

**PHILOSOPHY:** The philosophy of education that pervades our Christian Faith Community is one that emphasizes the education of the whole child. It is our belief that each child grows to maturity when he has been challenged to develop his full potential - scholastically, spiritually, socially, and physically. We believe that this can be achieved best in an orderly and disciplined approach which provides adequate flexibility for individual differences and capabilities.

Our faculty is committed to ensuring that our students achieve and exceed the education Standards of New York State. We strive not just for mastery of the standards, but challenge our students to strive for excellence. We have current and relevant materials and incorporate the latest technology within the total curriculum. If you find yourself asking, "Why St. Mary's?" we believe the answer is simple; we are convinced that we are unique in our education of the whole child - faith and spirit, intellectual development and participation in and enjoyment of God's gifts. Registration for all grades is always ongoing.

**CURRICULUM:** St. Mary's School follows the mandates of the New York State Education Department and the diocesan curriculum requirements in preparing students in their faith and in academic subjects. Our curriculum produces above average scores on standardized achievement tests.

Daily classes in Religion, Reading, Math, Language Arts, Social Studies, Science and weekly instruction in Physical Education, Art, Music and Computer Education is provided. Spanish is taught in grades 7 & 8.

**EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:** St. Mary's has a variety of extra-curricular activities which are enriching and rewarding. Such activities necessitate extra time and effort on the part of the teachers

and students. Parental support and volunteers assistance is warmly encouraged. At present students can participate in soccer, basketball, golf, Bridge Building, History Day, and Girls on the Move.

**REGISTRATION:** A child must be five (5) years of age on or before December 1st to register for Kindergarten at St. Mary's School.

**PARENTS' ROLES:** You as the parent are the primary educator of your child. What your child learns at home becomes an integral part of your child's character and development and certainly is of great benefit to the teaching staff in their day-to-day teaching. The relationship which you develop and the example which you give have a direct influence on your child's spiritual, academic, emotional and social growth. Your support and encouragement is the most important key to your child's success at St. Mary's School. No matter what the school attempts to teach, especially in the area of spiritual and moral development, it can be diminished and even negated if you, the parent, do not reinforce the doctrine at home. No child can reach full maturity without the basic teaching at the home level.

Your child needs your support and encouragement as he or she progresses in his/her formal learning. Working in cooperation with the school you can help your child grow in all areas and become a fully alive member of God's Family.

## **ADMISSION INFORMATION**

### **Nondiscriminatory Policy**

St. Mary's School admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students of the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic

origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, or athletic and other school-administered programs.

At the time of registration, all new students seeking admission to St. Mary's School are evaluated on the basis of current standardized test scores and report cards.

Requirements include: Health Records, Immunization Records, Birth Certificate, Baptismal Certificate, Report Cards, Standardized Test Results, and Records of IEP or 504 Plan. Students applying for Admission in Grades 1 - 8 must present a copy of the current report card and standardized test results. These will be reviewed to determine whether the program at St. Mary's School will meet the educational needs of the students.

All new students will be given a trial period of not less than one semester in which to prove himself/herself both socially and academically. If during this trial period there are any problems, a student may be asked to withdraw his/her attendance at St. Mary's School. If after admission, the educational and/or behavioral needs of a student exceed what would be considered reasonable, the student may need to be separated from St. Mary's School. This decision will be made for the student's educational and/or behavioral needs to be fully met in another educational setting. If the decision to separate the student from St. Mary's School is made by the school, the student's tuition due would be prorated.

Non-Catholic students whose parents accept the philosophy of St. Mary's School will be accepted. All students are expected to attend all religious observances.

## **SCHOOL HOURS**

All students need to be in school daily from 8:00 AM to 2:45 PM. Students not in their homeroom at 8:00 AM are considered tardy.

At St. Mary's School, we work in partnership with parents to enable each child to develop as an independent learner. Parents should allow their child(ren) to enter the school building on their own each morning.

The school doors are open for students at 7:30 AM. Students arriving at that time will go to the Gym until they are dismissed to their classrooms at 7:45 AM.

Afternoon prayer is at 2:40 PM each day. Dismissal immediately follows. Please check the school calendar and weekly newsletter for early dismissal dates.

## **SCHOOL OFFICE HOURS**

The school office is open on all school days from 7:30 AM - 3:00 PM.

## **SCHOOL PROPERTY**

The parent of a child who carelessly destroys or damages any furniture, computer, iPad, equipment, buildings, or anyone's personal property will be obligated to pay the full amount of repairs and labor or replacement. The student will pay for the replacement or damaged items before any final reports, transcripts, or diplomas are presented.

## **ITEMS BROUGHT TO SCHOOL**

St. Mary's School is not responsible for loss or damage to any items brought to school by a student. This includes, but is not limited to, all electronic devices.

The school reserves the right to search anything brought on school property. This includes cell phones and other electronic devices.

## **VISITORS**

School visitors (volunteers, parents, etc.) must come to the main office. For safety and security reasons, each person is required to sign in at the office when he/she enters the building for any reason. All visitors and/or volunteers are required to wear a designated badge that may be picked up in the office. Visitors and/or volunteers are to sign out at the time of departure. Visitors may be asked to show identification in the form of driver's license or other government issued identification.

Parents who volunteer to serve lunch or who volunteer in another capacity in the school may not drop in to a classroom to see their child during the day. This is an interruption to the teacher and to the educational process.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

A Volunteer Handbook is available. All individuals who volunteer in the school must complete the Volunteer Sign-Up sheet and will be asked to complete the Diocesan mandated background check. All volunteers must meet individually with the Principal and **MUST** be VIRTUS trained.

The main responsibility of a volunteer is to assist the administration or teachers. For this reason, pre-school siblings are not allowed to accompany parent volunteers to school for meetings, to serve lunches, to assist with class parties, or to decorate bulletin boards.

## **STUDENT ABSENCE**

When a student is absent from school, a parent must call the office by 10:00 AM each day of the absence.

Students should be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school.

A written statement giving reasons for the absence or tardiness must be brought to the student's teacher upon the student's return. These notes/letters will be retained in the office for one year. Please avoid writing the absence note on a napkin or a receipt. Should absence for any reason other than illness seem imperative, parents are requested to consult with the Principal and present a written reason for the absence.

Students who are absent due to illness have one day for each day of absence to make up the missed assignments, quizzes, or tests. For example, a student who was absent three days would be given three school days to complete the missed work.

When a student is absent for three or more days due to illness, a parent may call the school office before 9:30 AM to arrange for homework assignments. Homework assignments may be picked up at the school office between 2:30 PM - 3:10 PM.

For short absences, students should make arrangements with classmates regarding assignments. Students may also receive missed assignments from their teacher when they return to school.

Teachers are not required to give make-up tests or assignments for absences due to vacations. **NO ASSIGNMENT WILL BE GIVEN IN ANTICIPATION OF A VACATION.**

Arrangements for regular classroom tests missed because of an absence are to be made with the individual teachers. These tests must be taken within one week of the original test date.

Excessive absence 40 days or the equivalent of 40 days including tardies, can be cause for a student to be retained in the current grade for another year.

### **HOMEWORK**

Formal home-study is assigned to help students become self-reliant and self-directed. Assignments are designed to reinforce daily lessons, to supplement and enrich class work, and to prepare for certain lessons through various experiences.

Homework may be assigned to students Monday through Thursday. Homework will not be assigned to students on Friday evening or during Christmas or Spring Break.

However, students enrolled in Algebra may expect weekend homework.

### **REPORT CARDS/PROGRESS REPORTS**

Report Cards are important tools for communication Report Cards will be given four times during the academic school year.

No student will be given a Progress Report or Report Card if tuition or fees are in arrears.

### **ACADEMIC PROBATION**

A student whose academic performance indicates serious deficiencies may be placed on academic probation. Academic probation is for students who can learn, but who choose not to learn. Students on academic probation will placed on a two week improvement plan. At the end of the two week period, the student's academic progress will be assessed. Students whose average is an F will not be allowed to participate in any sport or academic competition until the grade has improved to a passing grade of D (70% or higher).

### **PROMOTION POLICY/RETENTION**

Advancement to the next grade in St. Mary's School is based on a student's daily performance, test results, recommendations of teachers, and the student's ability to complete work successfully on a more advanced level.

Promotion to the next grade depends on successful completion of all subject areas. The Administration may recommend the repetition of a grade, tutoring, or summer school classes as requirement for promotion when, after conferences with teachers and parents, it is believed that such action will better prepare the student academically or emotionally for the next grade.

### **STUDENT RECORDS**

St. Mary's School adheres to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act regarding access to student records. Records of students transferring to other schools will only be sent through the U.S. Mail. No records will be given to parents to transport to the new school.

No records will be sent to transferring schools of students whose financial commitment is in arrears.

It is the responsibility of the parents to share any official custodial information decided through the courts about custody of any student. Official custodial agreements will be kept confidential file in the office of the Principal. In the absence of any court document, the school will view each parent as having full legal custody of his/her child. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, non-custodial parents have the right to receive records about their child's academic progress or lack thereof. The school reserves the right to charge a shipping and processing fee for extra records sent to more than one home address.

Be advised that if a teacher is subpoenaed to testify in a child custody case, the parent will need to pay the cost of a substitute teacher and any other costs associated with the testimony (mileage, parking, food, etc.)

### **HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS**

In order to insure that all communication from school reaches home in a timely manner, St. Mary's School uses a Friday folder system. Newsletters, calendars, and schedules are sent home on Fridays. Official school-wide emergency communications are sent using the My Student's Progress phone system. You will need to give the school all important phone numbers in the beginning of the school year to register for these alerts.

### **WEATHER EMERGENCIES**

If it should be necessary to close school because of weather conditions, an announcement will be made over local television

stations and a message will be sent to the home phone, cell phone, and text account listed on the student's file via the My Students Progress System.

### **GIFTS**

Students should not exchange individual gifts at school. This gesture only creates hurt feelings among other students.

Invitations to parties or social occasions outside of school should be sent to the homes of students via the U.S. Mail unless an invitation is being given to every student in the entire classroom.

### **NUTRITION PROGRAM**

St. Mary's School offers breakfast and a hot lunch program daily. Students may choose to bring their lunch each day. Students should not bring glass bottles, soft drinks, or candy. Parents should not bring lunches or drinks from carry-out restaurants. Any student forgetting a lunch box will be provided a lunch. Reimbursement for the lunch must be made the next day. Any lunch accounts in arrears will not be issued a quarterly report card.

Students are expected to use manners during lunch. Courtesy toward other students and cooperation with our kitchen help are in order at all times.

### **THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT**

St. Mary's School does all that it can to ensure the school environment is favorable to children with asthma or allergies. St. Mary's School makes no claim to be a peanut-free school. Peanut free substitutions are offered in our cafeteria program.

St. Mary's School recognizes that an allergy is an important condition affecting many school children and positively welcomes all pupils with allergies. This school encourages children with allergies to achieve their potential in all aspects of school life by having a clear policy that is understood by school staff and pupils. All staff who come into contact with children with allergies are provided with training on allergies from a certified nurse. Training is updated as needed.

Students with allergies who participate in school sponsored field trips may face challenges to their physical health. St. Mary's School will make reasonable accommodations for all students and will inform field trip chaperones regarding a student's allergy issues. Every effort will be made to provide a safe learning experience for all students. A field trip generally occurs in a less controlled environment where allergen triggers may be present. If a parent is concerned about a child's presence on a field trip due to his/her special health needs, a parent may choose to keep their child at home on the day of the field trip.

### **MEDICATION**

If a child must take any medication in school which is prescribed by a doctor, that medication must be sent to the school office in the container received from the pharmacy and must have on its label the following information:

1. Child's name
2. Name of Doctor prescribing the child's medication
3. Frequency
4. Dose
5. Date

All non-prescription medication (cough drops, etc.) should be taken to the school office with the following information:

1. Child's Name
2. Frequency
3. Dose
4. Date

### **CHILD ABUSE LAWS**

St. Mary's School abides by the Child Abuse laws of the State of New York. This law mandates that all cases of suspected abuse and/or neglect be reported to Child Protective Services.

### **EMERGENCY FORMS**

Each year parents/guardians must complete a current Emergency Form. This form will include the names of individuals who are authorized to pick up students at dismissal or due to an emergency. In addition to the custodial parents, students will only be released to the individuals named on this form. Parents are to update this form with current contact information should phone numbers, names, etc. change during the year.

### **EMERGENCY DRILLS**

State law requires that fire drills be held regularly. During the fire drills, students should follow these regulations:

1. Rise in silence when the alarm sounds
2. Close windows and doors
3. Walk to the assigned place briskly, in single file at all times, and in silence

4. Return to building when signal is given

### **CRISIS PLAN**

St. Mary's School has implemented a "crisis plan" in case of a lockdown emergency. All teachers and staff are aware of the procedure to follow to keep your children safe. In the event of such an emergency, circumstances permitting, the building will be evacuated and students will be moved to secure designated locations.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

1. Field trips are designed to correlate with teaching units and to achieve curricular goals.
2. Field trips are re-evaluated each year to determine the compatibility of the field trip with curricular goals.
3. A field trip is a privilege and not a right.
4. There are no "traditional" field trips. Class participation in a particular field trip over consecutive years does not mean that this trip has become a school tradition.
5. All grades do not always have the same number of field trips.
6. Individual teachers, in consultation with the Administration, reserve the right to restrict or deny student participation on any field trip due to, but not limited to, poor academic performance and/or poor conduct.
7. A written official permission slip, signed by the parent, is required before a child will be permitted to attend a field trip activity. Verbal permission cannot be accepted.
8. A telephone call will not be accepted in lieu of the proper field trip permission slip.
9. Parents may refuse to permit their child from participating in a field trip by stating so on the permission form.

10. All monies collected for the field trip are non-refundable.
11. Cell phones are not allowed on field trips unless otherwise directed by the teacher and/or administration.
12. ALL CHAPERONES MUST BE VIRTUS CERTIFIED.

### **FUNDRAISING**

Students are asked to participate in fundraising activities to support the school. Involvement in this fundraising is one of the student's financial contribution to his/her education at St. Mary's School. Students and parents are expected to participate in fundraising for our school.

### **CELL PHONES**

If a student needs a cell phone after school due to attending sport practices or games, he/she should bring the cell phone to the office upon arrival in the morning. It will remain in the office in the off position for the day. The cell phone may be picked up by the student at dismissal.

At no time during the day should a cell phone be in a student's bookbag or in his/ her possession. Items taken away from students will be returned to the parent/guardian upon meeting with the Principal. The administration reserves the right to search the contents of a confiscated cell phone. Students involved in possession or transmission of inappropriate photos on their cell phones or other electronic devices face suspension and/or expulsion. In accordance with the law, the New York State Police will be notified.

### **HARASSMENT**

Harassment of any type is not tolerated. The Principal investigates all complaints of harassment. Students involved in harassing behavior face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion.

## **BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING**

St. Mary's School attempts to provide a safe environment for all individuals. Verbal or written threats made against the physical or emotional well-being of any individual are taken very seriously. Students making such threats (seriously or in jest or online) face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion.

## **DRUGS AND ALCOHOL**

Students who possess drugs and/or alcohol at school or at any school function face suspension and/or expulsion. This includes cigarettes or e-cigarettes.

## **DETENTION**

Detention may be issued for a breach of classroom and/or school rules. Parents will be notified of the detention. The day, date, and time of the detention are at the discretion of the Principal. Detention takes precedence over appointments, practices, lessons, tutoring, ball games, etc.

## **EXPULSION**

Expulsion is an extremely serious matter. Students who pose a threat to themselves or to others may be expelled from St. Mary's School. Students who have been expelled will not be allowed to

return to the school for any reason without prior permission from the Principal.

Students whose parents have violated the Parents as Partners agreement in this handbook may also be excluded from St. Mary's School.

## **OFF-CAMPUS CONDUCT**

The administration of St. Mary's School reserves the right to discipline its students for off-campus behavior that is not in line with behavior expectations of its students during the school day. This off campus behavior includes, but is not limited to, cyber-bullying.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Engagement in online social media sites such as, but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, etc. may result in disciplinary actions if the content of the student or parent's statements includes defamatory comments regarding the school, the faculty, other students, or other parents, or the parish. No parent should open a Facebook or Twitter account under the name of the school or a particular grade or organization. The only official St. Mary's Facebook or Twitter page is the one created and monitored by the school.

Photos and captions on a student or parent's Instagram account that depict the school, the faculty, other students, or the parish in a defamatory way will result in disciplinary action.

## **PARENTS AS PARTNERS**

As partners in the educational process at St. Mary's School, we ask parents:



1. To set rules, times, and limits so that your child gets to bed early on school nights, arrives at school on time and is picked up on time at the end of the day, is dressed according to the school dress code, completes assignments on time, and has lunch money or nutritional lunch every day.
2. To actively participate in school activities such as Parent-Teacher Conferences
3. To see that the student pays for any damage to school books or property due to carelessness or neglect on the part of the student
4. To notify the school with a written note when a student has been absent or tardy (these notes are kept for one year)
5. To notify the school office of any changes of address or important phone numbers
6. To meet all financial obligations to the school
7. To inform the school of any special situation regarding the student's well-being, safety, and health
8. To complete and return to school any requested information promptly
9. To read school notes and newsletters and to show interest in the student's total education
10. To support the religious and educational goals of the school
11. To attend Mass and teach the Catholic faith by word and example
12. To support and cooperate with the discipline policy of the school
13. To treat teachers with respect and courtesy in discussing student problems
14. To not post negative comments about students, teachers, or the administration on social media

## **PARENT'S ROLE IN EDUCATION**

At St. Mary's School we consider it a privilege to work with parents in the education of children because we believe parents are the primary educators of their children. Therefore, it is your right and your duty to become the primary role models for the development of your child's life -- physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally, and psychologically. Your choice of St. Mary's School involves a commitment and exhibits a concern for helping your child to recognize God as the greatest good in his/her life.

Good example is the strongest teacher. Your personal relationship with each other and the community will affect the way your child relates to others. Ideals taught in school are not well rooted in the child unless these are nurtured by the example of good Catholic/Christian morality and by an honest personal relationship with God in your family life.

Once you have chosen to enter into a partnership with us at St. Mary's School, we trust you will be loyal to this commitment. During these formative years, your child needs constant support from both parents and faculty to develop his/her moral, intellectual, social, cultural and physical endowment. Neither parents nor teachers can afford to doubt the sincerity of the efforts of their educational partner in the quest of challenging, yet nourishing, the student to reach his/her potential. It is vital that both parents and teachers remember that allowing oneself to be caught between the student and the other partner will never have positive results. To divide authority between school and home or within the home will only teach disrespect of all authority. If there is an incident at school, you as parents must make investigation of the complete story your first step. Evidence of mutual respect between parents and teachers will model good mature behavior and relationships. Speaking negatively about a child's teacher at home will only create an attitude of distrust toward the teacher and the school.

It is essential that a child take responsibility for grades he/she has earned and be accountable for homework, long-term assignments, major tests, service projects, and all other assignments. Parents are encouraged to let their child experience a logical consequence for an inappropriate action or behavior.

Together, let us begin this year with a commitment to partnership as we support one another in helping your child to become the person God created them to become.

### **RIGHT TO AMEND**

St. Mary's School reserves the right to amend this Handbook. Notice of amendments will be sent to parents via the Friday Folder.