

**Diocese of Rockville Centre Department of Education
Our Lady of Lourdes Elementary School**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Updated: 8/7/18

Why did Our Lady of Lourdes School close?

The school experienced a sudden and dramatic decline in enrollment. Only 47 students enrolled for the coming term. At that level of enrollment, the school was no longer able to offer students the high levels of academic quality and rigor, and the emotional spiritual development and nurturing they deserve.

Who made the decision to close the school?

A decision regarding the operational status of a parish elementary school is made in collaboration with the Pastor, Episcopal Vicar and the Department of Education. It was made in the best interests of all the children. Ultimately, however, the decision was dictated by extremely low enrollment numbers.

It seems this issue caught everyone by surprise, especially school parents. Were there warning signs?

We do think the speed of this decline was uncharacteristic. We will be looking into factors that may have contributed to the decline in enrollment.

What alternatives do the Our Lady of Lourdes students and parents have if they want to remain in Catholic Schools?

Every student who wishes to remain a part of the Catholic School family will be able to do so. Neighboring parish schools including St. Patrick (Bay Shore), Our Lady of Providence Regional (Central Islip), St. Mary (East Islip), Ss. Cyril and Methodius (Deer Park) or St. Martin of Tours (Amityville) have already accepted and are eager to welcome Our Lady of Lourdes students into their school communities. Visit https://www.drvcschools.org/school_websites for more information on all Catholic elementary and high schools in the Diocese of Rockville Centre.

What are you saying to the Our Lady of Lourdes community about this decision?

We want them to know we are deeply saddened at the closing of Our Lady of Lourdes Elementary School. It is a great loss for the students and parents, as well as the teachers and administrators who have served the school so faithfully. The goal has always been to provide a quality education, and to nurture and develop Our Lady of Lourdes students academically, emotionally and spiritually. Unfortunately, the unexpected and precipitous drop in enrollment from 206 students N-8 at the close of the 2018 academic year to a current enrollment of 47 students – makes the goal of providing a quality education to nurture and develop students academically, emotionally, and spiritually, unsustainable.

What support is the Department of Education providing to the affected students and parents?

The Department of Education will send out information on Catholic schools that parents and students may wish to consider. The Department will provide the assistance and support needed during this transition period. The Diocesan Office of Human Resources is offering services and support to employees affected by the school closure.

Will DRVC Schools continue to see declines in student enrollment and more school closings?

Catholic education is critical to the life of the church and the communities we serve. Many factors, including demographic and economic shifts, impact enrollment in our schools. We continually evaluate these trends, and the performance of our schools, to make decisions in line with our larger, long-term vision to advance Catholic education and Catholic life on Long Island, with financially strong schools that maintain the highest standards of academic excellence and nurture the spiritual growth of our students and school communities.

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