

Good evening,

Welcome! Welcome to St. Ursula School Back to School Night and welcome to the 2025 - 2026 school year.

I am so happy to be your new principal. A little bit about me. I am a product of Catholic School, I attended Holy Cross School, Mount St. Mary Academy and St. John's University. I taught in Catholic Schools in Buffalo and Long Island and previously I was the principal of Sts. Philip and James School in Long Island, NY.

I am a strong believer in Catholic education, where the whole child is educated - mind, heart and soul and I truly believe a Catholic education is the best gift you can give to a child. A gift that lasts a lifetime. So parents give yourselves a round of applause for all the sacrifices you make each and every day to send your children to St. Ursula School.

I am looking forward to working with our New Parish Administrator, Fr. Obinna. Fr. Obinna is in Nigeria with his family and will be returning the second week of September. He has prepared a short video for you.

Our school theme from the Archdiocese this year is from the Jubilee year....Pilgrims of Hope. Our new school song is "Who You Say I Am" The main refrain is...."I'm a Child of God, Yes I am"

Our hope this year is to remind our students that we are all children of God and God loves us very much. We will be reinforcing Christlike behaviors such as being Kind, Honest, Forgiving, Helpful, Respectful, Prayerful, Obedient, Inclusive, Grateful and to be a Peace Maker.

To help our students learn and continue to grow in their faith Fr. Obinna will offer Mass to our students weekly in both the gym and the church. This past Tuesday we celebrated our opening school Mass and I have to say I was so proud of our students. They were so willing to serve and participate. It was heartwarming to hear them pray and sing songs of praise to our Lord.

Given the recent tragedy, I will be following up with Fr. Obinna once he returns as some of our school Masses have been scheduled in the Church. I have also met with our local police officers about having police presence on the days Mass is offered in Church.

Fr. Obinna will also join us for our monthly Spirit Assemblies. Every Spirit Assembly will start with our 8th graders leading the school community in a decade of the rosary followed by Child of God Honors. Students will receive certificates and will be honored for displaying Christlike behaviors.

Parents, as leaders of your families, I encourage you to make time for Jesus each week and attend Mass with your children. If you are not in the habit of attending weekly Mass, take this as an opportunity to start new! I invite you to join our beautiful Parish. Please stop by the table in the back and visit Miss Laura/Miss Tanya who will be able to answer any questions you may have. Be sure to pick up a bulletin to learn more about Mass times, prayer opportunities and fellowship.

At this time, I would like to acknowledge and thank our amazing faculty and staff. I am so blessed to work with such dedicated, talented, and creative individuals. I have enjoyed getting to know them throughout the summer and I am so thankful for all of their support. It has been so exciting to see their classrooms and bulletin boards come to life! Their dedication and enthusiasm for our school and your children is admirable! They come in at the crack of dawn and leave hours after dismissal. Their day never ends as there is always one more set of papers to grade or one new great lesson idea floating around in their head.

I kindly ask that each and everyone of you support our teachers. They are here for your children and want the best for them.

The 25/26 handbook is in the process of being updated. It will be posted on the school website shortly and emailed to all families. Within these first couple of days I have noticed that the policies and procedures are not being followed as they may not be understood or clear to parents.

First off, I want to thank you for your support in establishing our new “No food” Birthday policy. The students have already begun collecting their treats and spinning the Birthday Wheel.

A few areas we would like to review and discuss tonight areArrival and dismissal

Arrival and dismissal are areas of great concern. Faculty and staff are out there everyday making sure your children are safe. All parents/guardians are expected to adhere to school policies which were established for the safety of our school community. We all know what it is like to be running late or have an appointment to get to but we need to be mindful and take into consideration all others in our school community.

Mrs. Marinaro will now go over arrival and dismissal procedures.

It is easiest for you to enter our parking areas via Manns Avenue. If you are parking on the St. John's lot, you should still enter via Manns Avenue and then turn left onto Aurelia. Please remember that the St. Ursula Church lot is also available for dismissal and may be an easier solution for your family. At no time during dismissal should drivers park on Manns Avenue or on Moreland Avenue. First, we need to be considerate and remember that our property is surrounded by private residences. Additionally, when cars try to exit Manns Avenue during dismissal, that really impedes the flow of traffic coming in and causes backups on Harford Road, often past the Beltway. Please help us be good neighbors to our surrounding community.

We will also be tightening up our uniform policy.

Please help your children come to school dressed in accordance with our uniform policy. The summer uniform is optional until November 4 this year. Students may wear the regular school uniform at any time. For our young gentlemen in grades K through 5, they will wear a white polo shirt, short or long sleeves. Navy blue pants are part of the regular uniform for the boys, while navy blue or khaki shorts are optional during the summer uniform period. For our young ladies, the regular uniform consists of the blue plaid jumper with the white Peter Pan collar blouse; alternatively, they may wear the white polo shirt with navy blue pants; the girls may also wear the polo shirt with navy blue or khaki shorts during the optional summer uniform period.

Our middle school uniform is different from that of the younger grades. All middle school students are required to wear an Oxford button-down shirt in white or a pastel color. No middle school student should wear a polo shirt. The gentlemen wear navy blue or khaki pants (or shorts during the summer uniform period) both with a solid black or brown, cloth or leather belt. A tie is to be worn with the uniform pants; a tie is not required when he is wearing shorts. Bow ties are acceptable. The ladies have a plaid skirt to wear. The skirt should fall no more than three inches above the knee. Girls may also wear the optional summer shorts with their Oxford shirts.

Socks are solid white or navy blue with no logos and must cover the ankle bone. Girls may wear navy blue knee highs, tights, or leggings. Shoes must be worn properly at all times. No one may come to school wearing pajama pants.

All students may wear the ¼ zip pullover, cardigan sweater, or pullover sweatshirt as part of their uniform; each of these items comes from either Flynn O'Hara or Sportsline. Please note that spirit wear is not part of the school uniform and is only for "out of uniform" days.

Outside sweatshirts may not be worn during the school day. If your child tends to get cold during the day, he/she may only wear the St. Ursula School approved sweatshirt or ¼ zip pullover.

You should have the letter day your child has Phys Ed. On Gym days your child should be dressed in his/her St. Ursula Gym uniform which consists of Athletic shoes (sneakers), T-shirt, shorts or sweatpants depending on season. If your child does not have the proper uniform, they cannot participate in PE class. Even on out-of-uniform days, students may not wear Crocs, sandals, or non-athletic shoes to gym. Only athletic shoes are acceptable for participation. If a student comes unprepared for gym, an email will be sent home from the PE teacher as a reminder of your child's gym day. **Partial Uniform Still Means No Participation.** If your child wears the regular uniform but does not have athletic shoes, they still cannot participate.

Something that we have seen more lately is colored hair. Students may not have chemically altered hair. If a student had their hair color altered in any way, it must be returned to their natural hair color. This week has been a grace period; administration will be reaching out to parents regarding such uniform infractions beginning this Tuesday.

Students are very limited in the amount of jewelry they may wear. Our young ladies may wear one pair of single post earrings; these earrings may not be hoops or dangle. All students are allowed to wear one religious necklace. This is the extent of the jewelry that students may wear. No nail polish is to be worn to school, nor may students have fake nails.

We will also be making minor tweaks to our discipline matrix and will be sending out reminders about our school policies.

Get involved! Volunteer! The friendships and memories will last a lifetime.

Thank you for your time and for entrusting us with your precious children. With God's guidance, we look forward to working together with you for a successful and rewarding school year.