



# PARTNERS FOR SUCCESS

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**Suggested Guidelines For  
Helias Catholic High School  
Families**

# VISION STATEMENT

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*Excelling Students Centering on Christ*

# MISSION STATEMENT

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*Helias Catholic High School is committed to providing excellence in education as established on the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church for students in grades 9-12. Working in partnership with families, we are dedicated to providing a disciplined environment where Christ and His graces in each person are recognized, respected and fostered. As a teaching institution in the traditions of the School Sisters of Notre Dame and the LaSalle Christian Brothers, we challenge our students spiritually, academically, morally, and physically as we help them to be active, lifelong, enthusiastic participants in the Church.*

# Introduction

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Dear Parents,

Our students are immersed in a world much different today from the world in which we grew up. Parents face the challenge of preparing their children to make decisions in all aspects of their high school years as well as beyond. It is an important and significant task...one that requires our collaborative effort. Working together as administrators, faculty, staff and parents we can impact the level of responsibility for our adolescents.

It has been said that it is too bad that children do not come with an instruction manual. This handbook is most definitely not an attempt to provide one for you. It is, in part, an attempt to alarm you. It is, in part, an attempt to educate you. It is, in part, an attempt to let you know that you are not alone, either in the concerns you have for your child or in your struggle to cope with adolescence. This manual is an attempt to offer helpful guidelines for your family's decision making. After all, the Lord has entrusted us to be custodians and stewards of our children during the short time we have them in our care.

This handbook covers many subjects, including tough ones like chemical use (especially alcohol) and sexual activity. It's also about what's "normal" in families with teenagers and what's not. It's about how to recognize trouble and when to get help. It deals with issues that parents of teens across the nation face. None of these issues are unique to Helias.

This book reflects the caring commitment that Helias has toward addressing these issues head-on. Above all, this book is a call to action. It is a call for more communication---parents to students, parents to parents, and parents to Helias. It is a call for more involvement and, above all else, a call to work together.

The Helias Catholic Administration

# Catholic Identity

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Helias Catholic High School recognizes its partnership with parents and guardians in educating and forming academically, emotionally, socially and spiritually the young men and women entrusted to us.

Helias exists for the development of the faith through a deeper understanding and practice of it. Realizing that parents and guardians are the primary educators, the school, through its administrators, teachers, staff, coaches and moderators, works diligently with parents and guardians to help our youth grow in their lived faith experience.

For the sake of our youth, we, as individual families and as a community, live our faith beliefs so as to nurture and develop them in our children and help them grow in their relationship with God. The example and message of Jesus, as found in the Gospels, assists us in this important endeavor.

With this in mind, individually and collectively, we are called to be:

- People of prayer
- People who love Sacred Scripture
- People who actively and regularly worship God in our parish or congregation
- People who seek to grow in holiness and goodness
- People who work diligently for peace and justice
- People who respect our own sacred dignity and that of each individual
- People of integrity who willingly accept and practice the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20: 1-17) and the Two Great Commandments (Matthew 22: 34-40).

# Lasallian Mission

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As part of the heritage given to us by Saint John Baptist de La Salle, founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, we try to be:

- People who continually remind ourselves that we live in the holy presence of God
- People who accept God's will in our regard
- People who have a special concern for the poor
- People who routinely give service to others

# Teen Responsibilities & Privileges

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**The following guidelines were designed to help families decide on teenage privileges and responsibilities. We realize that in some families these guidelines will be too restrictive; in others, too permissive. Our hope is that they will help you discuss and decide on reasonable standards for your family.**

- **Be able to reach your child by phone and make sure they can reach you.**
- **Be awake when your child comes home at night, or have them wake you up. This is an opportunity to communicate with them about the evening.**
- **Get to know your child's friends and their parents or guardians.**
- **Support Helias school rules and regulations.**
- **Assure your child that he/she can call you to be picked up whenever they need you.**
- **Families with continuing problems should consult the school's guidance counselor or seek outside professional help.**

## **Curfews:**

We suggest the following curfews with the exception of special occasions:

### School nights:

Students should be home in the evening unless they are working or there is a school or community activity. They should come home immediately following these events.

### Weekends:

- 9<sup>th</sup> grade 11:00 p.m.
- 10<sup>th</sup> grade 11:30 p.m.
- 11<sup>th</sup> grade 12:00 p.m.
- 12<sup>th</sup> grade 12:30 p.m.

### Holidays/Vacations:

10:30 p.m., except weekends (see above) or with reasonable exceptions as agreed upon by the family.

Parents are also encouraged to check their local community curfew regulations.

# Teen Parties

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## When your child is **hosting** a party...

### Before the Party:

- Set ground rules.  
Your child needs to know what you expect and why. Rules should include:
  - Adult supervision
  - No alcohol / drugs
  - No tobacco
  - No leaving and then returning
  - Lights left on
  - Certain rooms off limits
- Set definite starting and ending times.
- Limit party attendance.  
Small groups are easier to handle.  
“Open” parties can be difficult to control.
- Know your responsibilities as a parent.  
It is illegal to offer alcohol to guests under the age of 21 or to allow underage guests to consume alcohol or drugs in your home or on your property. You may face criminal charges or have to pay monetary damages in a civil lawsuit if you furnish alcohol or other drugs to minors. Explain to your child that you are legally responsible for anything that happens to a minor on your property. Include your child in this feeling of responsibility.

### At the Party:

- Be present, visible and available.  
Bringing in snacks or beverages is a way to interact with guests.
- Invite other parents over to help you chaperone.
- If anyone arrives under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, notify the parents to arrange for their safe transportation home.
- Guests who bring alcohol should be asked to leave, and their parents should be contacted. Be aware of guests arriving with paper bags, sports bags or backpacks.
- Be willing to call the police if needed.

# Teen Parties Continued

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## When your child is **going to a party**...

- Call the host parent in advance to verify the occasion and possibly to offer assistance. The Helias directory has all home phone numbers. Make sure a parent will be present during the entire time of the party and that alcohol and drugs will not be permitted. If this is not the case, we encourage you to say “no”.
- Know where your child is going and with whom. Have the phone number and address, and ask your child to call you if they change plans and go elsewhere.
- Discuss how to handle possible situations. Let your child know what you expect him/her to do if chemicals are offered. Help him/her come up with ways to refuse alcohol and other drugs. Using Helias’ random drug testing program as a reason to say no has been effective for many Helias students.
- Know how your child will get home from the party. Make it easy for him/her to leave a party by making it clear that he/she can call you, a neighbor or a friend for a ride home. Discuss possible situations in which he/she might need to make such a call. Develop a code to help your child communicate that he/she is in an uncomfortable situation, and still save face. Urge your son/daughter never to ride home with a driver who is under the influence.
- Be up to greet your child when he/she comes home. Be awake or have him/her wake you up when he/she arrives home.
- We do not recommend that you allow your child to spend the night at the home of a friend after a party. However, if your child does stay overnight, check with the parents beforehand to verify that:
  - They approve of your child staying over
  - They will be home
  - You both agree on curfew
  - This is not a co-ed sleepover

# Example

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It is critical that the adults with whom your child comes into contact provide a solid, Christian example demonstrating integrity, consistency, and unyielding commitment to principles and character.

At Helias Catholic High School our staff strives to model Christ for our young people. We recognize that is an awfully lofty goal and that there will be times when we fail, but, in order to justify our existence as a Catholic school, that has to be our objective.

For youngsters to be successful in the future, they must develop personal responsibility. To do so they must be allowed to do the things they could and should do for themselves. They must learn that there are consequences to actions and that good decision making involves considering all possible consequences before embarking on any behavior, particularly one that you think is probably wrong. They must learn that integrity, truthfulness, and honor are essential to a faith-filled Christian life.

It is essential that parents, the most important teachers of their children, especially those who believe in Catholic/Christian education enough to pay over \$4,000 per year for it, always demonstrate Christian morality for their children.

There may be times when your child asks you to lie for him/her (assignment that didn't get done, an absence that may otherwise be unexcused, a reason for missing a practice or another appointment, etc.) by developing or supporting a bogus excuse to keep him/her out of trouble. Before you do that, think of what that means to your child: Mom/Dad is willing to lie to protect me from the consequences of a poor decision; Mom/Dad think that keeping me out of trouble is more important than their personal moral values; Mom/Dad will shield me from any penalty for my bad choices.

Then think of the potential long-term results of a young person who has never had accept personal responsibility. You won't always be there to bail your child out.....the sooner he/she learns that, the better.

# Chemical Use

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Because chemical and alcohol use can be so harmful to our students, we take the issue very seriously and have put several policies in place to prevent our students from using chemicals. Despite these efforts, some Helias students, just like students from across the country, are involved in chemical use. Tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana are the drugs that young people most often use, though all reports point to heroin as an increasing problem in Jefferson City.

It is important that young people receive clear and consistent messages from school and from parents that illegal drug use and underage drinking are inappropriate, unacceptable and illegal. Purchase or possession of alcohol by a person under age 21 is illegal. Possession or sale of street drugs or controlled substances, including drugs prescribed for another person, is illegal. It is also illegal for property owners to allow minors to consume alcohol or other drugs on or in his/her property.

Some of the places where illegal chemical use, including drinking, takes place are in parties at homes, in fields and parks, and in vehicles on the way to and from social events. Many Helias students who do not drink or smoke marijuana refrain from participating in social activities because they do not want to face peer pressure to use. Both groups of students are suffering.

There is an on-line course available free of charge for parents with practical and valuable information on how to talk with your child about alcohol. We recommend that you visit <http://highschoolparents.alcohol.edu.com> to learn more about this opportunity. AlcoholEdu for Parents helps parents have a more effective conversation with their teen regarding underage drinking by helping them to understand social host liability, dispelling common misperceptions about underage drinking, assisting with strategies and techniques for monitoring and setting rules, giving guidance on what to do if your teen is experimenting, and getting expert advice for dealing with common situations.

Our school is taking an active role to discourage illegal chemical use, including underage drinking. Still Helias students and their parents may be forced to confront a variety of situations in which alcohol or other drugs are involved. We encourage you to talk to your child and tell them that chemical use, including alcohol by high school students, is illegal and will not be allowed. Here are some things to consider as your family faces these issues.

## Parties and Underage Drinking

There are usually two essential ingredients in the recipe for a party disaster: alcohol and absent parents. Parties at home are a natural way for young men and women to socialize and have fun together. Without planning and supervision, however, parties can lead to disaster. More than a few parents, some from Helias, have experienced the consequences of parties careening out of control. Homes can be damaged, sometimes severely. Young

people can become dangerously ill or injured. Police are sometimes needed to restore order. Parents are ultimately responsible for injuries or damages resulting from a party in their home.

### Keg Parties

Especially in the fall and the spring of the year, students from many schools participate in drinking parties. Sometimes other drugs may be present. Students using fake IDs buy kegs of beer and sell it to others. Older students sometimes exert peer pressure on younger students to attend, perpetuating a negative cycle. Alcohol impaired driving is always a concern at these unsupervised parties.

### Homecoming & Prom Nights

Helias does not sponsor any form of post homecoming or prom activities. Such post parties have become an area of concern for many parents. At many schools, including Helias, some couples have rented hotel rooms for their after prom party. Others have used family cabins as a gathering place, without adult supervision. Sometimes teens will change their plans at the last minute, leaving their parents in the dark as to exactly where they will be and who they will be with. As a school, we discourage overnight partying involving mixed groups of boys and girls.

Consider offering your child alternative ways to celebrate the night at a location where adult supervision is present. Know for certain where your son or daughter is throughout the night, and who he/she is with. Good communication between parents is an important ingredient for planning a safe and special prom or homecoming night. These guidelines can be applied to other dances as well.

### Chemicals and Sexual Activity

There are a number of negative behaviors that sometimes follow chemical use. Fighting is one. Sexual activity is another. It is challenging enough for young people to handle the variety of social situations they are exposed to when their minds are clear. Putting themselves under the influence of chemicals, including alcohol, can make social situations confusing and dangerous.

National studies tell us that 1 in 10 women between the ages of 16 and 24 will become victims of acquaintance rape or attempted rape. These statistics are alarming, and should not be ignored. Chemicals, including alcohol, are often involved in these sexual assaults.

As Catholics, we believe that sex outside of marriage is morally wrong, and should not be engaged in by teenagers. We believe that sexual intimacy is an expression of lifetime commitment. There are many adverse physical and psychological effects to casual sex that we are all aware of. Use of chemicals, including alcohol, only increases the odds that students will engage in casual sex.

# Sexual Activity

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At Helias Catholic we recognize that you, as parents, are the primary educators of your children. Through our programs and policies, however, we desire to work together with you to provide a common message to our students of respect, dignity and especially abstinence when it comes to sexual activity.

Because we recognize that a person's sexuality is a gift from God and that everyone deserves dignity and respect, we support the teachings of the church relative to sexuality. Across the curriculum we encourage respect and teach the sanctity of life. One of our many resources is the Catechism of the Catholic Church which tells us that our "sexuality affects all aspects of the human person in the unity of his body and soul." (Article 6, section 2332) The Catechism further teaches us that "everyone, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity" (Article 6, section 2333). It is our hope that we can partner with you to encourage sexual abstinence among our students, and teach the importance of chastity, respect for one's body, and the dignity of others.

# Attendance

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We ask parents to reinforce the importance of coming to school every day. Regular attendance is critical if students are going to be successful in school. No amount of "make-up work" can take the place of the daily interactions in the classroom.

Most students try to never miss a day, knowing the extended effort and time it takes to make up missed work. Some, however, look for any reason to miss school. This is where we need your help.

Please try to schedule appointments, driver's tests, family trips, etc. when school is not in session. Because our academic day ends early, many doctor and dentist appointments could be scheduled after 2:50 p.m. There are a number of student free days each semester which could also be used for routine appointments. When students see that you place a high priority on their being here every day, they will know that they should not even ask you to excuse them unless it is really necessary.

Helias does not recognize nor condone "skip days". If your student asks you to call in and lie for them so that he/she can have a skip day, please think seriously about the message that it sends to a young person when his/her parent is willing to lie for them.

# Sportsmanship

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Interscholastic athletics are an integral part of the total education and growth experience at Helias Catholic High School. Athletics are designed to affirm and promote the values stated in the school's mission statement.

Student athletes, coaches, and parents work together in a spirit of sportsmanship to create an environment where values can be revealed, tested, and proven relevant, both to participants and the entire community.

Through participation in athletics at Helias students will have the opportunity to mature physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually. They will be taught to take responsibility for personal growth by developing loyalty, pride, integrity, and commitment. Athletics provide the opportunity for the student-athlete to exhibit physical skills and knowledge in a variety of learning formats. Through participation in athletics the student-athlete is shown that God is active in all things and that individual and liturgical prayer will bring us closer to God. The student-athlete comes to trust that he/she is loved by God. Every member of the Helias community must seek to encourage, instill, and foster growth and development in all student-athletes.

Helias Catholic High School staff, athletes, and fans are called to a higher standard of sportsmanship because of who we say we are and what we say we believe. We profess Christ as the model lifestyle and expect Christian behavior and sportsmanship at all our events.

# Respect For Differences

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Part of our mission at Helias Catholic is to provide a safe and welcoming environment for all of our students. This kind of environment is created by fostering an attitude of respect and appreciation for the academic, economic and cultural differences within our school community. We ask you to help us create this environment by embracing diversity in your own family and by modeling for your child a respectful attitude toward those who are different from you.

# Homework

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Helias Catholic High School is not easy. Our students are challenged to work hard, read a lot, write well, develop good study habits, and work outside of class time in order to both succeed at Helias and be properly prepared for the challenges of college.

We believe that homework is an essential part of the learning process. It supports and reinforces the lectures, discussions and activities of the classroom. Homework takes many forms depending on the subject. Teachers may assign math problems or language exercises to practice a particular skill or concept. There may be reading to prepare for the next day's lesson. Students may be asked to write a reflection or answer some questions to check for understanding. Papers, projects, research and creative writing will also be assigned to extend the learning.

Every assignment is given for a reason and students are expected to complete the work and meet the deadlines established by the teacher. If there is no specific assignment on a given day, it is our expectation that students spend the time necessary to review or study for upcoming tests and assessments.

We ask parents to support their child in completing homework on a daily basis and to reinforce the importance of doing the work carefully, thoughtfully and promptly. We suggest providing a quiet and comfortable place for your son or daughter to study. You can also help them understand that the work they do must be their own and discuss with them the necessity for academic integrity.

Parents now have the ability and responsibility to visit the Helias parent portal technology tool (SIS). You can review your child's daily class homework assignments, view his/her academic grades, and communicate with a teacher using the Helias website.

# Style of Dress When Out of Uniform

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When Helias students have an “out of uniform” day or attend school sponsored events (e.g. dances, field trips, athletic competitions, fine arts performances) we ask that they follow some guidelines for their general style of dress. It’s our expectation that students will be neat, clean and modest and not have hair styles or accessories that draw undue attention. We ask your cooperation by encouraging your child to dress appropriately for Helias events.

# Financial Obligations

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We respect the fact that sending your child to Helias Catholic involves financial sacrifices on your part. The financing of your son or daughter’s education is accomplished through tuition, fundraising, and outside sources. To assure financial stability, it is important that Helias receive regular tuition payments from our families. We expect that our families will make tuition payments a priority as they pay their bills each month. We expect that families only make commitments to extracurricular programs that require additional payment after their primary financial commitment is taken care of.

# Stewardship

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Like all private schools, Helias Catholic depends upon the generosity of our parents, alumni parents, alumni and friends. Because tuition does not cover the full cost of educating a child at Helias, it is necessary for the Foundation / Development Office to raise funds annually in an effort to balance the budget. In addition, capital improvements are financed primarily through the generosity of our friends. We ask Helias families, which are financially able, to make a sacrificial gift above and beyond tuition charges and to consider Helias one of their primary charities as they plan their charitable giving each year.

# Working

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Many of our students work during the school year for various reasons. Perhaps the most common is so that the student can afford a nice vehicle and the insurance that goes with it.

We ask parents to remember that your child's primary responsibility at this time in their life is to fully reap the benefits of the educational opportunities offered so that they are well prepared for their move to college and the workplace. High school is a seven-hour-per-day job; add an hour or two of homework and your student is experiencing a full-time responsibility. Adding outside work, particularly when hours are inflexible and outside the control of the student, invariably creates conflicts and the need for prioritization. Typically that results in school work taking a backseat to the job.

We believe that it is realistic for a student, if not involved in time demanding extra-curriculars, to balance a controlled work schedule, academics, and social life. In athletics we have implemented a policy that students are limited to 2.5 hours per day and 12.5 hours per week (excluding travel, religious activities, or time spent voluntarily). We believe that is also about right for your child who wishes to work.

We encourage you to limit your child's job time to a maximum of three hours per day three days per week when we will be in school the next day and to no more than 20 hours per week (not that much unless at least half can be scheduled on weekends). Anything more deprives the child of necessary time for academics and leaves little time for family, social life, or religious activities. Your child will grow up very quickly and will work the rest of his/her life. He/she needs time to concentrate on school and to be with friends and family.

# Internet

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While the Internet provides incredible, instantaneous access to information, it also provides opportunities for young people to be involved in communication and activities that are inappropriate and dangerous.

As a parent it is important to monitor your child's use of the Internet. Many young people, using sites like MySpace and Facebook, unwittingly make personal information readily available to anyone and everyone who might view the site. The information provided often makes finding the young person and even having access to personal and financial information very easy. It has certainly led to many debacles and tragedies and created situations which have haunted young people for a long, long time.

You need to know if your child has a personal site and what he/she posts on it. Ask your child for information and frequently view the web yourself to find out what and with whom your child may be involved. WebMD suggests, "Make sure your kids know not to post personally identifying information – including pictures and videos of themselves – and not to meet anyone in person that they have only met online." They encourage parents to monitor their child's online activity, setting time limits, talking with children about safe usage, and installing software to block certain online activities.

Another issue which must be monitored is "cyber bullying". As the name implies, it is the use of e-mail, instant messaging, and text messaging to intimidate, threaten, or terrorize another. Obviously these situations must be taken very seriously. Young people must understand that such threats are always assumed to be legitimate, can be considered assault, are not acceptable by Helias students, and may become police issues.

Successfully raising a teenager depends upon communication and openness. Talk to your child. Warn him/her of the dangers that accompany seemingly harmless, innocent postings on the Internet or messages left in jest and make it your business to know how, when, and with whom your child is communicating.