; hearing problems, glasses or more serious issues such as epilepsy. Written notification to the administration must be made prior to the first day of school each year your child attends Guadalupe Regional Middle School. Prior notification to the Administration concerning such matters, even though they may appear minor, can present possible misunderstandings at a later time.

## **SCHOOL EXCLUSION**

The following diseases require exclusion from school: scabies, swine flu, chicken pox (not less than six days after eruption), German measles (five days after appearance of rash), and mumps (nine days and until all swelling is gone), Corona Virus 19 (ten school days after exposure).

## **STUDENT MEDICATION POLICY**

It is the policy of our school that students carry no drugs or medication, with the exclusion of prescription and nonprescription inhalers. All prescription medications are to be administered by parents and they may come to the office to give the child the medication. Medications will not be kept on campus or administered by school personnel. A medical log will be maintained on campus of any emergency medical situations that occur on campus.

## **STUDENT MEDICAL EMERGENCY**

When a student experiences a medical emergency at school we will make contact with parents/guardians and emergency contacts if parents are not reachable. If no one is reachable we will take the appropriate action. Parents/guardians will be billed for any cost incurred by medical personnel. Individual Faculty and/or staff are trained in emergency procedures which include current CPR/First Aid Training and AED Training.

## **COUNSELING**

Because of our concern for well-being of our students in all aspects of their development, Guadalupe Regional Middle school has access to a part-time counselor who provides personal and academic support services for our students. These services include personal and group counseling and academic support resources. Students can be referred for these services by a parent or teacher or may self-refer. In some cases, these services will be recommended for student success at Guadalupe Regional Middle School.

## **CHILD ABUSE PROCEDURES**

The Texas Family Code defines child abuse as any conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS) (1-800-252-5400) or on the web at Texas Abuse Hotline Website).

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

Emergency drills are conducted with and without prior notice and documented as per local/city and diocesan policy for all school programs, including before/after school. At the sound of the evacuation alarm, all work immediately stops. The last person to leave the room closes the door and turns off the lights. Students are to move quickly and silently. Running is forbidden. Absolute silence is to be maintained throughout emergency drills.

In the event of a lock-down drill, students should remain in the classrooms and follow all instructions given by the teacher. Violation of these procedures can constitute a serious hazard to the safety of others.

## **FIRE AND EVACUATION DRILLS**

The emergency exit plans are posted to indicate the proper fire evacuation exit in the school. Students are to follow the directions indicated on these signs and also the directions given by the teacher in charge. Silence is to be observed during the entire time of the exercise, both leaving the classroom and returning.

## **PARKING**

Guadalupe Regional Middle School does not have any officially designated parking spaces for staff, faculty, parents, guardians or families. Street and church parking lot parking is available, though there are some restrictions. Guadalupe Regional Middle School cautions parents to be aware of their child's safety when dropping off and picking up from school.

## **DROP OFF/PICK UP PROCEDURES**

Designated staff members are present at both drop off and pick up to assist in the procedures for arrival/departure. Students and parents are to follow the instructions from staff on duty in order to help facilitate the efficiency of the vehicle line up. Occasionally, parents will be asked to pull away from the vehicle line up and park in order to facilitate a teacher conference or to receive a personal message from school personnel.

For the safety of all, parents should yield the right of way to pedestrians, and be sure their student has safely exited/entered their vehicle before moving. Please drive slowly when entering and exiting the school grounds. **Speed limit on school grounds is 10 mph.**

For the safety of all during Student Drop off and Student Pick up times, the vehicle traffic flow is in one direction with all vehicles to enter from either 13<sup>th</sup> Street or Lincoln Street entrances, and exit through the northern entrance on 12<sup>th</sup> Street.

### **VISITORS ON CAMPUS**

Visitors must be cleared through the Main Office and must wear a visitor's pass while on campus. Parents who come to school must check in at the office first, and may not go to classrooms unless they have a scheduled appointment with a teacher.



HANDBOOK AGREEMENT

HANDBOOK AGREEMENT  
FOR PARENTS & STUDENTS

*Please review the contents of this handbook with your child(ren), sign and return this form to the Main Office no later than August 19, 2022.*

\*\*\*\*\*

I, the parent/guardian, have read this handbook and reviewed it with my child(ren). My signature verifies the fact that I am in accord with the school policies, will abide by them and agree to be governed by this handbook.

Furthermore, we understand that changes, additions or alterations may be made to this handbook by the administration at the discretion of the administration at any time. We, the parents, will be given notification of changes.

Finally, we understand this Handbook does not establish a contractual relationship between Guadalupe Regional Middle School and its students or their families. We acknowledge this Handbook only serves to highlight Guadalupe Regional Middle School’s policies, practices, and procedures for our personal benefit and cannot be construed as a legal document of any kind. We understand that any grievance procedure contained within this Handbook is strictly intended to provide an opportunity to resolve grievances that may arise from time to time and are not intended to represent the precise formula to be followed in every dispute which may arise.

**Parent Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Child/Student Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Child/Student Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

I/we have read and reviewed the sections that apply to me, understand them, and will abide by them.

**Student signature(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_