

# St. Mary School Student Handbook



## 2017-2018 Teach As Jesus Would Teach

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## **SCHOOL SONG**

### **THE BELLS OF ST. MARY**

The bells of Saint Mary  
I hear they are calling  
The children the young ones  
To guide on their way  
With Jesus and Mary  
To love and protect us  
The bells will ring  
They'll always ring  
For you and me

The bells of Saint Mary  
A century they've called us  
Through tear and with laughter  
We thank God today  
And so we'll continue  
In grace and with growing  
The bells will ring  
They'll always ring  
For you and me

Oh bells of Saint Mary  
We always will love you  
With your inspiration  
We never will fail  
Your chimes will forever  
Bring sweet memories of you  
So proudly ring out  
While we sing out  
Hail, hail, hail

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## **INTRODUCTION TO ST. MARY SCHOOL**

### **PARISH MISSION STATEMENT**

As members of St. Mary Parish, Gainesville, Texas, our primary mission is to live within the Church community in a manner faithful and pleasing to God, our Father, and to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ the Savior of all people. As Catholics, the opportunity to attend Mass and receive the Holy Eucharist in a spirit of shared celebration is prerequisite to fulfillment of our mission.

We are Christians who serve as witnesses to Christ's presence on earth and His ongoing ministry in society. United in this belief, we are called to work together in this ministry by serving those in need, worshipping, and forming a Catholic community bonded by love, humility, and compassion.

Through the power of the Holy Spirit and the gifts and talents of our members and the community at large, we are committed to continued stewardship of existing programs including RCIA and the religious education of all members. The maintenance and growth of St. Mary School is an essential element of our stewardship mission.

### **SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT**

St. Mary Catholic School exists to serve Jesus Christ by providing excellence in education and spiritual development of the whole person within the framework of the Gospel and traditions of the Catholic Church. Our mission is to foster a faith filled community of lifelong learners and compassionate leaders committed to living out Catholic values and following Jesus' example through prayer, service and love.

### **HISTORY**

St. Mary School was established in 1891 by the Benedictine Sisters. In 1902 four School Sisters of Notre Dame took charge of the school which was then a six-room frame building. Thirty-two pupils were enrolled that August which increased to seventy-five by the end of the year. The next school term 120 students enrolled. In 1905 high school subjects were offered for the first time. An official high school building opened in 1938. The present St. Mary Elementary School was erected in 1948. It was the first major structure built in Gainesville after World War II. The high school was disbanded in 1952. The School Sisters of Notre Dame phased out of direct administration and classroom instruction in 1984. The building was completely remodeled and air conditioning installed in 1979. A junior high section was added in 1985. A gymnasium was erected in 1991 in celebration of St. Mary Parish Centennial. In 2004 a new Early Learning Childhood Center with four classrooms was built onto the current school building. The staff continues a tradition of working with parents to stress the infinite worth of each individual students.

### **NOTE TO STUDENTS ABOUT PROCEDURES**

This handbook's purpose is to help make St. Mary Catholic School a place of academic excellence, with an atmosphere of Christian compassion and respect. One of the ways we can achieve this is by having a clear understanding of what is expected, why it is expected, and what the results are when these expectations are not met. This handbook will serve as the standard for expectations of the students and their families. These policies are a collaboration of federal and state laws as governed by the State of Texas, policies as mandated by the Fort Worth Catholic Diocese, and rules as approved by the St. Mary Catholic School Advisory Council.

This handbook is not intended to cover all diocesan and school policies and procedures. The purpose is to provide information about the most common areas that affect students and parents at Saint Mary Catholic School.

For more information, clarification, or to address topics not covered, please contact the school principal. The principal reserves the right to amend the handbook at any time. In all cases, the definitive interpretation of the handbook remains solely with the principal and/or pastor.

# ACADEMICS

## ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITY

Parents often ask how they can help their child in school. What can they do to ensure success? While some of the responsibilities may seem simplistic, they are all essential. As you can see, it takes more than teacher input. It also takes a firm commitment from students and parents equally. What happens in school is only a small part of the educational process. The follow-up at home, by both student and parents, is vital for success.

As parents and educators, we are dedicated to helping children become responsible citizens. Students must learn not only responsible conduct behavior but also responsible academic behavior. To this end, students are ultimately responsible for completing their own assignments and homework and for remembering to bring their own books, homework, assignments, and materials to class. Students are discouraged from calling home for forgotten books, homework, or materials.

Teachers try their best to notify parents if a student has lost a book, material or have received zeroes for missing assignments; however, it is the ultimate responsibility of the student to keep track of school assignments, grades, and materials and to relay this information to his or her parent. Students should make arrangements with teachers or outside tutors for extra help if further academic assistance is needed. At the beginning of the year, teachers will send home the times they are available to give students extra help.

### **The Teacher Will:**

- Present material
- Explain the subject
- Model material
- Answer questions
- Provide practice
- Reteach and clarify
- Assess and grade
- Encourage students
- Create a safe environment

### **The Student Should:**

- Listen to presentation
- Question if uncertain
- Follow examples
- Record assignments
- Review daily lessons discussed in class
- Do homework and turn it in on time
- Honor due dates
- Have required supplies
- Keep track of materials
- Be prepared for class

### **The Parent is encouraged to:**

- Make school a priority
- Provide quiet work area
- Provide student supplies
- Monitor homework and due dates
- Ensure daily review in all academic subjects
- Reward good work and provide consequences for poor work
- Ask to see graded work
- Encourage reasonable bedtime

### **Acknowledge QUALITY**

### **Strive for QUALITY**

### **Encourage QUALITY**

### **QUALITY WORK IS:**

**EXCELLENT  
CREATIVE  
MECHANICALLY CORRECT  
METICULOUS AND TIDY**

**ON TIME  
ERROR FREE  
PRECISE  
DESERVING OF RECOGNITION**

## Admission

In accordance with the Texas Catholic Conference accreditation standards, St. Mary Catholic School complies with all age and immunization requirements of the State of Texas and the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth. As a Catholic, non-public school dedicated to academic excellence within a disciplined, value-centered environment, the school actively seeks students and families who have a positive attitude toward the value of a traditional Catholic education.

St. Mary Catholic School requires that a student entering the PK3 program be 3 years of age by September 1st. Students entering the PK4 program must be 4 years of age by September 1st. Students must be potty trained. According to Texas State Law, a child must be 5 years of age by September 1st to enter Kindergarten. A child must be 6 years of age by September 1st to enter first grade.

The most important qualification for acceptance into the school is the Administration's assessment that the applicant will enjoy a successful school experience. This assessment is made in consultation with the family, as well as through examination of the student's past academic and conduct records. The aforementioned records must be provided by parents prior to admission. If a child has been diagnosed with a learning disability, it is the parent's responsibility to notify the administration and submit documentation to the principal (preferably before assessment). All new students are conditionally admitted for the first nine weeks.

**According to Diocesan Policy #5000** —*No student has a right to attend a diocesan school. The schools and the Diocese retain the right not to allow a student to continue attending or to re-enroll in a school. No teacher, principal, or pastor has the right to agree to consent to any individual having a right to continue as a student. Advanced enrollment, pre-enrollment, or continuing enrollment of a student is a conditional enrollment subject to review and termination by the school at any time. The conduct of the student or the student's parents may be grounds for the school revoking the enrollment of a student. Prior to the first day of school, the school does not have to state the reasons or have grounds for the revoking of a conditional enrollment of a student.*

## Non-discriminatory Policy

St. Mary Catholic School is in compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other federal statutes of non-discrimination in its employment and admission practices. It admits qualified students of any race, color, sex, national or ethnic origins to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students of the school.

## Entrance Assessment

Entrance assessments may be administered to all new students entering K through 8th grade. New families will be interviewed by the Principal and/or the pastor.

## Registration

Each returning family will submit their re-enrollment package through Renweb starting February 1st. New families will submit an application for enrollment through our website [www.smsmustangs.com](http://www.smsmustangs.com) The following admission order and criteria will be considered in accepting the application.

Order:

1. Currently enrolled students
2. Siblings of currently enrolled students
3. St. Mary Catholic Church parishioners
4. Catholics from other parishes
5. Students of other faiths

Criteria:

1. All tuition and fees at the time of application must be current.
2. Students must have shown appropriate growth in academic and behavioral standards (Summer school may be a requirement for re-registration).
3. All students and parents jointly agree to abide by the following:
  - Advisory Council Policies
  - Administrative Policies and Regulations
  - School Rules and Classroom Procedures

## **Admission Documentation Policy**

For all new students, the following documents must be provided to the administration before enrollment is complete:

1. Admission Application
2. Copy of official state birth certificate
3. Copy of official Baptismal certificate (for Catholics)
4. Sacramental record of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist, where applicable for Catholics
5. Final report card copies from previous school(s)
6. Results of any standardized testing
7. Signed Transcript Request (release for previous school records for grades 1-8)
8. Completed Diocese of Fort Worth Health Report (including school physical)
9. Immunization records signed by a physician (no religious exclusions)
10. Information about special health needs
11. Documentation regarding psychological, medical or educational evaluations.
12. Registration fee paid in full

## **AWARDS AND HONORS**

St. Mary School is proud of the many accomplishments of its students and strives to give recognition in academics, sports, and special achievements. The following is used for recognizing the academic achievements of the students: Principal's Honor Roll-an average of 95 or above; A Honor Roll-an average between 90 and 94; B Honor Roll-an average between 80 and 89. The different honor rolls are sent to the local newspaper each reporting period.

St. Mary School honors its top graduates by determining the Valedictorian and Salutatorian at the end of their eighth grade year. To qualify for these honors the student must have attended St. Mary School during their 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade years. Valedictorian and Salutatorian are determined by their cumulative grade point average through the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of their 8<sup>th</sup> grade year.

St. Mary School offers the Accelerated Reader Program to all students. This program is designed to promote reading. Teachers in grades 3-8 will require students to earn AR points. For other students, it is an extra-curricular program. Any student who earns AR points will be allowed to redeem them for special rewards.

## **CONTENT MASTERY PROGRAM**

The Content Mastery Program offers both enrichment activities and remediation for students in grades K4-8. Classroom teachers must recommend students for the program. There is constant communication between the content mastery teacher and each classroom teacher to ensure that the needs of each individual student are met.

## **CURRICULUM**

St. Mary School offers a strong academic program in a Christian environment. In addition, the faculty provides religious instruction in the Catholic faith. Students in grades K-8 are required to attend Mass each week. Students in K3 and K4 will attend on designated days.

The Early Learning Center uses a program that is committed to developing and preparing the young child for elementary school.

Students in grades 1-8 receive instruction in religion, language arts, math, social studies, science, computer literacy, Spanish, music, art, and physical education. They may also participate in extra-curricular academic competitions throughout the year such as NTIL (North Texas Independent League) and/or PSIA (Private Schools Interscholastic Association).

The curriculum of St. Mary Catholic School is the adopted curriculum of all schools in the Diocese of Fort Worth, which is based on the accreditation standards of the Texas Catholic Conference on Education and on national standards as outlined in the curriculum of the Archdiocese of Hartford. The curriculum includes Religion and all subjects required by the State of Texas and Texas Catholic Conference.

St. Mary School is accredited by the Texas Catholic Conference under the Texas Education Agency. Accreditation is every ten years with annual renewals. St. Mary School last official accreditation visit was in 2015.

## **GRADES**

Numerical grades will be used on papers and tests. Report card grades for the students in grades 1-8 will also be numerical. The lowest passing grade is a 70. Special needs students may have grade modifications put into place.

Students in all grades will receive academic report cards each nine weeks. Report cards issued after the first and third grading periods will be given to parents at a scheduled parent-teacher conference. These conferences give both the parents and the teacher the opportunity to discuss the child's academic and social progress. If a parent is unable to come on the conference day, other arrangements must be made with the teacher. Grades are posted weekly on RenWeb so that parents have access to current information at all times. It is the parents' responsibility to use this information to keep track of their child's/children's progress.

## **HOMEWORK GUIDELINES**

Homework is an extension of classroom instruction. It helps to develop concepts presented in the classroom, provides additional practice with skills, and helps a student master the goals and objectives presented by the classroom teacher. In addition, having homework assignments to do on a regular basis helps to foster systematic study habits. A student will realize that homework is a vital part of the educational process if both the teacher and the parents hold the child accountable for the quality of the work.

Individual teachers are responsible for the amount and type of homework assignment. Students in grades K-8 will have homework. The teachers will review the assignments and provide feedback to the students.

The approximate time spent on homework may be: K3& K4—10-15 minutes; K—20 minutes; Grades 1 & 2—30 minutes; Grades 3, 4, & 5—45 minutes; Grades 6, 7, & 8—1 to 1-1/2 hours.

Students are expected to take home all materials needed to complete homework assignments. Students are also responsible for returning assignments on the date they are due.

Failure to Complete Homework in Grades Pre-K—3: Students will miss recess until all homework is completed.

Failure to Complete Homework in Grades 4—8: Students will stay in detention that day until 4:30 p.m. Late homework assignments will be penalized 10 points. At the end of each class, each teacher will send a homework form to the office for every child who will be in detention that day. The office will notify the parent that the student will need to be picked up at 4:30, and the form will be sent to the principal. The principal will be responsible for detention each day. When each assignment is completed, the form will be attached to the assignment and returned to the teacher. If a child is unable to finish the work in one day, he/she will be allowed to complete the work at home that evening. Detention will be assigned the following day only if the work has not been completed and submitted to the teacher. Students who are assigned to detention will attend after school athletic practices after 4:30. FEES WILL BE CHARGED FOR DETENTION AT THE EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM RATE.

The exception will be late homework due to an excused absence. One day will be given to complete the work for each day the student has been absent. Therefore, if a child has a three day excused absence, he/she will be given three days to complete all of the missed work. Students are not to be allowed to leave the classroom to complete an assignment.

## **NO PASS-NO PARTICIPATION RULE**

Since educating the students is the main focus at St. Mary School, it is very important to maintain a balance between education and extra-curricular activities. Because of this fact, St. Mary School has adopted a no pass-no participation policy for its students. Grades will be checked according to the following guidelines.

First three weeks of school: All students are eligible to participate. Grades will not be checked until after the students have been in school for three weeks. After the three weeks are over, the principal will check the grades of each participant by 9:00 a.m. the day of the activity. If the activity takes place over a weekend, eligibility will be determined by 9:00 a.m. Friday morning. Students who have a failing grade will be ineligible for that activity. If a student has grade modifications in place, the principal will decide on his/her eligibility.

At the end of each grading period: If a student is ineligible at the end of a grading period, that child will remain ineligible for three weeks. After the three weeks are over, the principal will check the grades of each participant by 9:00 a.m. the day of the activity. If the activity takes place over a weekend, eligibility will be determined by 9:00 a.m. Friday morning. Students who have a failing grade will be ineligible for that activity. If a student has grade modifications in place, the principal will decide on his/her eligibility.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

The TCCED (Texas Catholic Conference Education Department) requires all children to participate in physical education class unless an excuse from a doctor is on file in the school office. If a child is too ill to participate on a particular day, the parent should send a note to the classroom teacher. The teacher will see that the physical education teacher receives this note.

## **TEXTBOOKS**

All textbooks are reviewed annually. The Diocese of Fort Worth updates the list of acceptable textbooks periodically. Textbooks are each student's responsibility and may be covered to minimize damage. Students will be responsible for replacing lost, damaged, or destroyed books.

## **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL POLICIES**

### **ARRIVING AT SCHOOL**

School hours are from 7:50 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. for the students in the Early Learning Center and from 7:50 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. for those in grades 1-8. All students must report to the parish hall each morning. The parish hall door is unlocked at 7:20 a.m. All students are required to be in their assigned places by 7:50 a.m. as the morning assembly is an important part of the school day. At this time an opening prayer, the pledge to the flag and morning announcements are made. Afterwards the classes will be dismissed with the teachers to walk quietly to the classrooms. The parish hall door will be locked, and the main office door will be unlocked. To provide for the safety of the children, all doors to the school will remain locked during the day with the exception of the main entrance. Visitors to the school must check in at the main office so they can be admitted to the building through the security door.

### **AFTERNOON DISMISSAL**

Students should be picked up promptly at the end of the school day. At 3:15 p.m. all Early Learning Center students will be dismissed. They must be picked up on the north side of the ELC building. Students will not be dismissed through the main office. The traffic will go east on Mustang Alley which is a one-way street. Each student will be placed into the appropriate vehicle by a staff person. Adults should not park in the line and get out of their vehicles for any reason. Traffic must continue to flow. On the first day of school, each child will receive a placard with his/her name printed on it. This is to be hung from the rearview mirror to expedite the dismissal process.

At 3:25 p.m. all students in grades 1-8 will assemble in the Parish Hall and be dismissed after prayer. Students will not be dismissed through the main office. Driving through the car line is the safest way to pick up students. People who choose to walk up to the Parish Hall to pick up students are to park on the street in front of the church/school. They will wait outside the junior high doors (these are the doors by the after school room) and a teacher will be there to call the children to the door. People walking must not cross through the line of cars moving under the canopy. They need to go directly to the sidewalk, and go to their vehicles. The adults walking with their child(ren) need to be very careful as cars will be leaving the parking lot through the driveway.

Adults who drive through the car line will enter from the east on Foreline Street and assemble in a line on the gym black-top. A staff person will load each car with the appropriate student(s) as it pulls through the covered area in front of the Parish Hall. Cars will go north on Weaver Street or east on Hall Street to exit. It is imperative that the line of cars move as quickly as possible. Therefore, any person who needs extra time for any reason should park and walk to the building to handle the situation.

Students whose parents are employees of St. Mary School will report to the Parish Hall for prayer and will be dismissed to be supervised by their parents when the other students are taken to the After School Program.

Any ELC child who has not been picked up by 3:30 and any child in grades 1-8 who has not been picked up by 3:45 will go to the After School Program. The parent will be billed at a rate of \$6.00 per hour/per child or \$8.00 per hour/per family. No child will be allowed to be unsupervised after school. Each student will only be allowed to leave with people authorized to pick up that child. Therefore, parents must notify the school office if anyone other than a parent is to pick up a student.

### **EARLY DISMISSAL**

School will dismiss at 12:00 p.m. on days designated as early dismissal days. Parents need to pick up students promptly on these days using the same afternoon dismissal guidelines. The after-school program is offered on most early dismissal days. Parents can check the monthly school calendar to determine when after-school care is available. The dates will be printed on the school calendar that is sent home each month. Any changes will be emailed through RenWeb immediately. **Lunch will not be served. Students attending the After School Program will need to bring a sack lunch.**

### **EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

Non-scheduled changes to the school day will be reported to KGAF, KXII TV (Channel 12), and Channel 5. Since there are other schools named St. Mary School in the area, parents need to be sure to look for the inclusion of the word Gainesville in the announcement. St. Mary School will post information on their website and Facebook page. A school email will also be sent through RenWeb.

### **EMERGENCY SCHOOLWIDE LOCKDOWN**

Should an emergency arise that requires St. Mary School to be locked-down for security purposes, students will not be permitted to leave the building until the situation is resolved. In addition, visitors will not be allowed to enter the building. The principal will make decisions based on all of the information available at the time and do what is necessary to keep the students and staff as safe as possible.

### **ATTENDANCE POLICIES**

#### **ABSENCE**

A student's attendance is extremely important for learning. Anyone present less than two hours in the morning or two hours in the afternoon is marked absent for that part of the day. Absences due to illnesses, family emergencies, or medical appointments are considered excused. The parent should call or email the office before 10:00 a.m. on the day of an absence to let the school know the reason for the child's absence or may send a note explaining the reason when the child returns to school. Students who are absent for three days or more due to a medical condition must bring a doctor's note to be readmitted to class. Failure to do this could result in the child receiving an unexcused absence. All students must attend school 90% of the days in each semester so that advancement eligibility is not jeopardized. Summer school may be required for those students who have excessive absences. These decisions will be made by the principal. Students may not participate in extra-curricular activities on any day that they have been absent from school. Any exceptions to this rule will need to be approved by the principal.

### **HEALTH PROGRAM AND PROCEDURES**

For the safety of each student, parents or guardians must complete their Emergency Information located on-line in the enrollment/re-enrollment tabs. If information changes at any time during the school year, please promptly notify the school office.

## IMMUNIZATIONS

Students must be current on immunizations to enroll. Religious objections to immunizations are not accepted. Students with medical exemptions must have a doctor's note.

## MEDICATION

So that all safeguards may be taken to protect the health of the child, the school office must be notified before the first day of school, concerning prescribed medications and/or any special physical conditions of the child. Diocesan policy states that necessary medications such as those needed for epileptics, asthmatics, diabetics and hyperkinetic may be given at school. Acetaminophen and ibuprofen may be dispensed if necessary with written permission of a doctor. **ONLY DOCTOR PRESCRIBED MEDICATIONS IN THE ORIGINAL CONTAINER WILL BE ADMINISTERED TO THE STUDENT.** Medication must be accompanied by the appropriate form. The form and instructions for administering must be provided. The form must include specific dosage and times. Medication should be directly handed from the parent/guardian to the school nurse or office personnel. Medication may not be carried or kept by students. It **CANNOT** be in backpacks, lunch boxes, etc. This includes throat lozenges and cough drops.

### Illness/Injury During School Hours

Should a child become ill or injured during the school day, and the matter cannot be handled at school, the parent will be called to make further arrangements. A child whose temperature is 100 degrees or above must be picked up from school as soon as possible. Please list an emergency contact that can arrive within 30 minutes of notification.

A parent must keep a child home if he/she is unable to follow the classroom routine or symptoms would prevent learning in the classroom. The following guidelines will be enforced but may not be all inclusive. Final decision will be made by the principal and or staff.

### Infectious and Contagious Disease

#### Guidelines for Excluding Students from School

##### Keep Child at Home Guidelines

Oral temperature of 100 or above /vomiting  
Nausea or severe stomach pains  
Marked drowsiness or malaise  
Sore throat, acute cold or persistent cough  
Red, inflamed or discharging eyes  
Acute skin rashes or eruptions  
Swollen glands around the jaws, ears or neck  
Suspected scabies or impetigo  
Any skin lesion in the weeping stage  
Earache  
Pediculosis (head lice)

Other symptoms suggestive of infectious illness  
Diarrhea

##### Return to school Guidelines

Symptom free for 24 hours  
Symptom free  
Symptom free upon arrival to school  
Symptom free upon arrival to school  
Written physician release  
Written physician release  
Written physician release  
Written physician release  
Covered and diagnosed as non-infectious  
Symptom free  
Nit free-must be cleared by school nurse before readmitted to school  
written physician release  
Symptom free

## **MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS**

Doctor and dental appointments should be scheduled after school hours. If a student must be taken for an appointment during the regular school day, a note must be given to the child's teacher in the morning. Even though students will be picked up through the office, the teacher needs to know prior to the child's departure so the child will be ready to leave. Students must be signed out of school by a parent/guardian. The sign-out book is located in the school office.

## **TARDINESS**

Parents are responsible for getting their children to school by 7:50 a.m. The morning announcements, prayer time, and the pledge to the flag are an important part of the school day; and all students are required to attend. For safety and security reasons, parents need to accompany tardy students into the building. Children who enter the classroom after the start of the day disrupt the teacher and the other students. Therefore, after a child is tardy three times, one of his/her parents will be required to have a conference with the principal to discuss the situation. In addition, three tardies equal one absence.

## **DISCIPLINE**

Promoting a safe, Christian environment is the primary goal of St. Mary School. Every student must realize that he/she is responsible for his/her actions. St. Mary School views discipline as a subject that needs to be constantly addressed. When a student chooses to break a rule, he/she also chooses to suffer whatever consequences are appropriate. Students are expected to learn that discipline is necessary for spiritual, physical, and intellectual growth to occur. Each teacher has a classroom discipline plan which is sent home to the parents on the first day of school. This plan will list classroom guidelines and consequences.

Since an quality learning environment is important, all students are expected to follow rules that will foster this. Students should obey the rules out of respect. If a student does not exhibit sufficient academic or social self-discipline, appropriate actions will be taken. These measures will follow the Zero Tolerance Behavior Policy approved by the St. Mary School Advisory Council. These measures can lead to suspension and expulsion. The following basic rules are given as guidelines for all students.

### **Bullying, Fighting or Harassment**

St Mary's Catholic School recognizes that each person has great dignity because each is made in the image and likeness of God; therefore, each person deserves respect. Respect and dignity are based on the Ten Commandments; we do not steal, lie, cheat, hurt a person in spirit or body, or do anything that would hurt the dignity of another. Such inappropriate behavior will be handled by the teacher and or principal.

In union with our fellow schools in the Diocese of Fort Worth, the staff and teachers of St. Mary Catholic School will not tolerate fighting, harassment or bullying on or off campus while students are under their supervision. Fighting, intimidation, bullying and harassment of any kind are inappropriate and also unacceptable. SMS faculty has been trained to recognize and address inappropriate behavior. Depending upon the type and severity of the offense, a student may be given a disciplinary referral or a detention. A student may also be suspended or expelled.

*Note: Parents, please communicate with your child's teacher should you have a concern in this area.*

## **CLASSROOM PROCEDURES**

1. Attend and be on time for all classes.
2. Be prepared for each class with appropriate materials and assignments.
3. Be properly attired as explained in the dress code.
4. Demonstrate respect for the rights of staff members and fellow students.
5. Demonstrate respect for school property and the property of others.
6. Stand when an adult enters a classroom. Use an appropriate greeting such as, "Good Morning/Afternoon." Address adults with an appropriate title such as sir or ma'am.
7. Do not eat in the classrooms, library, or computer room. (Supervised activities are an exception to this rule.)
8. Do not chew gum on school property.
9. Keep desks and lockers neat and orderly. Periodic inspections will be held.
10. Do not sit on bookshelves, desks, or tables.
11. Do not run in the halls.
12. Respect the privacy of any staff member. Never tamper with an adult's desk, computer, purse, etc.
13. Never show disrespect to anyone.
14. Comply with all classroom rules.
15. St. Mary School is not responsible for lost items. Students in the junior high school may put locks on the lockers. If a student has a lock on his/her locker, an extra key must be given to the homeroom teacher.

## **CONDUCT OUT OF TOWN**

The same rules apply when students are off the campus as when they are on the campus. Students must remember that their behavior on a school trip can reflect on the reputation of the school and the community. Students need to keep this in mind and act accordingly.

## **CONDUCT WITH VISITORS**

All visitors are to be treated with courtesy and respect. The goal is for a visitor to leave with a positive feeling concerning St. Mary School.

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND CELLPHONES**

St Mary Catholic School prohibits students from the use of electronic devices and cell phones during school hours. Electronic devices and cell phones are also prohibited during the After School Program and during extra-curricular activities both on campus and while traveling. These include, but are not limited to cell phones, lap tops, Ipads, Ipods, portable gaming devices, smart phone watches and electronic books.

If a student is caught with an electronic device or cell phone, parents will be notified; and it will be confiscated and returned at the end of the school day. A second offense will require the parent to pick up the device in the school office. Additional offenses will require a parental conference with the principal.

If a student needs to contact a parent during school hours, they may use the phone located in the school office. During extra-curricular events, the responsible teacher/coach will contact the parent for the student.

**PARENTS: State Law prohibits cell phone usage in school zones.**

## **JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES**

### **Disciplinary Infractions**

A verbal warning should be enough to correct inappropriate behavior. If a verbal warning is ineffective, the staff member may assign consequences. Three consequences equal one infraction. Consequences include but are not limited to: missing recess, silent lunch table, sentences, and isolated lunch. Disciplinary Infractions can be issued immediately for inappropriate behavior. A parent will be notified of any Disciplinary Infractions via email through Renweb. Parents are encouraged to have a conference with the teacher to discuss discipline concerns. If questions remain, parents can request a conference with the principal. Three Disciplinary Infractions equal one offense and will be treated following the Guidelines for Punishing Offenses.

Disciplinary Infractions might include:

1. Chewing gum or eating without permission.
2. Talking without permission.
3. Dress code violations.
4. Repeatedly being late for class or not having the materials necessary for class.
5. Leaving items out in the hallway.
6. Failure to turn in or make up homework. (See Homework Guidelines.)
7. Discourteous behavior.
8. Littering the campus.
9. Leaving the cafeteria without permission.
10. Misuse of school equipment.
11. Throwing rocks or other objects at recess.
12. Playing tackling games at recess.
13. Returning to the building without permission when at recess.
14. Running and jumping in the hall.
15. Loud talking in the halls or restrooms.
16. Failure to keep hands, feet, and objects to oneself.
17. Inappropriate behavior during Mass.
18. Other inappropriate behaviors left to the discretion of the staff member.

### **Guidelines for Punishing Offenses**

- 1st Offense: 1 hour of detention after school on an assigned day.  
2nd Offense: 2 hours of detention after school on two consecutive days.  
3rd Offense: 3 hours of Saturday detention.  
4th Offense: 1 day of in-school suspension/parents must attend a zero tolerance meeting.  
5th Offense: 2 days of in-school suspension/parents must attend a zero tolerance meeting.  
6th Offense: 1 day of out-of-school suspension/parents must attend a zero tolerance meeting.  
7th Offense: Possible suspension/expulsion from school.

A student will move directly to the next offense level if he/she fails to serve the assigned punishment. After serving that punishment, he/she will also be required to serve the one originally assigned.

If a student reaches the third offense level, he/she will be required to attend Saturday detention. After this has been satisfactorily completed, the student will be entitled to have one offense removed from his/her record. This will put the student back on the 2nd Offense level. Hopefully, this will encourage the student to learn from past behavior and give him/her the opportunity to keep from moving up to higher punishments. If the student continues to receive infractions, he/she will only be allowed to serve two additional Saturday detentions. After this, the opportunity for infraction removal will be revoked; and the student will move up to the next punishment.

## IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION, SUSPENSION, AND EXPULSION

Immediate in-school suspension, suspension, or expulsion will result from behavior that is totally unacceptable. The principal will decide on the particular consequence imposed. The severity of the situation and the individual circumstances will be taken into consideration when this decision is made. This behavior includes but is not limited to the following:

- A. Smoking.
- B. Use of alcohol.
- C. Use of drugs.
- D. Cheating.
- E. Lying.
- F. Vandalism.
- G. Threatening harm to students, staff, or property.
- H. Stealing.
- I. Fighting.
- J. Skipping school or leaving school without permission.
- K. Bringing a weapon to school.
- L. Hazing.
- M. Using vulgarity.
- N. Using the internet for inappropriate reasons such as playing games, checking email, being in chat rooms, etc.
- O. Use of a cell phone (calling, texting, taking pictures, etc.) or other electronic devices.
- P. Racial slurs.
- Q. Inappropriate displays of affection.
- R. Sexual harassment.\*
- S. Harassment/Bullying\*\* \*Examples of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment include but are not limited to: sexual propositions, off-color jokes, inappropriate physical contact, innuendoes, sexual offers, looks, and gestures.

\*\*Harassment is defined as one person making repeated (more than one) verbal or physical contacts with another person who does not want these contacts. Bullying usually involves some type of force. This can be done verbally, physically, or socially.

A child who is in in-school suspension is prohibited from participating in activities that occur during the extended school day. Thus the student is excluded from all school activities that occur after school hours on the day that the child is in ISS. This includes but is not limited to athletic practices, academic practices, athletic competitions, academic competitions, play performances, etc.

## DRESS CODE

Students of St. Mary School represent the school and are expected to be modestly dressed and well-groomed at all times. All students are required to wear school uniforms. Free dress days may be specified by the principal. The principal will have final say on all uniform concerns.

Uniform clothing (except for the plaid skirt and jumper) may be purchased at any clothing store. Visible logos or emblems such as Polo, Dockers, Dickey's, etc., are not permitted and must be removed from clothing before being worn to school. The French Toast Uniform Company ([www.frenchtoast.com](http://www.frenchtoast.com)) is the only carrier of the St. Mary School green plaid jumper and skirt. All students must keep shirts tucked in when on school property or on a school-sponsored trip. Students in grades 3-8 are required to wear a belt at all times if the uniform bottom being worn has belt loops. Belts must be black or brown.

### **Regular School Day Uniform**

Belts must be black or brown. Students in grades 3-8 are required to wear a belt at all times if the uniform bottom being worn has belt loops.

### Boys

Shorts/Pants - navy blue or khaki. Shorts may not be more than two inches above or two inches below the knee.  
Shirts - Solid white or navy shirt with a collar.

### Girls

Bottoms - St. Mary plaid jumper or skirt; navy blue or khaki skirt, jumper, skorts, slacks, or shorts. Skirts, jumpers, and skorts must be of conservative length.

Modesty Shorts - all girls must wear shorts under skirts and jumpers.

Shirts - solid white or navy blue shirt with a collar.

All undergarments must not be visible.

### Shoes

Sport shoes must be solid white with white shoelaces or solid black with black shoelaces. Socks must be black or white, and shoelaces must be tied.

Examples of sport shoes that **do** meet the dress code!



Examples of sport shoes that **do not** meet the dress code!



### **Dress Uniform**

***This is the required uniform for grades K3-5 on Mass day and other special days.***

*Girls - St. Mary School green plaid skirt, scooter or jumper, a white polo or blouse and solid black or white sport shoes.*



*Boys - navy pants, a white polo or button down shirt and solid black or white sport shoes.*



***This is the required uniform for Junior High Students on Mass day and other special days.***

Junior High Girls - St. Mary green plaid skirt, a white short-sleeve pointy collar blouse, white knee high socks and solid black (no embellishments) Mary Jane style shoe.



Junior High Boys: Navy pants, a white button down shirt, black dress belt, black dress socks and solid black dress shoes.



**Athletic Apparel:** In grades 6-8 black shorts and a white Mustang Athletic shirt must be worn for P.E. classes and athletic practices. The shorts must be long enough to reach the mid-thigh.

**Makeup:** Conservative makeup may be worn by girls in the junior high school.

**Hairstyles:** Hairstyles must be neat in appearance. In addition hair should be combed, clean, and worn so that it is kept out of a student's eyes and off of the face. No outlandish or faddish hairstyles are permitted. Students may not wear tails, racing stripes, lines etched into the hair, hair extensions, or any type of unnatural color highlights. The hair length for boys is shorter than the collar and above the ears and eyes.

**Jewelry:** Girls may wear small earrings (no dangle earrings, one earring in each lobe), a watch, a bracelet, one ring and a necklace. Boys may wear a watch, one ring, a bracelet and a necklace. Staff members may ask students to remove any jewelry that causes disruption to individuals or other students. Jewelry must be modest, conservative and should not distract from the school uniform.

Sweaters, sweatshirts, hair ribbons, and auxiliary clothing that will be worn all day should be navy and/or white with no visible logos.

Artificial fingernails are not permitted for any students. Girls may wear natural colored fingernail polish and each finger must be painted the same color.

No visible tattoos or body piercings.

Caps and hats are for outdoor wear only.

Junior high school students will receive an infraction for any dress code violation. In addition, violations that cause the classroom routine to be disrupted will be handled immediately by the principal.

### **SPIRIT WEAR GUIDELINES**

The following dress code will be allowed only on designated days to promote school spirit. This privilege can be revoked at the principal's discretion.

1. All girls through the fifth grade may wear blue and white cheerleading suits with modesty shorts or bloomers.
2. All students may wear a St. Mary School spirit shirt. Navy or khaki uniform bottoms must be worn. Other T-shirts and jeans are not allowed.
3. The coaches and sponsors of the cheerleaders and players will tell these students how to dress on game days.
4. Parents need to check the calendar carefully so that children do not come to school dressed in spirit wear on regular uniform days. Children will be asked to change if this occurs. They will be given the option to call for someone to bring them clothes, or they can find a change of clothes in the uniform closet.

**\*\*NOTE: Each item of clothing worn by a student must have the name of the owner clearly printed on the label. This will enable lost things to be returned after they are found in the locker rooms, gym, cafeteria, library, classrooms, hallways, restrooms, on the playground, school bus, etc.**

### **FREE DRESS DAY GUIDELINES**

The following dress code will be allowed only on free dress days. This privilege can be revoked at the principal's discretion.

1. Shoes: The students will be required to wear their regular school shoes unless a note or email sent home specifically states otherwise. On a designated free shoe day, roller shoes and flip flops are not allowed. Occasionally flip flops may be permitted. On these days the students should bring a pair of tennis shoes for physical education class.
2. Conservative clothing may be worn on free dress days. Clothing that is not allowed may include: gym shorts, yoga pants, athletic warm-ups, jogging suits, wind suits, revealing shirts or blouses, clothing with holes, short-shorts, short skirts, spaghetti straps, excessively baggy pants, excessively large clothing, etc.

### **DRILLS**

#### **FIRE**

Fire drills at regular intervals are required by law and are an important safety precaution. It is essential that when the first signal is given, everyone obeys promptly and clears the building by the prescribed route (signs are posted in every room) as quickly as possible. Students are not permitted to talk during a fire drill in case directions need to be changed. Students should remain outside the building until a signal is given to return inside.

#### **TORNADO**

In the event of a tornado warning, students should follow directions carefully. Areas of the building have been designated for shelter. Tornado drills are held in order to acquaint the students with the procedures and to minimize anxiety in the event of an actual tornado. If a tornado should occur at dismissal time, the principal will do what is necessary to keep the children as safe as possible.

## **AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM**

St. Mary School offers an After School Program to its students. The program is designed for parents who can't pick their child/children up at the end of the school day. Staff members supervise the students, and the cost is \$6.00/hour for one child or \$8.00/hour for a family with two or more students. The fee is billed to the parents monthly, and parents are expected to pay monthly. A child will not be allowed to attend the extended day program if his/her bill goes unpaid for two months.

The hours are 3:30 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. The After School Program ends promptly at 5:30 p.m. Children must be picked up by this time each day. Students who are habitually picked up after 5:30 p.m. will be dismissed from the program. This will be the principal's decision.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

School-sponsored field trips are educational in nature and must be approved by the principal. Parental help is essential. Without this help, field trips are not possible. When the school sponsors a trip, the students are expected to conduct themselves appropriately. The Diocesan policies and guidelines for field trips must be followed along with the following rules and regulations.

A field trip is a privilege and not a right. A written official permission slip, signed by the parent, is required before a child will be permitted to attend. Verbal permission cannot be accepted.

### **Rules & Regulations for Parents and Students to Observe While on a School-Sponsored Field Trip**

1. All parent drivers must have a Volunteer Driver Information Sheet on file in the school office and meet Diocesan insurance requirements before being allowed to drive on a field trip. Parents may be subject to a driving record, background check and/or criminal check. Parents are required to have the KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE course. They must have a copy of current insurance and driver's license on file with the school. Parents should check in with the school office two (2) days prior to the trip to ensure they meet diocesan requirements for driving.
2. Each parent volunteer will be assigned children to guide and supervise during the field trip.
3. Each child will be assigned to a vehicle, and he/she will ride in that vehicle going to the destination and coming back to the school.
4. All children must have a seatbelt fastened properly while the vehicle is in motion. Each child should keep his/her seatbelt fastened until instructed to remove it by the driver of the vehicle.
5. Children are expected to be well-behaved, and the parent assigned to them should accept nothing less. Any disruptive behavior should be reported to the teacher immediately.
6. One vehicle will be designated as the lead vehicle and one as the end vehicle. The teacher will travel in the lead vehicle and will make sure that all the vehicles stay together. This is very important when in traffic because the teacher is responsible for the students and must know where they are at all times. This is also necessary in the event of car trouble.
7. Once the students have arrived at the destination, all groups are to remain at that location until the designated time of departure. Parents are not to leave the location and must follow the teacher's decisions regarding meeting times, meeting locations, departure times, etc.
8. Field trips are extensions of classroom studies.
9. Each field trip is unique and teachers have the right to add any rules that may be necessary to ensure a safe and enjoyable field trip.
10. Adult supervisors are not to smoke while on a field trip.
11. Drivers are not to engage in cell phone usage when participating in field trips.
12. Drivers must comply with the school-approved itinerary and may not deviate from the approved destination and stops in-between. Drivers should ensure their vehicle is full of fuel and fully capable of making the trip.
13. Parents should make childcare arrangements for their other children so that they can be free to provide the supervision necessary. Siblings are not allowed on field trips.
14. Some vehicles are equipped with video viewing equipment. Any movies played must be G rated. All music and material in the vehicle must be of age appropriate content.

Diocesan policy prohibits St. Mary School personnel from taking students on overnight field trips. Field trips of this nature are not authorized by St. Mary School. If these field trips are planned by other individuals for students who attend St. Mary School, the individuals who participate do so at their own risk. St. Mary School is not liable under these circumstances. Fund raisers organized to pay for such trips are not under the jurisdiction of St. Mary School, and no individual is authorized to use the school's name to raise such funds.

## **GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **CUSTODY**

Parental rights extend to either parent unless the school has been provided with evidence that there is a court order, statute, or legally binding document relating to matters such as divorce, separation, or custody that specifically revokes these rights. A copy of such document must be in the school file. In case of joint custody both parents should be equally informed of their child's progress. It is the parents' responsibility to inform the school if special accommodations need to be made.

### **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

Our goal at St. Mary Catholic School is to make every effort to ensure effective communication between families and staff, but from time-to-time a misunderstanding may occur. If a parent/guardian has a grievance, please refer to the following guidelines and procedures.

1. Grievances are handled most satisfactorily at the level at which they occur. Therefore, if a parent has a staff-related grievance, an attempt must be made to settle the matter first with the staff member.
2. If a satisfactory solution is not reached, the family should contact the Principal.
3. If the issue is still not resolved, the pastor and then the superintendent of schools may be consulted.
4. Allow yourself time to consider all options. Please respect a 24-hour cooling off period and do not confront teachers, coaches, or administration while emotions are high. Under no circumstance is a parent to disrupt a teacher during class time. Please respect everyone's privacy and do not call teachers at home.
5. If you have a concern that involves a child other than your own, please talk to the teacher about this concern. **Do NOT talk to the child with whom you are concerned.**

Diocesan guidelines state that the proper procedure must be followed. Grievances will not be heard by the people on the higher levels if the people on the lower levels have not been consulted. Hopefully, we can resolve any concern informally in an open, cooperative, Christian atmosphere. In this way, we may model peaceful conflict resolution.

### **HEALTH FORMS**

All new students are required to submit a medical report completed and signed by a physician. The school office must be notified of any conditions that affect a child's general health. In addition, all students must have the required immunizations to attend St. Mary School. Failure to receive the state-mandated immunizations will result in a child being sent home until an updated immunization record is submitted to the school office.

### **LIBRARY**

All students will be able to go to the school library to check out books and use reference materials. Students will have access to the library during regularly scheduled library periods. Students with overdue books will be assessed a fine of \$.10 per day for each book, but they will be allowed to check out materials for the next two regularly scheduled library periods. After that time, however, the overdue books must be returned before a student will be allowed to check out additional materials. Any student who loses or damages a library book will pay for its replacement.

### **LUNCH PROGRAM**

Hot lunches are prepared according to USDA standards and served in the cafeteria each day. St. Mary School follows the Diocese of Ft. Worth Wellness Policy. A copy of the wellness program can be obtained in the school office. A menu will be sent home at the beginning of each month. Lunches are \$2.75 for the students in the Early Learning Center and \$3.00 for all other students and adults. Lunch money should be submitted in a sealed envelope labeled with the student's name, grade, amount of money enclosed, and the date(s) the student will be eating or purchasing milk. Lunch fees may also be paid through RenWeb. The money may be submitted daily, weekly, or monthly. The school office will notify a parent when a child's lunch bill reaches \$40.00. This bill will need to be paid before the student will be allowed to eat food from the cafeteria.

Free and reduced priced lunches are available to qualifying families. Application forms are sent home on the first day of the school year but are accepted anytime during the year. Therefore, a family whose financial situation changes during the year can still receive assistance.

Students may bring lunches from home as long as they do not require heating. Milk is available for \$.40. Carbonated beverages are not allowed, and parents are not allowed to bring students lunches from a fast food restaurant.

A copy of the St. Mary School and Diocese of Ft. Worth Wellness Policy is available on-line at [www.smsmustangs.com](http://www.smsmustangs.com).

## **PARTIES**

Students are not permitted to receive gifts during school hours for any reason. This includes balloons, flowers, candy, baskets, stuffed animals, etc. Party invitations given out at school must be given to each student in the classroom.

Students may bring treats such as cupcakes or cookies for their class to celebrate birthdays. The treats will be given to the students at the discretion of the teacher. No party favors are permitted. Throughout the year, each classroom teacher will decide what other holidays will be celebrated. Therefore, information concerning parties will be sent home from individual classroom teachers. Room mothers may be asked to help with refreshments and/or games.

## **SCHOOL SECURITY**

Students and staff members are not to open locked doors during the school day to admit people to the building. All visitors are to enter through the front doors, check in at the office, and be admitted through the security door. Any stranger seen in the building should be reported to the office immediately.

## **SCHOOL SPIRIT**

School spirit is an important and influential factor in the life of the school. It calls for loyalty to the school in all that it undertakes, cooperation in making these undertakings successful, and a sense of responsibility for making school experiences worthwhile and happy. In addition school spirit calls for obedience, honesty, respect for school traditions, respect for school property, and respect for the staff

## **VIOLENCE AND WEAPONS**

The school is concerned with providing students and employees with a safe and productive environment. As such, the School expressly prohibits any and all acts or threats of violence by or against any student, employee, family member of a student, vendor, or other visitor to the School facilities. This policy applies to all students and employees, whether or not they are engaged in business on behalf of the School, and whether or not they are on School premises.

In addition, the School strictly prohibits the possession of, exhibiting or threatening to exhibit or to use, or use of any and all weapons, including handguns, on School premises by any student or employee, family member of a student, vendor, or other visitor, whether licensed or unlicensed and whether concealed or visible. School premises includes not only the main facilities, but also the parking lots, entrances and exits, break areas, etc. Students and employees are further prohibited from the possession of, exhibiting or threatening to exhibit or to use, or the use of any and all weapons while conducting business on behalf of the School off of School premises.

The School is required to post signs containing the written statutory notice prohibiting bringing concealed weapons onto the School property. Contact the Diocese for the specific wording and statutory requirements for the written notice.

## **REGISTERED SEX OFFENDERS**

No individual, who is required to register as a sex offender under Chapter 62, Code of Criminal Procedure, or any other statute, may be a student. Any student, who is required to register as a sex offender, shall be expelled from the school.

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR INDIVIDUALS WISHING TO COME ON SCHOOL PROPERTY OR ATTEND SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

Parents and other individuals are welcome to visit the schools of the Diocese and to attend school sponsored activities. During school hours, all parents and visitors entering the school property, other than to deliver or to pick up the child, must first go to the school office, sign in and obtain a visitor's badge. Obtaining a school badge does not allow an individual to disrupt a teacher during class time or visit the class room during class. In order to visit the classroom during class, written permission from the principal stating the reason for the visit must be obtained in advance. Generally, two (2) days' advance notice is required, but if circumstances permit and the reasons are warranted, principals may establish either a longer or shorter period. The principal will respond to the request either approving the request with possible restrictions or denying the request. Teachers are to refer any parent visiting the classroom without the approval of the Principal to the school office and the parent will be asked to leave the school immediately.

An individual who (1) has been convicted of sex related crimes or a crime involving a minor and (2) does not have a child or grandchild attending the school is not welcome on the school property or to attend school sponsored activities. A parent or grandparent of a child attending the school and who (1) has been previously convicted of a sex related crime or a crime involving a minor and (2) wants to visit the school or to attend a school sponsored activity must submit a written request to the principal prior to the anticipated visit. Generally, at least five (5) school-days' advance notice is required and the request must provide the school with written documentation concerning each such conviction, including but not limited to all details concerning probationary status or restrictions. The principal will respond to the request either approving the request with restrictions or denying the request. If the individual is allowed to come on to the school property or to attend a school sponsored activity, the school will provide the individual with the written conditions for the visit, which may include supervision by school personnel during the time of the visit. If the individual fails to comply with the written conditions established by the school, then the individual will be denied permission to be on school property and/or to attend school sponsored activities.

Companies who provide contracted services to the school are required to give letters of recommendation on behalf of each contracted employee as well as provide appropriate documentation that each employee has completed a criminal background check. Under no circumstances will a company send the school a contracted employee who has been previously convicted of a crime involving a minor. Failure by companies providing contracted services to comply with these procedures and the safe environment policy as established by the Diocese of Fort Worth may be considered breach of contract and result in termination of the contract. More detail regarding this issue can be obtained in the Diocese of Fort Worth Safe Environment Policy and Code of Conduct.

## **STUDENT INSURANCE**

All students should be covered by emergency medical insurance.

## **TUITION**

All payments are made through the FACTS Tuition Management plan. This is part of the enrollment/re-enrollment process.

Payment Options:

1. Full Tuition payment due by August 15<sup>th</sup> of current school year.
2. Two semester payments due by August 15 and January 15 of current school year.
3. 10 monthly payments starting August 15, current year and ending May 15, current year. Payments are due by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.

Tuition payments must be current to continue enrollment for the spring semester.

Account balance must be paid full to enroll for the next school year.

Tuition assistance may be available to those who qualify. St. Mary School has Diocesan and local funds available for financial assistance. Interested parents must apply through FACTS Tuition and Grant Management found on our website.

Tuition information, fee schedules, and financial assistance information may be obtained in the school office. In addition an auto-draft payment method is available. Interested parents should contact the school office for information. School records will not be released to another school if money is owed. Payments may be brought to the office or mailed.

### **LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS**

St. Mary School believes that the liturgy is the center of Christian life. Students in grades K-8 are required to attend Mass on Thursday, Holy Days of Obligation, and other days if necessary. Students in K3 and K4 will attend Mass on designated days, on Holy Days of Obligation and special days during the liturgical year. These days will be noted on the ELC calendars that are sent home. Students must wear Mass day uniforms on Mass days. They are expected to actively participate in liturgical celebrations as great effort is made to make these meaningful to children. Parents are always welcome to attend.

### **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT ADULT BEHAVIOR**

St. Mary School believes that parents are the first and most important teacher their children have. Therefore, it is important for parents to remember that they are role models for all of the students with whom they come in contact. Behavior at extra-curricular activities is visible to both students and adults from this community as well as the visiting one. This behavior can have an adverse impact on the reputation of St. Mary School as well as give the wrong message to young people concerning appropriate adult behavior. Parents are asked to keep this in mind and exhibit acceptable behavior at all times.

#### **Diocesan Policy states: PARENT BEHAVIOR – SECTION (F) POLICY 5220:**

*“Actions of the parent of a student may be grounds for the student to lose the privilege of attending a school. The parents of a student are expected to conduct themselves so as not to be a disruptive influence on the school or a teacher. A parent of a student who becomes a disruptive influence shall be requested to withdraw the student from the school. The student’s records shall reflect that the student has either withdrawn or transferred. The student’s records shall not reflect expulsion, unless the parents refuse to remove the student from the school after having been notified that the child must withdraw or transfer to another school.” If, in the opinion of the administration, a student or his/her parent(s) do not support the philosophy and mission of the school, the student may be asked to withdraw. It is the school’s expectation that students and parents follow both the letter and spirit of the school’s mission.*

In addition, adults are asked to remember basic rules of courtesy when interacting with staff members, other parents, etc. Discussing school employees and/or school issues with others often results in incorrect information being disseminated throughout the community. Please call the school office if there are questions concerning St. Mary School.

### **ADVISORY COUNCIL**

The Advisory Council is responsible for giving advice concerning school issues. The council is composed of elected members who are both Catholic and Protestant, a Home and School Association representative, the pastor, the principal, a representative of the staff, and the business manager. Parents who wish to bring a matter to the council’s attention should submit the item in writing to the council president at least ten days prior to the meeting so the issue can be added to the monthly agenda. Parents are welcome to attend the council meetings which are held on the second Monday of each month at the school. Only agenda items are eligible for discussion.

## **FALL FESTIVAL**

The Fall Festival is St. Mary Catholic School's main fundraiser for the year. Its success is directly contributed by the time, talents and efforts put forth by volunteers. Every student and parent is expected to contribute in some way. There is always a need for help. If you are not asked directly, contact the school. **YOU ARE NEEDED.**

Various committees which include parents, school staff, and volunteers organize and run the Fall Festival which is held the last Sunday in September and earns revenue for the school. Every family in the school and most in the parish help with the Fall Festival. Since each family is asked to serve ten volunteer hours per year, this is one way to reach this goal.

Each school family is expected to give \$15.00 to purchase the meat that is cooked and served for the Fall Festival dinner. This money needs to be submitted to the school office prior to the event.

## **FUND RAISERS**

The Fall Festival is the only fund raiser that is approved by St. Mary School. All other fund raisers must have the prior approval of the principal. Under no circumstances can any individual benefit from a fund raiser held by any organization associated with St. Mary School.

Fund raisers organized to pay for unauthorized overnight field trips are not under the jurisdiction of St. Mary School, and no individual is authorized to use the school's name to raise such funds.

## **HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION**

All teachers and parents of children who attend St. Mary School are members of the Home and School Association. Parish members are also invited to participate. This organization provides a vital link between parents, teachers, and the school. Meetings and activities sponsored by the Home and School Association are held throughout the school year.

## **SAFE & SACRD KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE PROGRAM**

Diocesan guidelines require all adults who come into contact with students to help create and maintain a "safe environment" for them. Therefore the Diocese expects these adults to participate in the Safe & Sacred Keeping Children Safe Program. This program requires the participating adults to submit to a background check and attend the Keeping Children Safe training. The initial training is three hours in length and must be updated every three years. All sessions after the initial one are two hours long. Every volunteer must participate in this program, and each parent is encouraged to participate. For more information concerning these training sessions, contact the school office

## **VOLUNTEER HOURS**

Diocesan guidelines require all volunteers to help create and maintain a "safe environment" for children by submitting to a background check and attending the Safe & Sacred Keeping Children Safe training once every three years. For the next new volunteer training or volunteer update training, contact the school office.

Each family is asked to contribute ten volunteer hours per year to St. Mary School. There are many ways for families to get involved with activities at the school. Parents can help with classroom parties, field trips, sports events, the Fall Festival, Field Day, etc.

## SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS

All students will be supervised by the staff at school events on and off of the campus. Students are to obey school regulations at all times. All students on campus after school hours must be supervised by a staff member. Under no circumstances are any children to be left unsupervised in any room or facility on the campus.

## TEACHER AVAILABILITY

A parent may call the office or contact the teacher to schedule a conference before or after school. Teachers are also available to have conferences during their conference times. These appointments can also be scheduled through the office or directly with the teachers.

Emailing a teacher is a convenient way of communication. It does not, however, take the place of a face-to-face conversation. Conferences are still the best way to communicate with a staff member.

Please respect the teachers' and staffs' privacy by not contacting them in the evenings or weekends during their personal time.

## ONLINE SOCIAL MEDIA

Although this policy closely mirrors the Diocesan policy on social media, due to the special, privileged and powerful relationship between a Catholic school and its parents and students, sections of this policy are more restrictive. The first legal duty of a Catholic school is to keep those entrusted to them safe. The Catholic schools of the Diocese of Fort Worth acknowledge the right of employees to use personal websites, social networks, wikis, weblogs and other emerging technologies not only as a form of self-expression, and, in their individual capacity, as a means to further the work of the Church. Additionally, the same rules that apply to school employee's messaging and communications in traditional media apply in the online social media space. This specifically means that teachers and all school staff, including substitutes and volunteers, are never to use social media to directly communicate, interact or respond directly to students unless that social media is operated, controlled and directed by the school itself. Simply because the development and implementation of an online social media program can be fast, easy, and inexpensive does not mean that different rules apply.

School employees should bear in mind that posting of certain comments, photos, links or references to third party websites and information on websites, social networks, wikis and weblogs may have a harmful effect on the Church and its schools, their reputation, and their employees.

In light of this possibility, school employees are required to adhere to the following policy regarding the use of personal and professional websites, social networks, wikis, weblogs and other emerging technologies. This policy supports other related Diocesan and school policies, including Acceptable Technology Use and the *Code of Conduct & Behavior Standards for All Clergy, Religious and Ministries*.

School employees may only access websites, weblogs, wikis and social networks for legitimate professional job-related purposes during the workday with the approval of their direct supervisor. School employees are not to create, post or otherwise access weblogs, personal social networks, wikis or personal websites for personal use during normal school working hours. Employees should exercise sound judgment and common sense to prevent online social media sites from becoming a distraction at work. If you identify yourself as an employee of a Catholic school on a personal website, weblog or social network, you must make it clear to your readers that the views you express are yours alone and that your views do not necessarily reflect the views of the Diocese or its schools. In the event that you identify yourself as an employee of a Catholic school on a personal website, weblog, wiki or social network, to help reduce the potential for confusion, you are required to put the following notice in a reasonable prominent place on your site (e.g., at the bottom of your personal profile page) in at least a size 12 font bolded: "The views expressed on this website/weblog/social network are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer." School employees are prohibited from disclosing on personal or professional websites, weblogs, wikis or social networks, any information that is confidential or proprietary to the Diocese, its schools or to any third party that has disclosed information to the Diocese or its schools.

The school has exclusive ownership rights with respect to certain concepts and developments you produce that are related to school business. Employees may not use school trademarks on their site or reproduce any school materials or logos. Please consult with your principal if you have questions about appropriateness of publishing anything that may be related to the school on your site.

School employees may not use the copyrights, trademarks, rights of publicity, and other third-party rights in the online social media space, including with regard to user-generated content (UGC), without the necessary permissions of the rightsholder(s).

School employees are prohibited from providing a link or otherwise referring to the school website on their personal website, social networks, wikis or weblogs without consulting with and obtaining the approval of the principal of the specific school.

School employees shall not allow any obscene, harassing, offensive, derogatory or defamatory comments and images which reflects/discredits or causes embarrassment to the Diocese and its schools, their employees, patrons, vendors, partners, affiliates, agencies, students, and others on personal, the school's and professional websites, any other social networks, wikis or weblogs.

All social media being used by Catholic entities must be clearly branded in order provide institutional authority as well as avoid confusion. Unless you have been officially authorized in writing to speak or act on behalf of a Catholic entity, employees are prohibited to use such brandings or create secondary social media sites that give the illusion of being authoritative.

All social media used by Catholic entities must comply with the Minimum Social Media Requirements contained in Policy 6210.

The school reserves the right to regularly monitor any and all schools based computers. In addition, it is the policy of the Catholic schools of the Diocese of Fort Worth that every portable information/data storage device used by a school staff member or student may be examined at any time because it may contain something dangerous.

The school reserves the right to monitor professional websites, social networks, wikis or weblogs created on school computers during the course of a normal workday, or on school computers on personal time. Once information is published online, it is essentially part of a permanent record, even if you "remove/delete" it later or attempt to make it anonymous. If your complete thought, along with its context, cannot be squeezed into a character-restricted space (such as Twitter), provide a link to an online space where the message can be expressed completely and accurately.

The school requires that you confine your personal website, social network or weblog commentary to topics unrelated to the Diocese or its schools (or in certain cases, that you temporarily suspend your website or weblog activity altogether) if it believes this is necessary or advisable to ensure compliance with this policy or federal and state laws.

School employees will comply with all aspects of the Children's Online Private Protection Act (COPPA). Employees are forbidden to post or distribute personal identifiable information including pictures on any child under the age of eighteen without parental consent. Personal identifiable information includes name, home address, email address, telephone number or any information that would allow someone to identify or contact a child. If written verifiable consent is obtained from a parent, it is important that the parent has approved the information that is to be provided and has full knowledge of its use, purpose and how the information is going to be provided. Likewise, parents should be made aware that the school is making use of only school controlled websites, social networks, weblogs and other emerging technologies to communicate with students.

School employees will model safe and effective use of technology for students including developmentally appropriate instructions on responsibility associated with the use of technology and the possible dangers associated with technology.

School employees who violate this Online Social Media policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. If you have questions about this policy or any matter related to your site that this policy does not address, please consult with the principal of your school.

## THE MINIMUM SOCIAL MEDIA REQUIREMENTS

The following guidelines are required for schools wishing to establish social media. These requirements apply to all current and future social media, including but not limited to websites, wikis, Facebook, Twitter, blogs and other emerging technologies.

Site administrators must be adults and/or approved employees of the school

There must be at least two site administrators for each site to allow for rapid response and continuous monitoring and updating of the site.

All social media must be reviewed by the principal or the pastor before implementation to ensure it is not in conflict with current standards, policies and Catholic teachings.

Personal sites shall not be used in connection with school programs or to communicate with students. Students are defined as any and all students enrolled in a Catholic school in the Diocese of Fort Worth.

Passwords, names of the sites and the site addresses or site location information shall be registered in a central location in the school and at least two (2) adults must have access to this information.

In establishing a school site, know and abide by these key “Rules of the Road”:

Abide by all diocesan, parish and/or school guidelines

All communication by school employees reflect on the Church and the school

Do not claim or in any way give the impression or the appearance representing the official position of the school or the teachings of the Church, unless you have written authorized to do so.

All school social media sites shall be clearly branded and identified to provide institutional authority and to avoid confusion.

Abide by all copyright, fair use and financial disclosure laws.

Never divulge confidential information.

Do not cite others, post photographs or videos of other individuals or link to their material without express written approval. Media involving minors must have written parental approval.

Practice Christian charity.

## STUDENT COUNCIL

St. Mary School students are encouraged to participate in the Student Council. A faculty member sponsors this group. Representatives from each grade (1-8) are elected to serve. Officers of the Student Council are elected by the students. All of the candidates who sign up to run for an office are required to give a campaign speech to the student body. Campaign posters are permitted but must be in good taste. Meetings are held as needed.

The members of the Student Council must exhibit exemplary conduct and maintain passing grades. Students who fail to do so will be denied the right to participate in Student Council activities. Habitual offenders will be replaced.

After reading the handbook, please sign and return the following forms. The forms are due one week after the school year begins. The principal may amend this handbook when necessary during the school year. Parents will be notified of any changes made to the handbook.