



School Handbook 2021-2022

Our Mission

Founded on the Christian principle of the dignity of the human person, Madonna's mission is to serve students and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and provide them with a foundation to achieve their full potential at school, work, home and in the community.

Our Vision

Our vision is for all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to maximize their God-given potential and thrive as fully included members of the communities in which they learn, work & live.



Faculty and Staff

President	Jon Burt
Director of Education & Child Development	Jill Franco
Director of Transition & Lead Instructor	Darian Stout
Co-Teaching Specialist	Mary Mauldin
Lead Instructor	Sarah Burch
Speech Language Pathologist	Julie Froemming
Music Therapist	Mary Lynn Bennett
Music Therapist	Sara Dean
Media/Religion Instructor	Janet Sobczyk
Physical Education Instructor	Diane Vaiskunas
Teaching Assistant - Art	Kathleen Ward
Teaching Assistant - School	Laura Clark
Teaching Assistant - Transition	Barbara Thompson
Registered Nurse	Karen Bakewell
Chaplain	Fr. John Pietramale
Administrative Assistant	Rachel Halonen

School Contact Information

6402 N. 71st St. • Omaha, NE • 68104 • 402-556-1883

School Hours

School hours are 8:00 am to 3:10 pm. School instruction begins at 8:00 am. Students may arrive no earlier than 7:45 am each day. Dismissal is 3:10 pm and students need to be picked up no later than 3:25 pm.

Madonna Secondary & Transition Daily Schedule

7:45-8:00 Check-in and Arrival

8:00-8:40 Period 1*

8:45-9:25 Period 2

9:30-10:10 Period 3

10:15-10:55 Period 4

11:00-11:40 Period 5

11:45-12:10 Lunch and Break

12:15-12:55 Period 6

1:00-1:40 Period 7

1:45-2:25 Period 8

2:30-3:10 Period 9

3:10-3:15 Check-out and Dismissal

*Students are provided a 5-minute passing/transition time between each Period.

Our Community

Faith/Religion

Madonna School was founded in 1960 by Sister Mary Evangeline Rudolph as a ministry to educate children with intellectual and developmental disabilities in a Catholic, faith-based environment. Throughout its history, Madonna's enrollment has been diverse, serving individuals and families from every faith tradition and walk of life.

Madonna's students participate in religion classes and mass each week and have regular opportunities to volunteer and engage in service to those in need throughout the community. School masses are planned and executed with student participation and involvement. Individual sacrament preparation is available upon request.

The goals of these activities are to learn about faith traditions around the world, core Christian principles, and the rich history and tradition of the Catholic Church. While all students participate in these activities, it is not Madonna's goal to proselytize students who are not Catholic.

Community-Based Learning & Functional Skills Development

Madonna's students utilize community-based learning and functional learning opportunities on a consistent basis to enhance and compliment their academic development. These community outings and field trips may include, but are not limited to, bowling outings, grocery stores, volunteer sites, restaurants, parks, and exercise facilities.

Students will be transported in Madonna approved vehicles by a licensed and approved employee. Parents will sign a general waiver for these regular outings when registering their student and will be notified in weekly emails/newsletters of planned outings for the upcoming week.

Madonna considers these opportunities core to the program of learning. Students who are not interested, able, or provided permission to attend regular community outings may find other programs in the area are a better fit.

Extra-Curricular Activities

A variety of extra-curricular activities are available to Madonna students through school-based, Special Olympics, and Unified programs, including:

Basketball	Bowling	Band/Choir	
Flag Football	School Dances	Swimming	Track

Registration and Enrollment

Madonna School enrollment is open year-round to potential students. Upon enrollment, parents/guardians will meet with the school President to determine a negotiated enrollment fee. Public School Districts contracting students into Madonna School will do so at Madonna's established NDE SPED Service Provider rate.

Non-Discrimination

The Omaha Archdiocesan Schools admit students of any race, color, national and ethnic origins to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the schools. They do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in the administration of their educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

Negotiated Tuition

Madonna believes tuition costs should never create a barrier for a qualified student to attend Madonna, though all families attending Catholic School are required to personally invest in their child's education. As such, Madonna does not post a set tuition rate and executes a Negotiated Tuition process. Through objective data and open dialogue, each Madonna family works one to one with the Madonna President to determine an annual student tuition rate that is fair, just, and equitable.

Academics

IEP/ISP/ITP Goals

Student goals and objectives are developed annually at IEP/ISP/ITP meetings with parents, students, and core team members. Goals and objectives are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-based. Data and progress on these goals is reported quarterly.

Assessment/Grading

A variety of best-practice assessment methods are used according to student need and ability. Programs of study are graded as follows:

- 1 – Beginning
- 2 – Progressing
- 3 – Proficient
- 4 – Advanced

Progress Reports

Progress reports are developed quarterly and shared with parents on student IEP/ISP/ITP goals and objectives.

Report Cards

Report cards are developed quarterly and shared with parents on student progress and performance toward their programs of study.

Parent Communication

Madonna School makes every effort to communicate proactively using different modalities for families (e.g., email, communication logs, bi-weekly progress notes). For any classroom concerns, the classroom teacher should be your point of contact. For any concerns not resolved through your child's classroom teacher, please contact the Director for that program via email or phone call during school hours.

Non-Custodial and Custodial Parent Policy

Unless such rights are restricted by a legally binding instrument or court order, the custodial and the non-custodial parent is entitled to exercise all parental rights regarding student records; may obtain information from their child's records on a regular basis; may receive general notices; may attend regularly scheduled teacher conferences or have separate conferences scheduled.

A child may not be released during the school day to anyone except the custodial parent unless permission is provided by the custodial parent. The school may require custodial and non-custodial parents to provide a court certified copy of the court document in effect that sets forth the rights and restrictions pertaining to the parent's rights.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Madonna offers Parent-Teacher Conferences during each semester as an opportunity to discuss student progress and problem-solve for any concerns. Conferences include the classroom teacher, specialists, and therapists who function as an instructional team helping students progress toward their established ISP/IEP goals.

Instructional Program

Subject	Periods Per Week (45 minute periods)
Language Arts	5
Math	5
Science/Health	5
Social Studies (Community-based)	5
Art	3
Computer/Media	4
Music	4
P.E.	5
Religion	3

Transition Plan

According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), transition is “a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed with an outcome-oriented process, that promotes movement from school to post-school activities such as: Career/Employment, Postsecondary Education/Training, Community Participation and/or Adult Living Skills.” Transition planning begins at age 14 and occurs at an IEP or ISP meeting.

Transition planning increases the chances of success in adult life. The process works to bring together schools, students, families, and community agencies in a combined effort to appropriately plan a successful path to adult life.

Academic Integrity

The love of learning coupled with the development of a personal code of ethics built on honesty and integrity are some of the most important educational objectives of a Catholic Education. Every member of the school community must ensure that academic integrity is maintained to the highest standards at all times.

At Madonna, students are expected to complete their own work to the best of their abilities, and with the peer and adult supports prescribed in their IEP/ISP and as determined by their teachers to aid their academic learning and development.

Technology Policy

Technology is a valuable and important tool to improve student learning and enhance the academic curriculum taught at the school. Madonna’s objective is to provide students and employees with a wide range of information technology to support developmentally appropriate learning and instruction. All Madonna employees and students are expected to contribute to a safe and productive learning environment while using technology and related network resources.

For purposes of this policy, the term “technology” or "network resources" refers to all aspects of Madonna’s owned or leased electronic equipment (including computers, tablets, printers, scanners, cameras, etc.), email, internet services, servers, software, network files and folders and all other technology-related equipment and services. These rules apply to any use of Madonna’s technology or

network resources, whether this access occurs in school (live or virtual) or outside of school.

Students are expected to use technology in a responsible manner consistent with Madonna's educational and religious objectives. Students will receive instruction and direction on digital best practices, citizenship, and safety annually. Students should report any misuse of technology and network resources, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Accessing, posting, publishing, or storing violent, explicit, profane, or inappropriate content
- Harassment, intimidation, threatening or bullying others, whether inside or outside of school
- Using intellectual property without permission
- Knowingly bypassing Madonna's content filter or network security
- Knowingly spreading computer viruses or malware
- Taking a photo or making a video or audio recording of any student or faculty member without his/her knowledge and consent
- Playing games, chatting on-line, or watching videos during the school day unless associated with a class and permission from a teacher is explicitly given.

Students may be assigned unique email and login usernames and passwords to protect the information on the network. Do not share passwords with any other person (Madonna faculty and parents should be the only exceptions) and do not ask other students to share their passwords. If a student believes his or her password has been compromised, report this concern to a faculty member or parent.

There is no privacy online. Students should never provide personal information online or share any information the student does not want made available to the public. Electronic communications (emails) between faculty and students must be made via Madonna's internal email system. Faculty-student communications on personal devices could be deemed inappropriate.

Although social networking and texting normally occur outside of the classroom, it may have a negative impact on the school community. If a student uses social networking or a personal electronic device to convey offensive or disrespectful

communications inconsistent with this policy and/or the objectives of the school, Madonna reserves the right to take any disciplinary action it deems necessary to protect students and faculty. Madonna encourages parents to routinely view and monitor their student's personal networking sites and electronic devices to ensure the information and content does not place any student at risk.

Madonna sets the terms and conditions of technology use. Students should have no expectation of privacy or anonymity while using technology and network resources provided by Madonna. All content created, sent, accessed, or downloaded using any part of Madonna's technology or network resources is subject to the rules stated in this policy. Madonna reserves the right to monitor the network and examine or remove electronic files and/or materials whenever it deems necessary. Students should never assume that emails, files, or other content created or stored on Madonna's network will be maintained as private or confidential. Should Madonna determine there is a reasonable need to do so, it reserves the right to search students' personal electronic devices (cell phones, laptops, etc.) brought on to school grounds.

Violations of this Technology Acceptable Use Policy may result in the loss of technology and network privileges as well as appropriate disciplinary action (up to and including suspension or expulsion). Any violations of federal, state, or local laws will be reported to the appropriate authorities. Students who receive or learn of any harassing, threatening, or inappropriate electronic communications or postings should immediately notify the faculty member supervising the activity or Madonna's administration.

Access to Inappropriate Materials on the Internet/Disclaimer:

Madonna currently utilizes an internet content filtering system that reduces student access to offensive and pornographic materials. However, no filtering system is foolproof, and Madonna cannot entirely control what students may or may not locate on the internet. While Madonna allows students to access the internet for educational purposes only, students may have the ability to access inappropriate materials. Madonna is not responsible for the content of the information or materials students may retrieve from the internet. Students who inadvertently access inappropriate materials must report the incident to the supervising faculty member or the school's administration immediately.

Library/Media Center

The Madonna Library/Media Center has a print collection which supports student learning, including reference, non-fiction and fiction titles, and magazine subscriptions. Students can also access several online subscription databases and video streaming from any computer or mobile device while on campus, or with use of a password when off campus.

Items are available for checkout and renewal. Madonna does not assess fines for late materials; however, if an item is lost or damaged, a replacement cost will be assessed.

Professional Services

Madonna is firmly committed to the growth and development of its students. Acknowledging that adolescence is a period of substantial growth, our staff is open to the needs of our students and their families. It is the Madonna tradition for staff to sensitively maintain a personal interest in students.

In order to provide our students with the best comprehensive services, we maintain positive working relationships with human services/mental health professionals.

These services are available to the students by self-referral or referral of the parents, the teaching staff, counselor, or the administration. We sensitively consider the confidentiality of the emerging young adult and his/her parents. It may be necessary to consult with a professional for several meetings before an appraisal can be completed. If, as a result of the appraisal, additional consultations are recommended, or parental and family assistance are seen to be helpful, the families are contacted. A meeting follows and we trust that the parents appreciate and review both the situation and the recommendations.

The cost of such services is the responsibility of the families.

In some extraordinary situations, professional evaluation and treatment may be determined necessary for continued attendance at Madonna.

Attendance

Attendance is Essential

Madonna School believes students need to be at school daily to maximize their learning opportunities. We strongly request that students and their parents make every effort possible to minimize the number of days they miss school. If a student is habitually absent or tardy, we will first work with the family to improve attendance.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Madonna has provided students with the opportunity to learn virtually if circumstances warrant. Given the underlying health conditions of our students, we will continue to weigh remote learning requests on an individual basis for the 2021-2022 school year.

To report an absence, please call the front office prior to 9:00 am at 402-556-1883.

Illness Policy

Madonna School will follow current health department guidelines provided by the CEC regarding the Covid-19 virus. These guidelines will be communicated regularly to parents and guardians, and they serve as sound general guidelines for when to keep your student home from school due to illness:

If your student appears to be ill in the morning before school, please have him/her remain at home. In general, students will be sent home from school if they have a temperature of 100.4 degrees or more, if they are experiencing vomiting or diarrhea, or if they have symptoms of a suspected communicable illness or condition. If your student is sent home from school, please keep in mind that he/she should not return to school until he/she has maintained a normal temperature for 24 hours without being given medication for fever reduction (such as Tylenol, Motrin, etc.). The student should have experienced no vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school. If parents, guardians, or emergency contacts are called to pick up a student due to illness at school, it is expected that your student will be picked up as requested within one (1) hour of notification.

Emergency School Closings

When a severe storm occurs during the night or in the early morning hours, school closings or late starts will be announced as “Omaha Catholic Schools”. Madonna’s name is not mentioned separately on television or the radio.

When early dismissal from school is considered as a result of inclement weather, the safety of the students is our first concern. Members of the administration confer and communicate with other area schools. If we decide to dismiss school early, an announcement is made via Parent Reach, radio, and television and Madonna’s name is mentioned. Parents may call school and ask for a student to be dismissed early when there is inclement weather during the school day. We always make sure that each student has a ride home before the closing of school.

Student Health

Health Information

- Madonna contracts with the VNA to provide a certified School Nurse and Health services, as well as provide all staff with ongoing training on standard and required health protocols, such as blood borne pathogens.
- The school has a plan for emergency care of sudden illness or injuries in the school.
- The school documents accidents that occur on school property or during school activities and maintains written records of each accident that include all needed data in order to assess the overall safety of the school environment for students and personnel and also as a protection for the school and the health care providers.
- Each student must have an individual, permanent school health record on file in order to attend class.
- School administrators are responsible for enforcing school laws that pertain to the student's health, e.g., laws that state all students must be immunized and that certain students must have a health examination or a signed exemption form. All information must be sent to the school by the established deadline, or the student will not be allowed to attend classes.

- Students with communicable conditions are excluded from school activities until treatment is assured and the possibility of contagion is past.
- Health-screening is provided for students; this includes testing of blood pressure, vision, height, and hearing.
- Health counseling referral and follow-up is provided to ascertain that the student receives the appropriate treatment and/or care.
- The health program is reviewed annually with the VNA. Accurate statistical data is maintained and retrievable regarding nursing and health services provided.
- School administrators provide and promote working and learning conditions conducive to the mental and physical health of all school personnel and students. Health personnel observe and evaluate the school environment for safety, accident prevention, and a healthy physical and emotional environment.
- School personnel and health care providers in the school are knowledgeable of a student's physical, emotional, social, and intellectual characteristics and needs.

Medication

- Prescription medication may only be administered by specific staff members with the physician's written request and a signed/dated permission form filled out by the student's legal parent/guardian.
- Medication must be in the original prescription bottle (your pharmacist may give you a second, labeled bottle in which to send only the amount of medication needed during school hours.)
- All medication to be given during school hours must be labelled with the student's full name.
- It is the responsibility of the parent to make sure there is enough medication in the office.
- Any student with emergency medications must have a health action plan from a physician on file in the health office.

Counseling/Guidance

Madonna students are provided with Social Skills development across the core curriculum and as a part of their ISP's, as well as the Circle of Grace curriculum, a mandatory program for K-12 students in the Archdiocese of Omaha. This program focuses on safe relationships and boundaries, moral responsibilities, internet safety, and safety plans.

In addition, the school Chaplain regularly visits Madonna students and is available to them and their families to provide support and guidance when students and families are navigating personal issues or crisis situations.

Student Conduct

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS)

Madonna School utilizes positive and proactive behavior strategies and rules (PBIS). If a student escalates into a crisis, becoming a danger to himself or others, Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI) strategies are used (verbal de-escalation, calming strategies, breaks). When serious misbehavior occurs, it is always the desire of the school to assist the student and the parents in any way possible to alleviate the difficulty. However, in serious situations, it may become necessary to discipline a student by suspension and/or expulsion.

Dress Code Requirements

Madonna School requires students to follow a simple dress code to each day:

- Shirts can be a long sleeve or short sleeve polo. Students may also bring a sweater (cardigan or ¼ zip) or sweatshirt to wear over their shirt. Please, no hooded shirts or sweatshirts.
- Uniform pants can be any color dress pants (navy, black, grey, or khaki).

If a student has a sensory or compliance issue related to uniforms, please inform their teacher and staff will work with the student and family to help the child comply.

Disciplinary Policies and Procedures

Madonna School is a calm, safe, and peaceful environment for students with diverse abilities. Verbally and/or physically aggressive, destructive, or violent behavior by students toward property, another student, staff member or community member while on school grounds, during a school-related activity off school grounds, or through telephonic or electronic communications outside of the school day, will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action, which could include in-school suspension or out-of-school suspension or expulsion. This includes but is not limited to bullying or harassment on the basis of a person's gender, sexual orientation, race, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, or disability.

Madonna School students may not bring to school or have in their possession any item that may be classified as a weapon (examples: guns, knives, matches, lighters, etc.) Possession of such items at school will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action, which could include suspension or expulsion.

In the event of bullying, intimidation, harassment, assaultive behavior, or possession of a weapon by a student, staff will respond according to a student's behavioral/safety plan and their crisis training. Authorities may be called as circumstances warrant. The parents, guardians or caregivers of each student impacted will be notified as soon as possible.

Madonna does not tolerate retaliation against any student who reports, in good faith, offensive conduct, bullying, or harassment or provides, in good faith, information in connection with any complaint. Madonna will assist persons falsely accused of offensive conduct, bullying, or harassment in making known to appropriate parties the false complaint. The administration will take disciplinary action if sufficient evidence substantiates the guilt of a person who falsely alleges offensive conduct, bullying, or harassment.

Drinking and Use of Illegal Drugs

Madonna educators are concerned about the spiritual, academic, and personal growth of every student. The use of alcohol and illegal drugs can seriously interfere with this growth.

Engaging in the unlawful possession, selling, dispensing or use of alcohol or illegal drugs is a violation of Nebraska state law and consequently of school rules. A violation of any aspect of the state law or school rules and regulations regarding the use of alcohol or a controlled substance will result in a conference with the parents or guardians and could be grounds for professional services supports and/or disciplinary action.

Emergency Procedures

Child Abuse

State law requires that if any form of child abuse or child neglect is detected or suspected, school personnel, who are mandatory reporters, must contact Child Protective Services at 800.652.1999 and/or the Omaha Police Department at 911.

All Madonna staff members and volunteers are required to adhere to the Safe Environment standards of the Archdiocese of Omaha, which includes completion of Safe Environment training and maintaining ongoing Safe Environment certification.

Madonna recognizes that parents/guardians are the first and primary educators of their children, especially concerning highly sensitive issues. All schools in the Archdiocese of Omaha provide the Circle of Grace curriculum to educate and empower children and young people to actively participate in a safe environment for themselves and others. Madonna adapts and modifies this curriculum to meet the needs of students with diverse abilities and provide instruction that is developmentally appropriate.

Standard Response Protocol

Madonna's staff and students are trained on the Standard Response Protocol in order to respond quickly and uniformly to crisis situations. The SRP actions include:

Hold – For situations that require students to remain in their classrooms. For example, an altercation in the hallway may demand keeping students out of the halls until it is resolved. There may be a need for students who are not in a classroom to proceed to an area where they can be supervised and remain safe.

Students and teachers are to remain in their room or area, even if there is a scheduled class change, until the all-clear is announced. Students and staff in common areas, like a cafeteria or a gym, may be asked to remain in those areas, or to move to adjoining areas like a locker room. Students and staff outside of the building should remain outside unless administration directs otherwise.

Secure-Lockout - Secure (Lockout) is called when there is a threat or hazard outside of the school building. Whether it's due to violence or criminal activity in the immediate neighborhood, or a dangerous animal in the playground, Secure (Lockout) uses the security of the physical facility to act as protection.

The Secure (Lockout) Protocol demands bringing students into a secure building, locking all outside access points. Where possible, classroom activities would continue uninterrupted. Classes that were held outside, such as gym class, would return to the building and if possible, continue class inside the building. There may be occasions where students expect to be able to leave the building - end of classes, job commitment, etc. Depending on the condition, this may have to be delayed until the area is safe.

Lockdown - Lockdown is called when there is a threat or hazard inside the school building. From parental custody disputes to intruders to an active shooter, Lockdown uses classroom and school security actions to protect students and staff from threat.

The Lockdown Protocol demands locking individual classroom doors, offices, and other securable areas, moving room occupants out of line of sight of corridor windows and having room occupants maintain silence. There is no call to action to lock the building outside access points. Rather, the protocol advises to leave the perimeter as is. The reasoning is simple - sending staff to lock outside doors exposes them to unnecessary risk and inhibits first responders' entry into the building. Teacher, staff, and student training reinforces the practice of not opening the classroom door, once in Lockdown. Rather, no indication of occupancy should be revealed until first responders open the door.

Evacuate - Evacuate is called when there is a need to move students from one location to another.

The classroom teacher or administrator is usually responsible for initiating an evacuation. The directives or actions may vary for fire, bomb threat, or other emergencies. In a police-led evacuation, students may be instructed to form a single file line and hold hands front and back, or students and staff may be asked to put their hands on their heads while evacuating. Other directions may be invoked during an evacuation; students and staff should be prepared to follow specific instructions given by staff or first responders.

Shelter - Shelter is called when specific protective actions are needed based on a threat or hazard. Training includes response to threats such as tornado/severe weather and hazmat. For tornado/severe weather, Madonna's gym is a fully reinforced storm shelter where all individuals on campus will take shelter when circumstances warrant.

General Disclaimer:

The information contained in this handbook provides a general description of rules and regulations. The school reserves the right to add to, modify, or abolish any of the handbook provisions without notice. Non-enforcement of any of the rules or regulations does not serve as a waiver of their future enforcement. This handbook does not create any restriction upon Madonna's right to institute any course of disciplinary action that, in Madonna's sole discretion, it believes is necessary and consistent with its Mission as a Catholic School.