

Dear Parents,

The first day of school is Thursday, September 6<sup>th</sup>. This is a regular day of school.

A brand new school year! A fresh start for your child and for you as a parent. How can your child make the most of this new year? You can make a real difference in promoting a positive learning experience for your child, both at school and at home! As your child's first and most important teacher, you play an important role in his or her future success in school. Here are three ideas that can help support your child's learning:

1) **Be an example.**

- Reading: Be a reader and let your child see you read. Read to your child and with your child. Go to the library together. Your child will see how important reading is to you and will want to copy what you are doing.
- Your education: Continue your own education. Remain curious about learning new things. Your child is watching you.
- Educational opportunities: Have educational resources in your home such as books, maps, globes, and computers. Be alert to teachable moments that might appear at any time, and take advantage of those opportunities to help your child learn.

2) **Support school expectations.**

- Expectations and procedures: The beginning of a new school year is a great time to review expectations together.
- Home and classroom: Talk about what is expected at home to support your child's learning. Believe it or not, children actually like to know what is expected to help create an atmosphere where they can learn better. This provides predictability and routines that are valuable assets for learners.

3) **Be available.**

- Be a parent helper, field trip helper, or room parent: Even parents with the busiest schedules can find some way to contribute to the class. Make a special effort to attend school open houses and activities.
- Parent-teacher conferences and communication: Take advantage of these opportunities to stay informed about your child's progress at school. Developing a strong, positive relationship with the school will help support your child's school success!
- All parents should attend the VIRTUS Training on Wednesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 – 8:00 P.M. VIRTUS Training is required by the Diocese if you want to be involved with the students in any way (field trips, classroom aid, snack seller, art, Pre K Helper, serving breakfast/lunch etc.). For VIRTUS Training you must pre-register on line at [virtus.org](http://virtus.org). If you have questions about the registration, please contact the school office.

**CURRICULUM:** We follow the NYS Common Core State Standards for all grades Pre K -8. The students take all required state exams. Religion and Christian values permeate the curriculum at St. Mary's School.

**SCHEDULE:** Pre-K- Grade Eight.....7:55 a.m. - 2:50 p.m. daily

***SCHOOL POLICIES - READ CAREFULLY***

**DROP-OFF/PICKUP-**Parents transporting students to school must not block the school bus zone directly in front of the school. Bus drivers will not load/unload students with cars parked in their area. All students are to be dismissed through the **FRONT DOOR**. Parents and anyone designated to pick up children should come to the office and identify themselves and that way we know if a child was picked up. Waiting in the hall or down by classroom doors causes a lot of confusion for students and teachers at dismissal time. Students have been known to miss busses. No child will be dismissed with an adult who has not checked into the office. Please do not go to the classroom to pick up children, they will come to you. **THE BACK DOOR OF THE SCHOOL IS AN UNLOADING ZONE for trucks NOT AN ENTRANCE OR DISMISSAL DOOR.** And will remain locked.

These rules are made to safeguard the safety of your children. Please follow them and instruct your children also. Thank You. If you have any suggestions for child safety, please let us know. All doors at St. Mary's are locked. You need to ring the doorbell to enter the school at all times and check in at the office upon entering the building. Upon entering school, children need to go to classrooms by themselves or an older student will bring them – not parents.

**CAFETERIA:** Breakfast and Lunch are offered daily. Breakfast is served from 7:20-7:55 a.m. We ask that all free and reduced lunch applications (see packets) be returned by September 16. If you were on last year, your status is the same through October 1. Regular lunch is \$2.00, Milk only is \$.50, Breakfast is \$1.00. Please use the cafeteria. If you pay for meals by the month, please pay on the first day of the month. Children are required to have three things on their tray from the 3 basic food groups. They are not required to eat everything. We encourage all students to try the cafeteria. **WE ENCOURAGE FAMILIES TO APPLY FOR FREE/REDUCED LUNCH.** New guidelines for our federally funded program Title I (remedial reading and math), now require that a district distribute funds on the basis of the total number of children receiving free/reduced lunches. The greater the number of eligible students the more assured we will be to continue remediation for our students through Title I services. Eating breakfast and lunch will ensure the continuation of the cafeteria. Charges cannot exceed one month or we will lose our cafeteria status.

First Day Menu: Breakfast: Cereal, Toast, Juice, Fresh Fruit, Milk (\$1.00)  
Lunch: Chicken Patty/Bun, Chips, Corn, Watermelon, Milk - (\$2.00)

**DRESS CODE:** Most of you were sent a dress code with a welcoming letter from your child's teacher. If you didn't get one or it is lost, please pick one up at the office. Junior High students (5-8) were told the appropriate dress code last June (khakis and navy blue polo with school emblem). If there are problems with uniforms, please contact Sister Sharon directly. Grades 1 -4 - Boys: navy pants and light blue polo shirt w/logo (Logo available at Sharkey's Sport Shop). Girls: plaid school uniform, white blouse with round collar, socks in solid colors. Students need to wear SHOES to school. **NO LIGHT-UP SNEAKERS** of any kind, they are distracting. No backless sandals or flip flops. No dangling earrings at any time. Safety is our concern always. **HAIR CUTS:** Boys' hair needs to be neat, trimmed above the ears. Hair should be out of the eyes for both boys and girls. No colored hair, body piercings, or tattoos for any student. It is always the discretion of the principal what is appropriate or not. **You can go on-line to Flynn & O'Hara for girl's plaid uniforms and little boys light blue polo w/logo.** We have extra uniforms in the church basement, all sorted thanks to Mrs. DeFranco.

**LITURGY:** One of the greatest joys that we participate in as a school family is the Mass. All students in grades Pre K-8 pray together as they celebrate the First Friday Masses each month and Holy Days. We will begin the school year with a Mass, Friday, September 7th at 9 A.M. We are honored to have Fr. Kevin to celebrate the opening school Mass. Please join us and sit with the students. Anyone who plays a musical instrument is always welcome. Once a month we will plan a weekend Mass. Please try to attend these and participate. You don't have to be Catholic to attend. We all have people and things to pray for. We have so many blessings. Many are less fortunate than we are. Many are enduring illness in their lives and need our support and prayers. We need to come together as often as we can as a faith community and pray for peace in our country and an end to violence and anger.

**TUITION:** Tuition letters and payment books are being sent in your First Day Packet to each family. We strongly encourage families to apply for Tuition Assistance. A Tuition Assistance form is in each packet to be sent home Sept. 6th. Applications must be returned by September 14 signed and with income verification. Tuition assistance is available for all students. St. Mary's is also fortunate to have the **Adopt A Student Program** and **Scholarship Program** to help families. All students will have student insurance. No one is denied an education because of lack of funds. We do ask families to perform some service to the school for this aid. Fundraising is everybody's business. Tuition cannot be free. We all should be paying something each month starting in September. Some families have an outstanding balance for the 2017-18 academic year. Please settle your account before September 6, 2018. Thank You!

FEES: Each family is required to pay an insurance/testing/paper supply fee. The fee this year is \$30.00 for each child. This fee needs to be paid by Sept 15th. All Pre K and Kindergarten students pay \$30.00 twice a year (Sept./Feb.) for supplies and snacks.

BIRTHDAYS: Traditional classroom parties (cupcakes and juice) for Grades Pre K-4 may be arranged by contacting your child's teacher. Students in Grades 5-8 can bring in a treat to be enjoyed at lunch time if they wish. Birthdays of all students and staff are posted monthly on the office hall windows. Students receive a free snack on their special day. We also take their picture and place it on the office window. Do not send invitations to school for home parties unless you are inviting the whole class. Children's feelings are easily hurt, especially if you are the one not invited. Other than birthdays, St. Mary's encourages healthy snacks when sending in snacks for classroom parties. Please be conscious of allergies. Please do not send in any birthday treats that contain peanuts or peanut butter. **Kindergarten and 4th grade** are PEANUT AND TREE NUT FREE ROOMS. WOW Butter is used instead of peanut butter. All snacks sent into the school no matter what grade should be peanut/tree nut free, especially bake sales.

FUNDRAISING: One of our major fund-raisers for the year begins in September when you pick up your 7 Winner's Cards to sell in the school office. I hope you will do this as this is part of your tuition agreement. By each of you selling 7 or more Winner's Cards we can make \$14,000. Prices of everything have gone up. We are all aware of this. Let's not leave the job to someone else. We need everyone doing their part. This fundraiser was started by the St. Mary's Education Council. A Board member will contact you about your ticket sales. We will draw the first winners and one \$500 winner at our Open House (date to be announced). If you can sell extra tickets, please contact the office. If you have not picked up your tickets please do so. We need to sell 800 tickets (We have sold 900 before and we can do it again!) to reach our goal – Please do your part.

PARENTS: Our faculty is committed to providing quality education to the children and families we serve in our community. We want to build a strong bond of communication between family and school. We strongly encourage you as parents to contact us whenever you have questions or concerns and we ask for your cooperation when we call upon you. If any parent should need to see a teacher in the morning before school, please call ahead of time to arrange this time. Otherwise, teachers plan to use this time to organize the day's work and greet students as they enter the classroom for the day. This is an important time for the teacher to be present for all students. Teachers are in school by 7:30 a.m. and in their classrooms by 7:45 a.m. (this is not the time to go visit with teachers). Teachers will meet every Monday before school starts and will not be available for parent meetings. At the end of the day some are on bus duty and are here usually until 3:15 P.M. or later. Please, do not try to visit during dismissal. Set up an appointment ahead of time.

NOTICES: Parents are requested to read carefully all notices that are sent home by the teachers and Sr. Sharon. Weekly notices and monthly newsletters highlight school events throughout the year. Please check the book bag of your child each night and for the brown envelope that will be sent home the first day of school. If you wish to receive newsletters/Friday notes via email please send us that information. Also, parents are required to phone the office by 8:30 a.m. if their child is ill and will not be attending school. A note is still required for all absences with the reason stated and signed by a parent otherwise days missed from school are illegal absences. Tardiness needs a note and reason every time. This is a NYS Law. You are considered late after 8:00 A.M.

COLLECTING: Collecting what? St. Mary's School is collecting: *10 cent Box Tops For Education, Returnable Bottles and Cans* (leave in the bin outside of the garage), and *Pennies for the Playground*. Thank you for collecting those pennies! We need help cleaning up the playground. Would you like to head up this project or at least help? We plan to add three benches and a picnic table to the playground. Remember we got a grant. I hope you like the new equipment. Thank you to Father Kevin, Reale Construction, Jean Hakim, Doug Schumer, and Kevin Snell for all of their work this summer. It was a HOT one!

LIBRARY: St. Mary's School continues to add new books to our new Library. We believe that the road to success for each child is to be a good reader and love to read books. If you would like to help out or be a library volunteer please sign up on the Service Commitment Sheet in your packet or contact Linda Bhatia.

COMPUTER AND TECHNOLOGY: We are excited to announce a new Computer and Technology program will start this year with the Junior High students. It will be taught by Mrs. Jean Hakim, a Professor of Computer Science at a nearby college. The skills taught are the fundamentals Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) curricula.

### SEPTEMBER CALENDAR

- 5 Pre K and K Orientation 5:30
- 5 Meet & Greet for all grades 6:00 followed by an Ice Cream Social
- 6 First day of school for Pre-K -8
- 7 Opening Mass 9 A.M. K - 8
- 13 TAP Forms due (Tuition Assistance)
- 13 Seagle Music Colony will present "The 3 Billy Goats Gruff" at 1:30
- 18 Open House 6 – 7 P.M. Bring a healthy snack to share – apples, pretzels, cheese and crackers, etc.
- 19 VIRTUS Training 6:00-8:00 P.M. All parents, grandparents and volunteers should attend if you have not done so already.
- 21 Gr. 5-8 Youth Retreat at Camp Guggenheim
- 27 Family Breakfast 7:15-8:00
- 28 Casual Dress Day

Art Classes are to be announced.

Gym classes for grades 1-4 are Monday, Wednesday, & Friday, Pre-K & Kindergarten every day.

Gym classes for grades 5-8 are Tuesday & Thursday.

Music with Vaughn Watson grades 4-8 will be each Friday afternoon. Hand bells are taught.

SOCCER: Joe Giordano and Chris Leerkes will be coaching the 6-8 soccer team this year. We need coaches for the 3-5 team. Sign-up Wed. at the Meet and Greet. Practices: to be announced.

School Supplies Donations are coming in. If you need something, come in or call the school office.

***All school policies are contained within the school calendar.***

We would like to welcome all of our new families to St. Mary's School and a BIG welcome back to all of our old friends! We wish Mrs. Zauner the best as she begins a new chapter in her life. We thank her for service as 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher at St. Mary's. She will be missed, but we will see her as her son Samuel is attending Pre K. We welcome Mrs. Jennifer Facticeau as our permanent 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher. We also welcome Sister Suanne as our full-time 5<sup>th</sup> grade homeroom teacher and ELA coordinator of grades 5-8.

*It is not easy to raise responsible Christian adults. As your children's first teacher, you've begun a truly challenging task. By choosing a Catholic school for their education, you have taken an important step. We are happy to have your family as a part of our school community, and we urge you to continue your active involvement in every facet of your children's lives.*

*Home activities can be of immense value in reinforcing work done at school. Build your young person's enjoyment of reading by reading aloud stories which interest him or her. Use written messages to remind your children of tasks or appointments; to congratulate them for a job well done; or just to say, "I love you."*

*Involve your child in the many math activities which are a necessary part of daily living. Doubling or halving recipes requires expertise in the use of fractions. In shopping, there is a need to figure discounts and sales tax amounts. Paying monthly bills, figuring automobile expenses, and balancing a checkbook are all opportunities to build math skills and an understanding of economic concepts.*

*As teachers and parents, we know that our words, our actions, and our attitudes are constantly on display. If we want children to care about kindness, compassion and justice, we must demonstrate those qualities. If we want them to appreciate beauty in art and nature, we need to show that we do also. Being our children's role model is both a great responsibility and a momentous challenge. As we begin another school year, we have the opportunity by working together to realize the goals you have envisioned for your child/ren.*

*Yours in Christ,*