



**SAINT MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL  
PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK  
2021-2022**

*“Show Courage, Seek Wisdom, and Share the Love of God.”*

**School Colors: Navy Blue and White  
School Mascot: Knights**



## **Welcome to Saint Mary's Catholic School!**

Dear Parents,

It is our plan to serve you well by assisting you in the religious, moral, and academic aspects of educating your children. It is our hope that our efforts, in partnership with yours, will accomplish this goal.

In light of this, we require, after careful study of the handbook with your child, that you sign the Parent Acknowledgement Page. Please return the signed Parent Acknowledgement Page by Friday, August 13, 2021. If there are areas that you feel you cannot support with enthusiasm, you need to discuss these with the principal prior to Friday, August 13, 2021.

Saint Mary's Catholic School retains the right to amend this handbook in accordance with new policies of the Archdiocese of Atlanta. Written notification of changes will be sent home and emailed to parents' RenWeb addresses.

Again, please return the signed Parent Acknowledgement Page no later than Friday, August 13, 2021. Thank you in advance for your support and cooperation with us here at Saint Mary's School. It is working together that we truly thrive as a community.

## **HISTORY**

In 1945, Saint Mary's Parochial School was founded through a shared vision by a people of faith committed to excellence, responsibility to the community, service, and religious values. At the request of Archbishop O'Hara, the Dominican Sisters from Adrian, Michigan, agreed to staff the school. The Lumpkin House, a 100-year-old building situated on Terrace Hill overlooking the Oostanaula River on West 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, was converted into a school. The school opened on September 17, 1945, with fifty-one students in grades 1-11.

In 1960, the Archdiocese obtained a portion of the Cooper Estate, and a small school with eight classrooms, library, kitchen and cafeteria was erected at 401 East 7<sup>th</sup> Street. The enrollment at that time was 185 students in grades 1-8.

The Dominican Sisters, who had served the school since 1945, were forced to withdraw from the school in 1970 because of the many demands on their time and the decline of religious vocations. For one year, the staff was served by a lay faculty as the parish worked diligently to secure a new religious order.

In 1971, the Daughters of Charity, based in Emmitsburg, Maryland, were assigned to staff the school. For twenty-two years, the Sisters lovingly served the school as enrollment increased and waiting lists developed for most grades. Twenty-six of the Sisters served the school, along with principals Sister Patricia, Sister Mary Catherine, Sister Kathleen, Sister Miriam and Sister Regina, who are remembered fondly by many of Saint Mary's faculty, parents, and alumni.

Responding to a growing need, 1980 saw the addition of a new wing which housed a library, gymnasium, music room and two new classrooms. Kindergarten was added and enrollment increased. In 1987, a modular unit was attached to the school allowing three new classrooms to accommodate expanding enrollment.

Due to demands on their community, the Daughters of Charity were forced to withdraw from the school in 1993, and Saint Mary's School has since been served by a lay principal and staff.

In the fall of 2001, after remarkable efforts by the school community, Saint Mary's opened a beautiful new building on the existing site. The school is nestled in a residential community and can accommodate up to four hundred students. The new facility includes a Chapel that serves as a prayerful gathering place, expanded fine arts, an air-conditioned gymnasium, commercial kitchen, media center, computer lab, and room for two classes per grade level.

Today, Saint Mary's Catholic School enjoys an excellent reputation as it serves several counties in Northwest Georgia. Saint Mary's Catholic School serves students from all regional parishes: Saint Mary's Catholic Church of Rome, Saint Clement's Catholic Church of Calhoun, Saint Bernadette's Catholic Church of Cedartown, and Saint Francis' Catholic Church of Cartersville.

## **MISSION STATEMENTS**

### **Mission Statement of Saint Mary's School**

Saint Mary's Catholic School continues a tradition of academic excellence as we embrace a faith-filled future. Our *Courage* shines as we live the Gospel, always seeking the *Wisdom* to understand God's will as we share the *Love of God* with all people.

### **Motto**

Show Courage, Seek Wisdom, and Share The Love of God.

Saint Mary's School is a Roman Catholic educational institution, fully committed to the teachings of the Roman Catholic faith. All educative activity offered at the school is grounded in the Catholic faith; without it, the school is unable to achieve its mission. While Saint Mary's School is committed to ensuring that all teachings of the Catholic faith are shared and discussed with respect, sensitivity, and charity, especially with those who may struggle with them, the school expects all parents/guardians and students to demonstrate support for the mission of the school and all the teachings of the Roman Catholic faith by not contradicting or criticizing them publicly, in words or actions, including through online social media venues. Parents/guardians and students who fail to act in a manner consistent with this expectation may be asked to withdraw their child(ren) from the school.

### **Mission Statement of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta**

We, the faithful of the Archdiocese of Atlanta, are a people of prayer, love and joy who are dedicated to the salvation of all. As disciples and believers in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we proclaim the good news and grow in faith, hope, love and service to others. We are unified in our commitment to sacramental life, pastoral care and life-long formation in our Roman Catholic faith. We express our love through evangelization, fellowship, Catholic education, social services and charity in the full pursuit of effective discipleship.

### **Mission Statement of the Office of Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Atlanta**

The Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Atlanta serve a vital role in the educational ministry of the Church. Our schools are committed to providing quality education in an environment of spiritual, intellectual, and moral formation in accordance with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

### **Non-Discrimination Policy and Public Assurance Statement**

Saint Mary's Catholic School shall admit students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. Saint Mary's School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of educational policies, admissions policies, loan programs and athletics or other school administered programs.

In keeping with Canon Law, the Archbishop or his designee reserve the right to make decisions in all matters regarding Archdiocesan elementary and secondary schools.

Saint Mary's Catholic School is in full compliance with all Archdiocesan policies as outlined in the Archdiocesan Schools' Policy Manual.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

Saint Mary's Catholic School is a community that combines Christian living with high academic standards. Administration, faculty, staff and parents not only stress high academic goals and achievement but also share a community that has Christ at its core. In Christ's spirit, life's joys, sorrows, successes and failures are shared and borne by the entire school community. Saint Mary's Catholic School is a community that works, studies, plays, prays, and shares in the celebration of the Eucharist together.

Saint Mary's Catholic School is committed to a learning process that will allow each child to attain a fuller knowledge of the world, of self, and of God. As a Catholic educational institution, Saint Mary's Catholic School articulates clearly the moral standards that are implicit in all learning and attempts to make Gospel values real to its students. Striving to provide a total education, the school realizes that educating the whole child leads to personal independence as well as personal interdependence.

In implementing a curriculum that will adjust to meet the unique needs of individual students, Saint Mary's Catholic School respects the rights, interests, and personal dignity of each child. Learning methods utilized in all curricular areas foster creativity, stimulate an inquiring spirit and challenge students to strive for excellence. In all, the school supports and enriches the child's academic, spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development as it continues to promote its high standards of excellence.

Acknowledging the parents' role as primary and continuing educators of their children, the school encourages and appreciates parental interest and participation in the school community. Therefore, teachers and parents of Saint Mary's Catholic School interact with open communication and cooperation. This attitude of cooperation in the task of educating children leads to an environment that embodies a strong and joyful Christian community - a community that can contribute to the fullness of life for each of its members.

## **OBJECTIVES**

Working together, the members of the Saint Mary's Catholic School community strive to educate children who not only are productive students, but who will grow into responsible members of their family, their community, their church, and their world.

Our objectives consist of the following:

1. To bear witness to the values and attitudes consistent with basic human dignity;
2. To help those with whom we work develop to their greatest potential
  - a. by stimulating in them intellectual curiosity which will give them a desire for lifelong learning,
  - b. by encouraging in them creativity, initiative, responsibility, and self-direction, and c. by assisting them to develop a healthy self-concept;
3. To bring to educational endeavors qualified personnel who strive to provide challenging, innovative programs through updated curriculum, ongoing study and in-service training in order to provide the best possible education;
4. To foster apostolic consciousness and Christian awareness in our students, their parents, and one another by encouraging activities that give witness to Christ's justice and love inside and outside the school environment;
5. To prepare those we serve for the part they will play in society and to foster in them an awareness of their responsibility toward the most vulnerable of our society.

## **ACCREDITATION**

The Archdiocese of Atlanta holds District Accreditation through Cognia. All Archdiocesan schools, including Saint Mary's, are thereby accredited through this agency. Saint Mary's also holds membership in the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) and the Georgia Independent School Association.

## **ADMISSIONS**

In the admission of students to Saint Mary's Catholic School, Catholic families receive priority acceptance, in accordance with Archdiocesan Policy #5120. Catholic families will need to confirm that they are Catholic by providing the required Catholic Parish Verification Form. Other consideration is given to these criteria, in order of priority:

- All students that are currently enrolled and are eligible for re-enrollment;
- Siblings of currently enrolled students;
- Students who are children of school employees;
- Students who are members of Saint Mary's Parish;

- Students from regional Catholic parishes, active status;
- Students transferring from another Catholic School (out of town);
- Students from regional Catholic parishes, non-active status;
- Students of another religious affiliation.

Factors to be considered in the decision to accept any student are academic performance, effort, behavior, work study habits, and the school's ability to meet the student's needs.

Applications for the upcoming academic year may be submitted as early as August prior to the year the student will begin at Saint Mary's Catholic School. Applications will continue to be accepted as long as there is space in the class, but because there is limited space in many classes, it is wise to submit the application as soon as possible. A student is not considered to be enrolled until the registration fee is paid. Students whose registration fees are not paid by the time that the class reaches capacity will forfeit their spots. This includes all incoming students in pre kindergarten through seventh grade.

**State and Archdiocesan regulations require that:**

- Students must be three (3) years of age (must be potty trained) on or before September 1 to be enrolled in Pre-Kindergarten 3-year olds.
- Students must be four (4) years of age (must be potty trained) on or before September 1 to be enrolled in Pre-Kindergarten 4-year olds.
- Students must be five (5) years of age on or before September 1 to be enrolled in Kindergarten.
- Students must be six (6) years of age on or before September 1 to be enrolled in First Grade.
- All Pre-K and Kindergarten students will be given a readiness evaluation prior to their acceptance at Saint Mary's School.

It is also standard practice to expect incoming second, third, and fourth graders to be seven, eight, and nine years of age respectively by September 1. An entrance assessment may be given to each student prior to his or her acceptance. Students will be placed at the appropriate grade level based on age, current academic standing (derived from report cards and standardized test scores) and entrance test results. Students entering sixth and seventh grade may be required to take a placement exam in math, writing and reading. The Admissions Committee will determine grade placement. All new students are accepted on a probationary status for the first semester.

**Applicants MUST provide the following records:**

- Archdiocesan Physical Examination form, signed by a physician.
- Birth certificate.
- Certificate of Eye, Ear, and Dental Examinations. This must be obtained from the GA Department of Human Resources or family physician.
- Copy of previous year's report card and current report card.
- Copy of standardized test scores (if applicable), for example, the Georgia CRT, ITBS, etc.
- Custody papers, if applicable.
- Up-To-Date Immunization Record (GA Department of Human Resources Certificate of Immunization Form 3231 or Medical Report Form 5320).
  - In the rare case that a student cannot receive immunizations due to a life threatening condition, a medical waiver, signed by the child's pediatrician, will be accepted.
  - There are no religious exemptions.
  - Any other exemptions must be approved by the Archdiocese.

- Student evaluation forms.
- Catholic students should provide Baptismal Certificates, First Communion Certificates, and Parish Verification Form if applicable.

Falsification of records (birth certificate, report card, etc.) or the withholding of pertinent information (including IEP, behavior interventions, evaluations completed by doctors/diagnosis, SST meeting notes, 504 plans, medication, allergies, etc.) regarding the student will result in denial or revocation of admission to Saint Mary’s Catholic School.

**CONTINUING ENROLLMENT**

Continued enrollment of the student is subject to the student and parent(s) abiding by all school rules as set out in the school handbook including, but not limited to, general behavior, academic performance, and attendance. Continued enrollment in any given school year, and re-enrollment in any subsequent years, is subject to the parent’s/guardian’s continued support of the mission of the school as documented in the school handbook, the maintenance of a demonstrably effective and supportive relationship between the school and the parents/guardians, and the timely payment of all debts owed to the school. Re-enrollment in any subsequent year is subject to mutual agreement. The parents or the school administration, with or without cause, may withhold that agreement.

**WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURE**

Parents who wish to withdraw a student from Saint Mary’s Catholic School during the school year are required to notify the school in writing prior to withdrawal. A withdrawal form must be completed if withdrawn during the school year. The student’s transcripts will be forwarded to the new school upon written request from the new school. Tuition and all other financial obligations must be paid in full before transcripts are released.

**TRANSCRIPTS**

Transcripts, health records, and attendance records are forwarded directly to the new school the child will be attending. Transcripts are not given to parents. Parents wishing to send transcripts to various schools to which they have applied may do so at no extra cost. Saint Mary’s Catholic School follows the guidelines of the Buckley Amendment (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Acts). Specifically, parents have the right to review their children’s records at any time, and those records are kept private within the guidelines of the law.

**CHILD CUSTODY**

In cases of joint or sole custody arising from a divorce or separation, it is the custodial parent’s responsibility to submit appropriate legal documentation to the school detailing court-mandated custody arrangements. If duplicate records (report cards, etc.) and/or communications (newsletters, etc.) are needed, it is the parents’ responsibility to inform the school of the preferred method of delivery (mail, email, etc.). Students must be enrolled under their full legal name. Any name change requested must be accompanied by a court order.

**TUITION SCHEDULE 2021-2022**

The annual tuition rates for students in Pre-K3 through eighth grade are listed below. In order to verify eligibility for the Catholic student tuition rate, a Parish Verification Form will be requested from the parish in which your family is registered.

**Catholic Students – Active Parish Members  
Per Student Elementary (K-5).....\$8420**

**Per Student Middle School (6-8).....\$8790**

**Non-Catholic Students and Inactive Catholic Students**

**Per Student Elementary (K-5).....\$9590**

**Per Student Middle School (6-8).....\$9965**

**Catholic and Non-Catholic Pre-Kindergarten 4-year olds**

**Per Student.....\$7280**

**Catholic and Non-Catholic Pre-Kindergarten 3-year olds**

**Per Student 5-day Full day.....\$8420**

**REGISTRATION AND FEES 2021-2022**

These fees are required at the time the application is made and are non-refundable. The student's name will not be placed on the school roster until the required fees are paid.

**Pre-K – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade.....\$275 per Student**

**6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade.....\$375 per Student**

**TUITION PAYMENT INFORMATION**

Saint Mary's Catholic School depends upon tuition to meet operating expenses. If a problem paying tuition arises, please call the principal or business manager for help in finding a solution. All tuition payments are paid through the FACTS tuition service (a link to their site is posted on our website).

Tuition may be paid in full or by the month, unless alternative arrangements are made with the business office. No discount will be given for tuition at the Catholic rate if a Parish Verification Form is not on file each year. Tuition paid by the month can be paid over a ten or eleven month period. Payments through FACTS begin in July or August on a date of your choosing through FACTS. The registration fee secures the student's place in the school.

An 8<sup>th</sup> grade student must be current in tuition/incidental payments one month prior to the graduation date in order to graduate. Tuition and all other financial obligations must be current for the student to receive a report card each quarter. Any family that is 30 days behind in tuition will be asked to meet with the business manager or principal to make payment arrangements. Any family that is 60 days behind in tuition and has not set up a payment schedule or any family that is not honoring the terms of the payment schedule could have their child's access to class denied.

Families with an unpaid balance greater than or equal to the equivalent of three months of tuition at the end of the school year will not be invited to re-register unless the balance is paid in full or payment arrangements are set up.

**CATHOLIC TUITION AND TUITION ASSISTANCE**

In order to be eligible to receive the Catholic tuition rate and to apply for Archdiocesan-funded tuition assistance, the Archdiocese of Atlanta requires that a parent or family be considered an active family. A Parish Verification Form will be submitted to the parish office at the church in which your family is registered. This

form must be signed by the pastor, indicating that the requirements for active status have been met. The parishioner or family is then eligible to receive the Catholic tuition rate and to apply for Archdiocesan-funded tuition assistance.

### **Standards for determining Active Status:**

- 1. An annual stewardship card is on file in the parish that reflects a good faith effort on the part of the parishioners to support the parish financially along with time and talent.**
  - a. Parish registration and financial support is presumed. The use of a stewardship card is required as an objective determination of support.
  - b. The “good faith effort” is seen as more than a token amount of support simply to comply with the minimum requirement. While this is a somewhat subjective judgment, there are various indicators (jobs, property, lifestyle, etc.) that may be considered. The annual contribution of the individual or family in relation to the average annual contribution in the parish is also a measure of the good faith of the individual seeking Catholic tuition and tuition assistance.
- 2. The parishioner uses envelopes and/or checks for the offertory that verify attendance at Mass in the parish at least 65% of the time.**
  - a. The most practical way to determine this minimum requirement of Mass attendance at least 65% of the time is by the use of envelopes and/or checks which are posted weekly.
  - b. Those who wish to give monthly, quarterly, or annually can place an empty envelope in the collection each week as an indication of attendance and make their contribution as they wish.
- 3. The parishioner is re-assessed periodically for eligibility for the Catholic tuition rate and tuition assistance, and at least annually through the Parish Verification Form.**
  - a. A new Parish Verification Form must be submitted each year since eligibility for the Catholic tuition rate and tuition assistance does not automatically transfer from year to year.
  - b. In cases where a “good faith effort” is not maintained, a review may be made prior to the annual Parish Verification Form.
- 4. School age children of the family who do not attend the Catholic School must be enrolled in the Parish School of Religion (PSR)**
  - a. It is inconsistent for a child or children to attend the Catholic School if other children in the same family do not attend the appropriate religious education programs (PSR). Catholic education for all children and teens in a family is the responsibility of the parent(s) and required for the Catholic tuition rate and tuition assistance for any children.
  - b. The exception to this requirement is “blended families” where children may be of different religious backgrounds.

### **TUITION ASSISTANCE**

The following policies and procedures were developed by the Saint Mary’s Catholic School Finance Committee and the school’s administration to establish objective guidelines for awarding tuition assistance.

1. The school will announce the availability of tuition assistance applications through its usual methods of communication – school newsletter, web site announcements, automated school texts, and e-mail. It is the applicant’s responsibility to complete the application online via FACTS.
2. A completed FACTS application must be on file and completely processed by FACTS before an applicant’s request for tuition assistance will be considered. It is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure that FACTS receives all required documents in a timely manner.

3. Applications must be submitted to FACTS on or before the published deadline in order to receive consideration for tuition assistance. Applications submitted to FACTS after the published deadline will be considered only after all on-time applications have been processed.
4. FACTS will process each application and calculate an estimated need based upon data supplied by the applicant and supported by tax returns and other applicable financial documentation.
5. When possible, the school will reserve a portion of available tuition assistance funds (to be determined annually by the principal) for the express purposes of funding possible appeals and providing assistance to qualifying new families who apply for admission to the school after the published deadline date for tuition assistance requests.
6. Tuition assistance may be awarded from several funding sources. With the exception of the Grizzard Scholarship for Summit Hill Foods employees, all tuition assistance is needs based. Additionally, tuition assistance funds provided through the Archdiocesan Block Grant are restricted for use by Catholic families only.
7. Tuition assistance awards are determined as follows:
  - a. Applicants must have a calculated need of \$500 or more in order to be considered for tuition assistance
  - b. For returning students who are first-time applicants for financial assistance, the maximum amount of aid allowed is 80% of the tuition rate, based on financial need according to FACTS calculated need.
  - c. For new Catholic students, including siblings of currently enrolled students, the maximum amount of aid allowed is 80% of the tuition rate, based on financial need according to FACTS calculated need.
  - d. For new non-Catholic students, including siblings of currently enrolled students, the maximum amount of aid allowed is 80% of the tuition rate, based on financial need according to FACTS calculated need.
  - e. Applicants with a recent bankruptcy will not be considered for tuition assistance.
  - f. Applicants with a past due balance on their school account will not be considered for tuition assistance unless arrangements are made to pay down the balance before the start of the upcoming school year.
  - g. In the event that the overall need for all applicants exceeds the amount of available tuition assistance funds, the principal, in consultation with the Saint Mary's Catholic School Finance Committee and with the final approval of the pastor, will adjust the amounts awarded to achieve an equitable distribution among all applicants with a demonstrated need.
8. All applicants will be notified by email of the amount of tuition assistance awarded, if any. Applicants will be required to accept online by the stated deadline indicating that they accept, decline, or wish to appeal the award. If a tuition award is declined, that money is returned to the tuition assistance fund from which it was disbursed for future use. If an award is appealed, a written explanation of extenuating circumstances must be submitted to the principal or business manager. Parents may also request a meeting with the principal to discuss the matter personally, but a written appeals request must still be submitted. All appeals requests will be reviewed and discussed with the principal, at which time variances from the criteria stated in #7 above may be granted. Responses to the appeals requests will be sent by email, and applicants will once again be asked to sign and return a form indicating their decision to either accept or decline the award. No further appeals will be considered.

Qualification for financial assistance does not imply acceptance into the school program; admission to the school is a separate process.

## SCHOLARSHIPS

**Vernon and Gaynelle Grizzard** - This scholarship fund (managed by the Catholic Foundation of North Georgia) was established in 1993 to provide scholarships for qualified students to attend Saint Mary's Catholic School. Priority is given to students whose parents and grandparents are employees of Summit Hill Foods, but funds may also be available for any student who is a resident of Floyd County.

**Jamie Hughes Scholarship Fund** - This scholarship fund was established in 2018 and is sustained by donations in memory of Jamie Hughes, a member of Saint Mary's Class of 2018. Jamie lost his brave battle with bone cancer shortly after his graduation from Saint Mary's. This scholarship in his memory provides needs-based financial assistance to Catholic families who qualify. To apply for this scholarship, families must complete the FACTS application.

**Archdiocesan Tuition Assistance** - Archdiocesan tuition assistance is to assist active Catholic families with the cost of education. Tuition assistance is awarded on the basis of need and availability of funds. To apply for this assistance, families must complete the FACTS application.

**Saint Mary's School Fund** - A limited fund is set aside each year from the Annual Fund donations to assist Catholic and non-Catholic students with financial aid. To apply for this assistance families, must complete the FACTS application.

**G.R.A.C.E. SCHOLARS, Inc.** - G.R.A.C.E. Scholars, Inc. is a Georgia nonprofit corporation and tax exempt charity. G.R.A.C.E. Scholars has met the requirements for designation as a student scholarship organization (SSO) in Georgia. Georgia taxpayers may redirect part of their tax liability to G.R.A.C.E. and qualify for a generous tax benefit created by the Georgia legislature – a 100 percent tax credit. G.R.A.C.E. Scholars, Inc. is a tax exempt charity (501-c-3 organization), gifts to G.R.A.C.E. also qualify as charitable contributions under federal law.

G.R.A.C.E. Scholars, Inc. was founded by Archbishop Wilton Gregory of Atlanta and Bishop J. Kevin Boland of Savannah in 2008 to take advantage of the SSO/tax credit legislation. Since then thousands of taxpayers have redirected part of their Georgia income taxes to G.R.A.C.E. which, in turn, has awarded scholarships to students wishing to attend Georgia Catholic Schools. All students receiving G.R.A.C.E. awards have demonstrated financial need.

The mission of G.R.A.C.E. Scholars, Inc. is to provide children from families with financial need throughout the State of Georgia with greater opportunities to secure a quality PK-12 Catholic education.

The G.R.A.C.E. organization provides needs-based scholarships for students transferring in from the public school system or who are entering Pre-K 4 or Kindergarten. To apply for this assistance, families must complete the FACTS application.

Applications and more information are available at [www.gracescholars.org](http://www.gracescholars.org).

## ADVANCEMENT

Throughout its history, Saint Mary's has been sustained by the generous financial and volunteer support offered by parents, parishioners, friends, and alumni. The Advancement Office is responsible for coordinating and implementing a comprehensive advancement program comprising the Annual Fund, honorariums, memorials, matching gifts, gifts-in-kind, scholarship funding, capital gifts, equity donations, GRACE and planned giving. Given the considerable impact that alumni have on the area of development, the Saint Mary's Advancement

Office is also responsible for cultivating and strengthening the school's alumni relations program.

**Annual Fund** - The Annual Fund is the cornerstone of giving to Saint Mary's. As with most parochial schools, tuition does not cover the full cost of educating our students. Each year the Annual Fund is an indispensable part of the school's operating budget, enabling the school to fulfill its commitment to faculty salaries and academic programs. Certainly, the total amount raised is an important part of the Annual Fund goal. Equally important, however, is strong participation from faculty, staff, alumni, parishioners, and of course, parents. As a Christ-centered, mission-driven community, it is our collective goal to achieve 100% faculty and parent participation each and every year. By achieving 100% participation in the Annual Fund, our community affirms its conviction that Christ's message of hope and love is central to our human purpose and thus central to our children's classroom education.

**Matching Gifts** - You can double or even triple your gift by including your company's corporate matching form.

**Gifts of Stock** - An excellent way to maximize the tax benefits of giving is to donate a gift of stock. By giving stock, you can take a tax deduction of the stock value on the gift date and forgo paying taxes on the gain on your investment.

**Honorariums and Memorials** – Saint Mary's Catholic School offers a unique way to pay tribute or respect to a loved one. Opportunities exist within the school to honor or memorialize a family member or friend. A recognition card will be sent to the family or honoree and acknowledgement to the donor.

**Gifts-In-Kind** – Donated goods, commodities, or services are a giving option. Significant gifts have included printing and graphic services, technological support, computers, and landscape enhancements.

**Planned Giving** – Saint Mary's Catholic School welcomes planned gifts in the form of Bequests, Real Estate, Trusts, and Life Insurance. Donors can make these gifts with beneficial tax advantages, and such giving will make a significant difference to the school in the future.

**Endowment Fund** – The Saint Mary's School Endowment Fund is held and managed by the Catholic Foundation of North Georgia, an independent organization of the Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta. The fund is designed to provide funding for student scholarships in perpetuity. All monies deposited into this fund are kept intact and only the interest earned is used to underwrite scholarships. Contributions may be made to the endowment fund through the Advancement office.

**Scholarship Gifts** – Please refer to page 12.

## **ADVISORY COUNCIL**

The Advisory Council serves as a sounding board to the principal. This committee reports to the Archdiocese of Atlanta via the Superintendent of Catholic Schools. Council members review and discuss topics such as finance, advancement, mission effectiveness, facilities, public relations and marketing, technology, Archdiocesan policies, PTO, and strategic planning.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Saint Mary's Catholic School will be in session from 8:15 AM until 3:15 PM, Monday through Friday. As a security measure, parents or guardians must call or email the school office by 9:00 AM to report any student who will be absent or tardy. Parents may leave a message on the answering service **(706-234-4953, Ext. 201)**. If you choose to email your child's absence please include the school secretary and classroom teacher. Do not send notes or verbal messages with another child regarding absences or tardies. These procedures are in place to ensure the safety and well being of all students. Assignments and books will be sent to the school office to be

picked up after dismissal time if requested by phone or email before 9:00 AM.

Students called to be picked up early for appointments will not be called to the office until the parent arrives.

## **ARRIVAL**

Students may arrive at school as early as 7:00 AM. Students arriving between the hours of 7:00 AM and 7:50 AM must report to *Before School Care* in the cafeteria. There is a charge for this service from 7:00-7:50 AM. After 7:50 AM students report to their classroom. Students arriving after the 8:15 AM bell are to report directly to the school office. Students not in their classroom for morning announcements are considered tardy.

## **DISMISSAL TIME**

Children are to be picked up promptly at dismissal time, 3:15 PM on a regular day, or as communicated to parents or if the school calendar indicates that dismissal time be different for a particular day. At or around 3:30 PM, students still waiting to be picked up will proceed to *Extended School Care*. After 3:30 PM, the After-Care rates will be charged on your FACTS incidental billing. The only families allowed to park to pick up their child(ren) are those who have purchased the parking spots sold at our school auction. All families need to be in carline to pick up unless you have purchased a spot or there is a family emergency.

## **EXTENDED SCHOOL CARE**

Extended school care (ESC) is available to currently enrolled Saint Mary's Catholic School students both before (7:00AM – 7:50 AM) and after (3:30-6:00 PM) school hours. Contact the school office for current rates. Enrolled siblings of students involved in school-sponsored activities that take place immediately after school and occur on school grounds may attend the ESC program at no charge until such time as the school-sponsored activity has ended. Students not picked up by the end time of the school-sponsored activity will be charged current ESC rates.

## **TRAFFIC PLAN**

The majority of students are transported to and from school by their parents or in carpools. Parents are to drop off and pick up children in the areas designated for this purpose. Drivers are to adhere to the established traffic patterns and follow the directions of faculty and staff. Please note that left turns into the parking lot are prohibited between the hours of 2:30 PM to 3:30 PM.

Students are dismissed at 3:15 on a regular school day. When students in a carpool participate in an after school activity, parents are to make alternate transportation arrangements and are to be prompt in picking up the student.

## **BUS TRANSPORTATION**

Parents of students who will be riding the buses to and from school are required to contact the school to have transportation arranged. The information is kept on file in the office.

As a security measure, parents are to notify the front office if a student will not be riding on the bus on a specific day. The student will then be permitted to go to the appropriate line or stay after school for an activity.

Students who ride the buses are bound by the school code of conduct while on the bus. Disciplinary issues will be handled by the bus driver and/or the principal. Students with consistent disciplinary problems may be suspended or removed from riding the bus.

Please note that there will be an additional charge for bus riders that will be processed through FACTS.

## **ON-DEMAND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES POLICY**

On-demand transportation services (e.g., Uber, Lyft) are prohibited from transporting Archdiocesan students to and/or from Archdiocesan property unless a parent, grandparent, or guardian accompanies the student in the vehicle.

## **ABSENCE AND TARDY POLICY**

It is the shared responsibility of the school and the home to assist students in developing desirable habits of punctuality and attendance. Students are expected to attend school regularly in compliance with the law for compulsory attendance.

Absences are sometimes necessary due to illness, death in the family, a doctor or dental appointment, or whenever the principal considers that exemption from attendance is in the best interest of the child. Such absences must be recorded in the legal attendance records. All absences and tardiness will be recorded and reflected on all school records. Doctor appointments and school visits will be marked as “excused” if a note from the doctor or name tag from the school visited is presented to the school when the student first returns from the appointment or visit.

A satisfactory explanation from the legal/custodial parent or guardian for the absence of the student from all or any part of the day is required. Parents must call the school before 9:00 a.m. on the day of the absence.

The success of the school day is greatly influenced by the student’s prompt arrival. The school day begins at 8:15 and *students who arrive in their classroom after 8:15 are considered tardy*. After ten (10) times tardy, the homeroom teacher will notify the school counselor and, in turn, the school counselor will contact the parent. After fifteen (15) times tardy, the student will be referred to the principal. Students who are repeatedly late to school, or to class, may receive disciplinary consequences including, but not limited to, after school detention, work detail, or the loss of a school privilege or activity.

Grade promotion of students tardy and/or absent 30 or more days is made at the discretion of the principal.

All late arrivals are marked tardy. Early releases are also marked tardy.

The principal/designee may release a student during the school day upon written request of the legal/custodial parent or guardian. Such absences must be recorded in the official school records.

If a student enters 3 hours after school begins or leaves 3 hours before the end of the day, he/she shall be considered half day absent.

If the student is being released to someone other than the parent/guardian, the “Authorized Emergency Card” will be consulted for name verification. The parent/guardian of the student must also provide written permission for pick up. Photo ID is required.

Students who did not attend school during the day may not participate in after-school activities. This includes, but is not limited to, scouts, drama, sports, chess club, school dance, etc...

Students may only be checked in and out of school *in the front office* by a parent or person authorized by the parent on the emergency information form. We ask parents NOT to go directly into a classroom.

Please note: five (5) or more unexcused absences in a quarter will result in an “excessive absences” comment on the quarter report card.

Excused absences are granted for student illness, a death in the student’s immediate family (parent, sibling,

grandparent, aunt, uncle, etc.), or approved school-sponsored or school-related educational activities.

## VACATIONS

Vacations not on the school calendar are discouraged. It is strongly recommended that parents give serious consideration before planning vacations during the school term. In spite of the fact that students may have the ability to make up their work, it does not replace the formal instruction given by the teachers. In the event that parents do take children out of school for extended vacations, they are expected to notify the homeroom teacher and the main office with separate notes to explain how long their children will be out of school. *Please note that these absences are recorded as unexcused*, which may result in the student not receiving credit for any work missed. **Please do not ask teachers to provide homework prior to a family vacation.**

In the event of absences due to family vacations, the parents/guardians assume the responsibility for student learning. Teachers are not expected to meet with students outside of the normal school day to make up work due to absenteeism resulting from family vacations.

## EXCESSIVE ABSENCES

In specific instances of excessive absences, the principal may request a written note from a doctor explaining the severity of the child's illness. Any child who is absent for twenty (20) days in a school year is subject to retention. The principal, based on the consideration of individual circumstances, may make an exception to this policy.

## CURRICULUM

The curriculum of Saint Mary's Catholic School includes religion, language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, foreign language, library, art, music, computer and physical education. Students are required to participate in every subject taught in their grade level.

Saint Mary's Catholic School's commitment to the learning process is reflected in a curriculum that meets the unique needs of individual students while respecting the rights, interests, and personal dignity of each child. The school's rigorous academic curriculum prepares students to become productive members of society in an increasingly competitive world.

Religion is the heartbeat of Saint Mary's School. The goal for the religion curriculum is to instill in students an enthusiasm for living an active Christian faith, while providing an in-depth Catholic education, including experiences in prayer, the sacraments, and service. Religion is integrated throughout the curriculum. Students participate in liturgies, celebrating a variety of themes relating to the liturgical year, as well as special occasions such as feast days of saints.

The school respects the personal conscience of individual students and their families. This freedom is recognized by the Catholic Church. However, as a Catholic school it cannot relinquish its own freedom to proclaim the Gospel and to offer a formation based on the teachings of the Catholic faith and the values to be found in Christian education. All students will therefore be expected to participate in religious instruction and Catholic formation offered at the school except those intended only for Catholics; namely, the reception of the Sacraments.

The Language Arts curriculum incorporates reading, writing, speaking, listening, spelling, grammar, and vocabulary in assisting students in the acquisition of effective language skills. Teachers in K-5 are Orton-Gillingham trained and use the multi-sensory approach to reading education. In addition, all classroom teachers are trained in The Complete Reading Series through the Georgia ETA. Phonics encourages the use of decoding strategies, and spelling is taught as both a reading and phonics skill. An emphasis on vocabulary

development begins in the primary grades and continues through middle school.

The study of Mathematics plays an integral role in the education of each student. While contributing to the development of reasoning skills, mathematics helps students prepare for an increasingly technological world. A hands-on approach to mathematical ideas and concepts encourages children to become critical thinkers. The curriculum emphasizes the mastery of essential skills in mathematics.

The Science curriculum provides students with a foundational knowledge of science as it relates to their own experiences. Students utilize a hands-on, inquiry-based science program that integrates and develops knowledge, investigative experience, and curiosity through student involvement. The K-8 curriculum prepares students for the rigorous demands of high school science.

The school's Social Studies curriculum focuses on historical understanding, citizenship, geography, and economics. Students develop critical thinking skills that allow them to become informed and responsible citizens. The curriculum moves our students from exploring family and community relationships in the lower grades to a critical study of our nation and our world.

Foreign Language is offered to enrich the curriculum. Spanish is offered for all grades and focuses on vocabulary building in the elementary grades and progresses to grammar, sentence structure and conversational use of the language in the upper elementary and middle school.

The Computer Lab features computers for class use and special projects. The technology curriculum includes instruction in keyboarding, software applications, and Internet usage and more. Computers within the lab are networked for both the school's intranet and for Internet access. The school's Internet policy will govern computer and Internet usage.

Physical Education classes assist in the development of physical, motor, and developmental skills, while teaching the importance of teamwork and providing lifetime fitness skills.

The School Counseling Program plays a vital role in the school's curriculum. Through individual and group guidance, students are assisted in developing the self-confidence, responsibility, and social skills necessary to become productive members of their community.

Students are encouraged to visit the Media Center and check out books on a weekly basis. The Media Center provides a wide range of teaching materials that play an integral role in enhancing the school's instructional program. Use of these valuable resources helps to develop each student's ability to effectively conduct research and retrieve information.

The Fine Arts curriculum develops and stimulates the artistic qualities inherent in all children. Art and music develop many valuable skills, including physical and mental coordination, self expression, group participation, and cooperation.

In general, materials and resources shown to be in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church and/or that have a valid educational purpose will be approved for use within the school. Parents who object to any materials used in the delivery of curriculum or any resources available to the students in the school may formally challenge the use of those materials by submitting a written letter to the school principal indicating the material(s) in question and the reason for the objection. The materials and resources in question will be reviewed by the school administration for appropriateness and educational validity.

### **MATH PLACEMENT FOR GRADES 7 AND 8**

Students who participate in the advanced mathematics course in 7th grade or the 8th grade algebra course must meet the criteria set forth by the Archdiocese of Atlanta (adopted February, 2000; reviewed April, 2012 & March, 2017).

The following minimum criteria (5 out of the 6 areas) must be met for a 7th or 8th grade student to qualify for advanced placement:

- Algebra Aptitude Test 80%
- Iowa Assessment Mathematics 80%
- Iowa Assessment Computation 80%
- 6th & 7th Grade Math Test Average 85%
- 6th & 7th Grade Math Report Card Quarterly Average 85%
- Teacher recommendation indicating that the student demonstrates consistent, successful completion of homework, classwork and positive classroom performance (maturity level, positive work habits, participation) as defined by the current level mathematics teacher

For a student to remain in the 7th grade advanced math course or the 8th grade algebra course, he/she must earn a grade of 85% or higher each quarter. If the student falls below the average during the quarter, he/she will be required to attend tutorials. Should the student's average fall below the 85% mandated average at the end of the quarter, the student may be reassigned to the 7th grade general math course or the 8th grade pre-algebra course.

Seventh grade placement in the advanced mathematics course does not guarantee placement in the algebra course in the 8th grade year. All rising 8th graders must meet the established criteria.

By Archdiocesan policy managed by the Office of Catholic Schools, students must meet five of the six criteria above in order to be eligible for advanced placement into Pre-Algebra at 7th grade and/or Algebra at 8th grade. The school's principal may exercise discretion in placing a student into an appropriate course upon review of the student's performance records and Cognitive Ability (CogAt) Quantitative score as presented on the Iowa Assessment.

## **GRADING SCALES**

Each grade level has various components of evaluation that are appropriate for the grade level of the children. In Pre-Kindergarten, student grades are determined by class work, classroom performance, and formal and informal evaluation.

**Pre-Kindergarten:** A Always  
S Sometimes  
N Not Yet

### **Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> Grade:**

Student grades in Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade are determined by class work, classroom performance, and formal and informal evaluation.

**S= Secure-** Student has acquired strategies needed to perform with minimal teacher support. Student can apply the skills or concepts correctly and independently.

**D=Developing-** Student is gaining confidence and requiring less teacher support. Student shows some understanding, however, understanding of concepts is not complete. Reminders, hints, and suggestions are necessary for completion of work.

**B=Beginning-** Student is beginning to explore with considerable support. The student does not yet complete the task independently. Student requires continued instruction.

**I=Insufficient Progress-** Student requires more than grade appropriate instruction and teacher support.

The student cannot yet complete the task even with assistance. Student requires instructional support in addition to that of the classroom teacher.

**X=Not assessed at this time**

### **Second through Eighth Grades:**

Student grades in second through eighth grade are determined by class work, classroom performance, projects, long and short-term assignments, and formal and informal assessments.

#### **Academic**

**A** 90-100

**B** 80-89

**C** 75-79

**D** 70-74

**F** 69 and below

#### **Conduct**

**S** Satisfactory

**NI** Needs Improvement

**U** Unsatisfactory

### **Specials Classes**

Art, Music, Physical Education, and Library will be graded on a Meets Standard (MS)/Needs Improvement (NI) scale.

Spanish and Computer will be graded on the regular evaluation scale. They will receive letter grades in second through eighth grade.

### **REPORT CARDS**

Report cards are issued four times each school year, and they reflect what the student has accomplished over the course of the nine-week marking period. Parents may make inquiries as to the assessments which result in a cumulative grade on a report card. However, grade changes will not be made unless academic evidence warrants such a change. Parents must notify the office within five (5) days upon receipt of the report card if there is a concern with a grade.

### **PROGRESS REPORTS**

Progress reports in grades 2-8 are issued at the midway point in each nine-week quarter, allowing students ample opportunity to address any areas of concern. Progress report distribution dates are listed on the school calendar. Please remember that you can always consult Renweb for the most up to date grades.

### **HONOR ROLL**

Students in the second through eighth grades are eligible for recognition on one of the school's two Honor Rolls. Honor Roll recognizes students who have earned all A's in all academic classes, including Spanish and Computer class, and a grade of MS in all other specials and no lower than an 'S' in conduct. Merit Roll recognizes students who have earned A's and no more than two B's in all academic classes, including Spanish and Computer class, and a grade of MS in all specials, and no lower than an 'S' in conduct.

### **RETENTION POLICY**

Testing, diagnosis, and performance may indicate that some students cannot complete a year's work in that time frame. Therefore, it may become necessary to retain a student for an additional year in a particular grade. Parents of students who are at risk of being retained will be notified.

For students in grades PK through 1<sup>st</sup>, retention may be considered based on the following criteria:

- The student is functioning below grade level in reading and/or mathematics;
- The student's maturity level is sufficiently below what is expected for the particular grade in question and is seriously affecting academic progress.

Students in the intermediate or middle grades (intermediate: grades 3-5; middle school: grades 6-8) may not fail more than two core courses in one academic year. Should a student fail three or more courses in an academic year, alternative educational placement will be required.

Students who fail one or two core subjects in one academic year will be required to receive remediation over the summer. Failure to successfully remediate according to school guidelines indicates the parents' choice to seek alternative educational placement.

Students in intermediate or middle school who have failed two courses in one academic year, and who have successfully remediated, may return to the school in the following year with the status of academic probation. Should a student fail one core subject (final year average) within the year while on academic probation, alternative educational placement will be required.

## **COUNSELOR**

Counseling services are provided which reflect our mission to create a nurturing environment grounded in the Catholic faith for all students. Counseling services may take the form of individual meetings, small group guidance, student and parent/guardian consultation, and/or classroom guidance lessons. Students may be referred to the counselor by teacher recommendation, parent/guardian request, counselor initiative, self-request, or any other method that communicates a need for consultation. If the administration and counselor determine that student needs exceed the scope of the school counselor's expertise, parents/guardians will be advised to seek additional services outside the school.

## **STANDARDIZED TESTING**

The Archdiocesan testing program for elementary schools requires that the Iowa Assessment (IA), the Cognitive Ability Test (COGAT), and the National Catholic Education Association Assessment of Catechesis/Religious Education Test (NCEA/ACRES) be administered annually.

1. IA is administered in grades 1 – 8 (March)
2. COGAT is administered in grades 2, 5, and 7 (March)
3. ACRES is administered in grades 5 and 8 (April)

Parents are strongly encouraged to avoid scheduling appointments and family trips during the days designated for Standardized Testing. Students will not be given the opportunity to make up IA/COGAT/ACRES testing due to vacations. Please refer to the school calendar for testing dates.

## **STUDENT SUCCESS TEAM (SST)**

The Student Success Team exists to support the teachers in their efforts to serve the students. Team members do this through the consultation model and/or by providing direct services to meet the student's academic, behavioral, or emotional needs.

The Student Success Team is composed of the school counselor, classroom teachers, and administration. This team meets regularly to discuss student achievement and progress as well as alternative strategies as a first or ongoing step in meeting individual student needs.

An established process is followed in supporting the needs of individual students: the classroom teacher shares

with the appropriate Success Team personnel concerns about students who are exhibiting academic, social, emotional, or behavioral difficulties; the teacher and the Success Team members develop a plan of assistance to help the student which may include but are not limited to classroom and instructional strategies and interventions, observations of the student, parent conferences, and consultation with other staff members who work with the student; support strategies and interventions are evaluated for effectiveness and additional steps are taken if needed.

### **EDUCATIONAL ACCOMMODATIONS**

Saint Mary's School strives to accommodate students with physical, emotional, social, or learning challenges. However, families must fully disclose the nature and known extent of such challenges at the time of registration. The School has limited resources to meet certain challenges and may recommend educational alternatives that may better serve the needs of some students.

In order for any recommendation from psychological evaluations to be implemented in the classroom, a current complete psychological evaluation must be provided to the counselor at the beginning of the school year. After review of the recommendations, the school will determine what accommodations can be implemented in our educational setting.

In order for the school to approve student use of accommodation for standardized testing, (Iowa Assessments, SSAT, PSAT, etc.), the student must be using the requested accommodations consistently at the school.

Archdiocesan schools do not operate under 504 Plans or IEPs. Only current psychological evaluations are considered when assessing and planning for classroom accommodations.

Students who exhibit special needs that cannot be met by the school shall be referred to the local public school or other appropriate educational settings. School personnel will work closely with parents to recommend appropriate educational alternatives.

### **COMMUNICATION**

The principal must approve all communications for the school's website, folders, and/or email system. To discuss any facet of your child's program, please contact your child's teacher directly either through written message, e-mail, or over the telephone during school hours (School Office: 706-234-4953). As teachers are responsible for supervision and teaching when with students, parents who are volunteering may not interrupt or visit other classes during the school day, in the morning prior to the start of school, or during afternoon dismissal. All parents must check in and check out at the school office upon entering/leaving the building.

1. Parents are encouraged to discuss a situation thoroughly with the classroom teacher before discussing it with the principal or school counselor.
1. Electronic communication (e-mail system) is the preferred mode of mass parent notification. Parents are responsible for updating email addresses, home addresses, and phone numbers in RenWeb.
2. Parent/Teacher Conferences are scheduled twice a year.
3. No response will be made to anonymous messages. Only signed or "in person" communications will be addressed.

### **FLYERS, BROCHURES, NON-SCHOOL RELATED ADVERTISING**

No person is permitted to post or distribute any flyers, pamphlets, or other written communication on school grounds without the authorization of the principal. All school-related flyers must be pre-approved by the principal. The school does not endorse or guarantee satisfaction with the advertised services or products.

## **PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Official parent-teacher report card conferences are held twice per year and are scheduled by the teacher. The dates are published in the school calendar. Parents will receive information as to the times available for the conferences. Parents are strongly urged to take advantage of the opportunity to discuss their student's progress with their respective teachers. All other conferences may be held as requested by the parent or the teacher.

## **HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION**

Frequent and meaningful communication between home and school is essential to the success of the academic program at Saint Mary's. Most teachers will publish a weekly newsletter. Parents may receive other forms of communication from their child's teacher, administrative staff, or other faculty members, as needed.

Faculty and staff members may be contacted at school by one of the following methods:

- A message left at the front office;
- E-mail can be found on our website at [smsrome.org](http://smsrome.org)

Please check with your child's teacher regarding his/her preferred method of communication.

Teachers have 24 hours to respond to an email, phone call, etc. This does not include weekends. For example, if you send home communication on Friday afternoon, you may not receive a response until the following Monday.

The most effective method of addressing concerns is to communicate directly with your child's teacher. If a question or problem arises which the teacher is unable to resolve, the principal may be contacted. To schedule a meeting with a teacher, the parent may email the child's teacher. To schedule a meeting with any administrator, call the school office or send an email or note directly to the administrator.

Parents with a scheduled appointment are to sign in at the main office and receive a visitor's badge. No one is permitted to go to a classroom or other part of the building to speak with a teacher during the school day without a scheduled appointment.

## **SCHOOL PUBLICATIONS**

The Advancement Department publishes the *Knight Vision* newsletter twice a year. Non-custodial parents who wish to receive a copy of newsletters or other publications should contact the school.

Each family will receive a hard copy of the Saint Mary's Catholic School Student/Parent Handbook. An emailed copy will be sent out for families to read. Each year parents/guardians will be required to sign that you have read the school handbook.

The Saint Mary's Catholic School Yearbook may be purchased during the school year and is distributed at the end of the school year.

## **CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

It is very important to notify the main office if there is a change in home address, e-mail address, or in home, work, or cell numbers.

## **ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR TECHNOLOGY**

### **Purpose**

Technology is a valuable and real world educational tool. Our school is committed to teach its students, faculty, administrators, staff, and school community to work and to learn effectively with technology and to ensure responsible use of technology. The policy outlined below applies to all technology use including but not limited to Internet use. The Acceptable Use Policy for Technology applies to all students, faculty, administrators, staff, volunteers or community members allowed access to school technology resources. In some cases outside or personal uses of technology may be applicable under this policy.

### **Scope Of Use**

We recognize that the digital world allows anytime, anywhere access. Uses mentioned in this policy apply to inside school use and may in certain instances apply to personal technology use and/or uses outside of school. Where personal outside use of technology threatens a likelihood of substantial disruption in school, including harming or interfering with the rights of other students or teachers to participate fully in school or extracurricular activities, these activities may be viewed as a violation of the Acceptable Use Policy and may be subject to the disciplinary measure found herein.

The types of electronic and digital communications referenced in this AUP include, but are not limited to, social networking sites, cell phones, digital cameras, text messaging, email, voice over ip, chat rooms, and instant messaging.

### **Goal**

The school's goal is to prepare its members for life in a digital global community. To this end, the school will:

- Integrate technology with curriculum to enhance teaching and learning
- Encourage critical thinking, communication, collaboration and problem solving skills
- Facilitate evaluation and synthesis of information
- Encourage ethical practices and provide education for internet safety and digital citizenship
- Provide a variety of technology based tools and related technology skills

### **Responsibilities Of User**

Saint Mary's Catholic School will make every effort to provide a safe environment for learning with technology including Internet filtering and safeguards. The students, faculty, administrators, staff, and school community are granted the privilege of using the computer hardware and software peripherals, and electronic communication tools including the Internet. With this privilege comes the responsibility for appropriate use. At Saint Mary's Catholic School, we use information and technology in safe, legal, and responsible ways. We embrace the following conditions or facets of being a digital citizen.

#### **Respect One's Self**

Users will select online names that are appropriate and will consider the information and images that are posted online. Users will be mindful of the information they share online and practice mindfulness in everything they do online.

#### **Respect Others**

Users will refrain from using technologies to bully, tease or harass other people. Users will not share sensitive information about others. Users will also not participate in spreading misinformation.

#### **Protect One's Self and Others**

Users will protect themselves and others by reporting abuse and not forwarding inappropriate materials or

communications.

### **Respect Intellectual Property**

Users will appropriately cite any and all use of websites, books, media, etc.

### **Protect Intellectual Property**

Users will request to use the software and media others produce and protect license agreements for all software and resources.

## **TECHNOLOGY USE GUIDELINES**

### **Educational Purpose/ Appropriate Use**

- School technology is to be used to enhance student learning. Students must not access social networking sites or gaming sites, except for educational purposes under teacher supervision.
- Unsupervised use of any computer-related equipment is strictly prohibited. Use of the printers must be authorized by the teacher.
- Students must keep devices flat on the desk – visible to the teacher when in use.
- Proper care of the equipment will be taken at all times. No food or beverages are permitted near school technology at any time. Fees will be charged for the repair and/or replacement of computer-related equipment damaged by a student.
- The use of personal storage devices, such as DVDs, flash drives, or zip drives, is permitted under the direction of the classroom teacher. If applicable, such devices must be scanned prior to use in school.
- Students will login with their personal login name and password and will refrain from sharing this information with other students.
- Students will use only school supported search engines. Access to the internet is limited to educational sites approved by the teacher.

### **Examples of Unacceptable Uses - Users are not to:**

- Use technology to harass, bully, threaten, deceive, intimidate, offend, embarrass, or annoy any individual.
- Post, publish, or display any defamatory, inaccurate, violent, abusive, profane or sexually oriented material.
- Users must not use obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude or threatening language.
- Users must not knowingly or recklessly post false information about any persons, students, staff or any other organization.
- Use a photograph, image, video or likeness of any student, or employee without express permission of that individual and of the principal.
- Take photos or videos during school hours unless instructed to do so by the teacher.
- Use of the recording feature of electronic devices to record a teacher without his/ her permission.
- Create any site, post any photo, image or video of another except with express permission of that individual.
- Attempt to circumvent system security, alter the school's computer system and/or network, delete files or programs, or install unauthorized games or copyrighted software.
- Deliberately visit a site known for unacceptable material or any material that is not in support of educational objectives.
- Violate license agreements, copy CDs/DVDs, or other protected media.

- Use Technology for any illegal activity. Use of the Internet for commercial gains or profits is not allowed.
- Breach confidentiality obligations of school or system employees.
- Harm the goodwill and reputation of the school or system in the community.
- Transmit any material in violation of any local, federal and state laws. This includes, but is not limited to: copyrighted material, licensed material and threatening or obscene material.
- Use devices during transition time between classes.

### **Copyright/Intellectual Property and Identity**

All sources obtained for teacher and student work should be properly cited. Users are to respect the rights of and the intellectual property of others in accordance with Federal Copyright Law. Transferring copyrighted material to or from a school without expressed permission of the owner is a violation of Federal Law.

### **Reporting**

Users must immediately report any damage or change to the school's hardware/software that is noticed by the user, or any violations of the school's Acceptable Use Policy.

### **Electronic and Mobile Devices, Cell phones**

Users must adhere to school policy that further defines uses of mobile devices, such as cell phones, smart watches and electronic readers. Students should come to the office for permission to use the school's phone in order to contact parents.

### **Cell Phones & Photography**

All student cell phones must be turned off upon entering the building and must be stored in the student's backpack in their homeroom class. Students in Before Care and Extended Care may not use their phones. Students in violation of this policy will have their cell phones confiscated. The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged cell phones.

Please note that photography of other students while on campus is strictly forbidden at all times.

### **Administrative Rights**

The school has the right to monitor both student and employee use of school computers and computer accessed content. Due to the evolving nature of technology, Saint Mary's Catholic School reserves the right to amend or add to this policy at any time without notice.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE**

Social Media encompasses the various cyberspace ways that persons can communicate with each other. Social Media includes, but is not limited to, Facebook, SnapChat, Twitter, Instagram, etc. While the school does not prohibit the use of social media, conduct, whether inside or outside the school, which is detrimental to the reputation of the school can result in disciplinary action. Therefore, defamatory or threatening statements made on social media may result in discipline of the student account holder. Likewise, parents/guardians are expected to conduct themselves in a productive, positive, and Christ-like manner when discussing the school, school programs, and/or school personnel on social media. The school and the parents/guardians are partners in the education of our children. If, in the opinion of the administration, that partnership is no longer viable, the school reserves the right to require the parent/guardian to withdraw the student from the school.

The school name, logo, motto, or mascot may not appear in any form on any type of social media used for promotion of products or published on public social media not “owned” by the pictured child’s family. Social media postings should always reflect the values of Saint Mary’s School. The school name, logo, motto, or mascot may not appear in any form of clothing or paraphernalia, e.g. putting the school name or crest on t-shirts, without the express written permission of the principal.

Saint Mary’s Catholic School provides many online resources for student use, and we recognize that in addition to using the Internet to access educational materials, many students also use various forms of social media. Social media can be used for good and most students use it appropriately. Students are expected to demonstrate the same standard of respectful behavior toward others online as they are in-person (see Respecting Persons guideline in this handbook).

At Saint Mary’s School, we do not make a practice of reviewing our students’ social media activity outside of school hours, but if something is brought to our attention that is believed to be in violation of the school’s code of conduct, the school may investigate and respond with appropriate consequences up to and including expulsion. Therefore, we encourage our parents to be diligent in monitoring their child’s social media participation to ensure their personal safety and compliance with Saint Mary’s social media usage expectations.

Parents are reminded that the minimum age requirement to create accounts on many of these sites is at least 13.

### **Policy Violations of Social Media Usage**

Violation of the above rules will be dealt with by the administration of the school. Violation of these rules may result in any or all of the following:

- Loss of use of the school network, computers and software, including Internet access.
- Issuance of demerits/detentions, if applicable.
- Disciplinary action including, but not limited to, suspension, expulsion, and/or legal action by the school, civil authorities, or other involved parties.

### **PUBLIC MEDIA POLICY**

On occasion, Saint Mary’s students’ written work, projects, names and likenesses/photographs are featured in the local media, the school website, and other school publications. (Including Saint Mary’s Facebook Page and Private Youtube Page) Parents who DO NOT wish the above items/ information released to the media or published on the school website or other school publications, must notify the school in writing.

No one may use the school name, logo, or motto on any type of social media or in any other way, e.g. putting the name on t-shirts, for example, without the express written permission of the principal.

### **AUDIO/VISUAL RECORDING POLICY**

No audio/visual recording devices may be used to record conversations or photographic images, either in person or by telephone, by or among students, parents, teachers, or school administrators on school property or on the school telephone without the express consent and knowledge of all parties involved. The administration reserves the right to restrict or prohibit the use of audio/visual recording devices during school functions and events.

### **VISITORS**

Parents/guardians or other adults must check-in at the school office and receive a volunteer/visitor badge upon arrival.

Alumni (under the age of 16) may visit during lunch and recess, however, they are not permitted to remain on campus beyond the scheduled lunch times, attend classes, participate in class parties, or field trips, and must have a parent/guardian remain on campus during the visit. Graduates are also welcome to visit with faculty members following the afternoon dismissal. Non-related students from other local area schools are not permitted to visit without the principal's prior approval.

Any other correspondence needs to be arranged with the teacher via email prior to visiting campus.

### **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT/VOLUNTEERS**

Volunteers are important to the success of school life. Most volunteer opportunities are coordinated by the Saint Mary's PTO, such as class party coordinators and help with our school fundraising events. Classroom teachers request volunteer assistance for field trips. The Media Center and the Advancement Office also request volunteers as needed for projects and events.

Volunteers must contact the business manager by email to request a link to initiate the screening process. Upon completing the background check and volunteer application, all volunteers are required to complete the VIRTUS Program, which is a 3-hour live training session. Volunteers may find the VIRTUS Program training schedule on the Archdiocese of Atlanta website at [archatl.com](http://archatl.com), click Ministries and Services, then click Safe Environment. Sessions will be held at Saint Mary's Catholic School and Saint Mary's Catholic Church as well as listed sessions at other parishes and schools throughout the Archdiocese.

Volunteers must complete the entire Safe Environment program, including the VIRTUS Program, before volunteering at Saint Mary's School or any other Archdiocesan entity. Background screening and VIRTUS training are required every five (5) years.

Parents/guardians, visitors, and volunteers may never be alone with a child (other than their own) in a classroom, office, or bathroom.

All approved volunteers should secure their name badge upon entering the school, and must sign out upon exit.

### **PARENTAL COOPERATION/SUPPORT**

Saint Mary's Catholic School is a Roman Catholic educational institution, fully committed to the teachings of the Roman Catholic faith. All educative activity offered at the school is grounded in the Catholic faith; without it, the school is unable to achieve its mission. While Saint Mary's Catholic School is committed to ensuring that all teachings of the Catholic faith are shared and discussed with respect, sensitivity and charity, especially with those who may struggle with them, the school expects all parents/guardians and students to demonstrate support for the mission of the school and all the teachings of the Roman Catholic faith by not contradicting or criticizing them publicly, in words or actions, including through online social media venues. Parents/guardians and students who fail to act in a manner consistent with this expectation may be asked to withdraw their children from the school.

### **PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION**

The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is a volunteer service organization designed to help connect home and school by providing support to the students, parents, administration, faculty, and staff of Saint Mary's Catholic School. The PTO is committed to enhancing the school environment through a variety of student activities, family activities, and fundraisers. We encourage all of our families to become active members of the Parent Teacher Organization. The many committed parent volunteers are the heart and soul of the organization.

## **LUNCH**

Students may bring lunch or parents wishing to purchase a lunch may do so through *SchoolHouse Fare* at their website: [www.schoolhousefare.com](http://www.schoolhousefare.com). You may go to that site, establish an account, and order lunches. Parents prepay for these lunches by using a credit or debit card.

Milk, bottled water and ice cream are available to students at an additional fee. These fees will be billed through your FACTS account monthly.

Calling home for a forgotten lunch is not permitted. If a student forgets his/her lunch, Saint Mary's will provide a lunch and your FACTS account will be charged. Drinks in glass bottles may not be brought to school. Due to our contract agreement with SchoolHouse Fare, no outside restaurant food can be brought in. Forgotten lunches may only be brought into the school up until 9:30 am. After that time, your child will receive the lunch provided by Saint Mary's. Also, please be mindful of your classroom's food allergy policies.

## **PLAYGROUND**

Students are allowed to play on the playground equipment or in the designated play area during their recess time under the supervision of a faculty/staff member. Due to insurance liabilities, students may not play unsupervised in the playground areas before or after school.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

A field trip is a first-hand experience that supplements classroom instruction. It is an observational experience having definite educational objectives. Field trips may be taken only with the approval of the principal who, in cooperation with the classroom teacher, approves safe procedures and determines whether the trip is a contributing activity to the students' learning experience. A permission slip, signed by the parent, is required before any child is permitted to participate in any field trip. Only original signatures will be accepted. No faxed or electronically received permission slips will be accepted. Handwritten slips are not permission slips and will not be accepted. Parents are encouraged to volunteer as chaperones; however, chaperones are not permitted to bring other siblings or children not enrolled at SMS on a field trip. Chaperones are required to complete the volunteer application process prior to attending any field trips. Each chaperone must have a criminal background check on file with the school and must have completed Virtus Training. Generally, the SMS Bus is used to transport children. Private cars may not be used to transport children on field trips. Parent chaperones may not ride on the bus to and from the field trip. All field trips must originate and terminate at the school. Students will not be allowed to meet their class at the field trip site, nor will parents be allowed to take their child home from the field trip site. Students can be denied participation in field trips if they fail to meet academic or behavioral requirements.

In general, school uniforms must be worn on field trips unless the type of field trip warrants different attire (touring a barn, visiting wetlands, etc.). Attire for field trips, other than school uniforms, requires approval by the principal.

## **CLASSROOM CELEBRATIONS**

Teachers should be contacted in advance to ensure minimal classroom disruption. Treats should be simple and should be for the child's class only. Please refer to the guidelines below.

**Birthdays** - Food should be restricted to individually portioned treats. We have several students that are highly allergic to various foods. Please check with the classroom teacher. Outside entertainment (clowns, ponies, bounce houses) is not allowed for birthdays. No balloons, flowers, etc. are to be delivered to the school. If a delivery is received at Saint Mary's the item(s) will be held in the school office until the end of the school day.

In order to avoid hurt feelings, invitations to a child's party outside of school time may be distributed in class only if the entire class is invited.

**Holiday and End-of-Year Parties** - Parties normally begin at 2:30 PM unless otherwise noted. In addition to an end-of-year party, approved party dates will be noted on the school calendar. Neither off-campus parties nor outside entertainment are allowed nor is the collection of money to fund classroom parties. It is recommended that homeroom parents organize volunteers to donate party supplies and food items.

## **CLUBS, COMPETITIONS & ORGANIZATIONS**

Saint Mary's Catholic School has many clubs and organizations in which students are encouraged to participate. Clubs, organizations, and activities that are usually offered include, but are not limited to: student government, choir, Beta Club, Drama Club, Altar Society, tennis, basketball, soccer, volleyball, cross country, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Archdiocesan Oratorical Contest, Quiz Bowl, recycling program, chess club, Spelling Bee and Religion Bee. Most clubs meet after school, and separate arrangements must be made for transportation.

## **SPORTS**

Students wishing to participate in Saint Mary's Catholic School sponsored sports teams must submit a current year sports physical, signed by a physician, dated no earlier than June 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

We strongly recommend labeling all students' clothing and possessions. Money or valuable objects that are found should be turned in to the school office. The school is not responsible for lost articles or money. Unclaimed clothing or usable objects may be given away or sold at the Used Uniform Sale.

## **GENERAL STUDENT APPEARANCE**

### **“Let your modesty be known to all...” Philippians 4:5**

It is our goal that students reflect the values and traditions of a Catholic school. The expectation is that our students' appearance is conservative and not a distraction to themselves or to those around them.

We encourage a simple hairstyle which is consistent with the simple, tailored appearance of our school uniform. Extreme hairstyles are not considered appropriate. Girls' hair must be neat and (with the exception of bangs) off the face. The maximum acceptable length of hair for boys is above the eyebrows, above the top of the collar at the back, and above the top of the ears.

Chemically altered hair, shaving all or part of the head, shaving patterns in the hair, cutting or shaving one part of the head and leaving hair long on other parts, excessively teased hair or hair that is unkempt in appearance, ponytails worn by boys, and unusual or trendy hairstyles are not permitted.

Students in violation will be given one week to cut their hair. Failure to comply may result in the student not being allowed to return to school until he/she is in compliance. Boys should NOT have facial hair. Beach style beads and hair wraps are not allowed.

Girls may wear only clear fingernail polish. Middle School girls may wear light makeup. Light makeup is defined as skin tone foundation, a light blush, clear lip-gloss, and brown or black mascara. Eye shadow, eyeliner, glitter make-up, and acrylic nails are not permitted. Hair accessories should coordinate with the school uniform. Scarves, headband scarves and bandannas are not allowed. Hats or caps may not be worn with the school uniform during the school day.

## **JEWELRY POLICY**

Boys and girls may wear:

- One religious medal or one thin Cross on a thin plain gold or silver chain around the neck.
- One small watch. No smart watches.
- One small ring per hand.
- No bracelets of any kind are permitted.
- Girls may wear one small stud earring or tiny hoop earring per ear.
- Boys may not wear earrings.
- All jewelry should be conservative in size, color, and nature.
- Tattoos, temporary or otherwise, and body piercings are not allowed.

It is advisable for students not to wear jewelry on P.E. days. The P.E. teacher may request a student to remove jewelry for the student's safety. Students should not wear valuable jewelry to school. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen jewelry. This excludes any necessary medical jewelry including necklaces and medical bracelets. You must have a doctor's note on file.

## **UNIFORM POLICY**

As Saint Bernard of Clairvaux said, "How beautiful then is modesty and what a gem among virtues it is." It is in line with this virtue that our uniform policy is focused. The student uniform reflects the cohesiveness and unity of the school community. When our uniforms are worn in the community, our students thus become walking representatives of Saint Mary's Catholic School. It is our goal that Saint Mary's Catholic School students will take pride in their uniforms, looking at them as a way of being a part of a very special family—the Saint Mary's family—and that they will always strive to act and behave in a way that would make the school and their parents proud.

With these ideas in mind, all members of the school community must adhere to the uniform regulations. All new uniforms must be purchased at Uniform Source through the contact information below:

**Uniform Source**  
**2141 Cobb Pkwy NW**  
**Kennesaw, GA 30152**  
**Phone: 1-770-919-9967**  
**Website: [www.uniform-source.com](http://www.uniform-source.com)**

Saint Mary's Parent Teacher Organization conducts a Used Uniform Sale several times a year, selling gently used uniforms at a reduced price. This provides another way for parents to purchase uniforms for their students.

There are three basic uniforms:

- Summer Uniforms
- Winter Uniforms
- Dress Uniforms

The Summer Uniform is worn from the first day of school until the Fall time change, and from the Spring time change through the last day of school.

The Winter Uniform is worn from the Fall time change until the Spring time change.

The Dress Uniform is worn on all Mass Days, Prayer Service Days, and other special announced days.

\*Please Note: During the transitional period of the year, it may be cold on mornings when Summer Uniforms are supposed to be worn. If you feel that your child will be cold all day in shorts or the elementary school skort, it is acceptable for your student to wear the Winter Uniform that day. It is NOT acceptable, however, to wear shorts or an elementary school skort instead of the Winter Uniform, even though the weather may be warm. Shorts and elementary school skorts are to be worn ONLY as Summer Uniforms.

## **UNIFORM DETAILS**

Only standard athletic shoes that are predominantly white, black, or gray, or a combination of the three colors may be worn. There can be no additional colors present on the shoe, the shoestrings, the sole, or the logo.

Students may wear any shoe sold by Uniform Source, such as navy Mary Janes, Sperry Bluefish or A/O, Merrell Jungle Moc; or traditional athletic shoes that are predominantly solid white, black, or grey, or a combination of these colors. For example: a solid black shoe with a white sole is acceptable. No shoes may have brightly colored midsoles or inlays in themed soles. Bright laces and/or midsoles are not allowed. Accent colors must coordinate with the uniform and be white, black or grey -- no pink, green, orange, red, neon colors, glitter, etc.

Velcro or lace-less athletic shoes may be worn, but they should be white, black, gray, or a combination of those colors, with no additional colors on the shoe, the sole, the shoestrings or the logo. Midsoles must be a standard white, black or gray.

No roller shoes, slide-on or slip-on tennis shoes, shoes that make noise or blink, Crocs, Toms, Vans or Converse, high top athletic shoes, skater style shoes, cowboy boots, UGGS, shoes with cartoon characters or other unusual styles.

Heels of shoes should not be more than one inch high.

Socks for students in Kindergarten-5<sup>th</sup> Grade should be standard white crew-style socks. Crew socks are socks that extend over the ankle and up the calf, approximately 4 inches above the top of the shoe. Students may also wear the ankle style white socks, but the socks must cover the entire ankle. No logo should be visible on the socks. Girls may also wear the Uniform Source white socks with the SMS plaid on the ruffle only. Eighth grade students only are allowed to wear the no-show style of ankle socks.

Students must wear proper shoes on Dress Uniform days: Kids Sizes Sperry Songfish for girls and Sperry Gamefish for boys from Uniform Source. Men sizes must be Authentic Original Sperry Top-Sider in Oatmeal. Women sizes must be Bluefish Sperry Top-Sider in Linen Oat. Your family may choose to purchase an *identical* shoe from another manufacturer.

Shirts and blouses must be neatly tucked in, not rolled over the top of pants, shorts, or skirts. The belt must be visible. Only the first, top button of shirts and blouses may be unbuttoned.

- Pants and shorts must be worn at the waist.
- Underwear must not be visible at any time.
- Only plain white short sleeve or sleeveless undershirts may be worn under the uniform.
- Skirts, skorts and shorts length should be no more than 2 ½ inches above the knee.

- Skirts should not be rolled at the waistband.
- If a garment has belt loops, a belt must be worn.

The entire uniform must be in good, clean condition, and fit properly, with no holes, missing buttons, ripped hemlines, stains, faded, etc. Uniforms should be worn as the manufacturer intended.

### **Boys' Uniforms, Grades K-5**

#### **Summer Uniform:**

- White or light blue pique knit short-sleeved polo with Saint Mary's logo
- Navy shorts (Boys in K-2 may wear elastic waist shorts with no belt loops)
  - No shorter than 2-1/2" above the knee
- Plain brown or black leather belt (may be braided)
- White crew socks
- Appropriate school shoes (see Uniform Details above)

#### **Winter Uniform:**

- White or light blue pique knit polo shirt in a choice of short OR long-sleeves with Saint Mary's logo
- Navy slacks (Boys in K-2 may wear elastic waist slacks with no belt loops)
- Plain brown or black leather belt (may be braided)
- White crew socks
- Appropriate school shoes (see Uniform Details above)

\*Please Note: only Saint Mary's sweatshirt OR fleece jacket may be worn in the classroom.

Coat of choice may be worn outside only.

#### **Dress Uniform:**

- White pique knit polo shirt in a choice of short OR long-sleeves with Saint Mary's logo.
  - No blue polo shirt on dress uniform days
- Navy slacks
- Plain brown or black leather belt (may be braided)
- White crew socks
- Appropriate school shoes (see Uniform Details above)

### **Girls' Uniforms, Grades K-5**

#### **Summer Uniform:**

- White smooth knit short-sleeved polo shirt with Saint Mary's logo
- Navy shorts OR plaid skort (Girls in K-2 may wear elastic waist shorts with no belt loops)
  - No shorter than 2-1/2" above the knee
- Plain brown or black leather belt (may be braided)
- White crew socks OR Uniform Source white and plaid ruffle socks
- Appropriate shoes (see Uniform Details above)

**OR**

- White short-sleeved Peter Pan blouse
- Plaid jumper
  - No shorter than 2-1/2" above the knee

- White crew socks or navy knee socks or Uniform Source white and plaid ruffle socks
- Appropriate shoes (see Uniform Details above)

**OR**

- Plaid Dress for girls in K, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades
  - No shorter than 2-1/2” above the knee
- White crew socks or Uniform Source white and plaid ruffle socks
- Appropriate shoes (see Uniform Details above).

**Winter Uniform:**

- White Peter Pan blouse in choice of short or long-sleeves
- Plaid jumper
  - No shorter than 2-1/2” above the knee
- White crew socks or Uniform Source white and plaid ruffle socks or navy knee socks or navy tights/footless tights with crew socks (sweatpants should NOT be worn under jumpers)
- Appropriate school shoes (see Uniform Details above)

**OR**

- White smooth knit shirt in a choice of short OR long sleeves with Saint Mary’s logo
- Navy slacks (Girls in K-2 may wear elastic waist slacks with no belt loops).
- Plain brown or black leather belt (may be braided)
- White crew socks or Uniform Source white and plaid ruffle socks
- Appropriate school shoes (see Uniform Details above)

**OR**

- Plaid Dress for girls in K, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades
  - No shorter than 2-1/2” above the knee
- White crew socks or Uniform Source white and plaid ruffle socks or knee socks or navy tights/footless tights with crew socks
- Appropriate shoes (see Uniform Details above)

\*Please Note: ONLY official Saint Mary’s sweatshirt or fleece jacket with embroidered school logo may be worn in the classroom.

Outerwear coat of choice may be worn outside only.

**Dress Uniform:**

- White Peter Pan blouse in choice of short OR long sleeves
- Plaid jumper
  - No shorter than 2-1/2” above the knee
- White crew socks or navy knee socks
- Appropriate school shoes (see Uniform Details above)

Only navy cardigan sweaters may be worn at Mass. Saint Mary’s sweatshirts/fleeces are not acceptable attire for Mass.

**Boys’ Uniforms, Grades 6-8 (Middle School)**

**Summer Uniform:**

- Red or navy smooth knit polo shirts, short sleeves, with Saint Mary’s logo

- Khaki shorts
  - No shorter than 2-1/2" above the knee
- Plain brown or black leather belt (may be braided)
- White crew OR white ankle socks (socks must be visible above shoe tops and cover ankles)
- Eighth grade students only are allowed to wear the no-show style of ankle socks.
- Appropriate school shoes (see Uniform Details above)

**Winter Uniform:**

- Red or navy smooth knit polo shirt, either short- or long-sleeved with Saint Mary's logo
- Khaki slacks
- Plain brown or black leather belt (may be braided)
- White crew OR white ankle socks (socks must be visible above shoe tops and cover ankles)
- Eighth grade students only are allowed to wear the no-show style of ankle socks.
- Appropriate athletic shoes (see Uniform Details above)

Only official Saint Mary's sweatshirt, hoodie, or fleece jacket with embroidered school logo may be worn in the classroom. Outerwear coat of choice may be worn outside only, not in the classroom.

**Dress Uniforms:**

- White oxford-cloth shirt in a choice of short OR long sleeves with Saint Mary's logo
- Khaki slacks
- Blue and white striped uniform tie
- Plain brown or black leather belt (may be braided)
- White or navy crew socks (ankle socks are not allowed for Mass)
- Appropriate school shoes (see Uniform Details above)
- Optional dress jacket with SMS logo from Uniform Source

On dress uniform days, it is permissible for Middle School boys to remove ties after Mass, and Middle School girls to remove vests.

**Girls' Uniforms, Grades 6-8 (Middle School)**

**Summer Uniform:**

- Red or navy smooth knit short-sleeved polo shirt with Saint Mary's logo
- Khaki shorts OR khaki skirt
  - No shorter than 2-1/2" above the knee
- Plain brown or black leather belt (may be braided)
- White crew OR white ankle socks (socks must be visible above shoe tops and cover ankles)
- Eighth grade students only are allowed to wear the no-show style of ankle socks.
- Appropriate school shoes (see Uniform Details above)

**Winter Uniform:**

- Red or navy smooth knit polo shirt, either short- or long-sleeved with Saint Mary's logo
- Khaki slacks OR khaki skirt
  - No shorter than 2-1/2" above the knee
- Plain brown or black leather belt (may be braided)
- White crew OR navy knee socks OR white ankle socks (socks must be visible above shoe tops and cover ankles), OR navy tights/leggings.

Only official Saint Mary's sweatshirt, hoodie, or fleece jacket with embroidered school logo may be worn in the classroom.

Coat of choice may be worn outside only, not in the classroom.

**Dress Uniform:**

- White oxford-cloth shirt in a choice of short OR long-sleeves with Saint Mary's logo
- Plaid skirt
  - No shorter than 2-1/2" above the knee
- Navy sweater vest with embroidered Saint Mary's logo OR dress jacket with Saint Mary's logo from Uniform Source
- Navy knee socks

**Physical Education Uniform:**

- Athletic shoes with non-marking soles and socks as listed under the regular uniform
- Students in Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade are to wear their regular school uniforms for P.E.
- Students in 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grades are to change into the P.E. uniform at school just before P.E. class begins.
- Only the SMS P.E. shorts, shirt, and sweatshirts may be worn in P.E. class on P.E. days.
- P.E. shorts and shirts are NOT available through the uniform company and must be purchased at the school.

SMS reserves the right to adjust/modify the above stated uniform policy.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL MISSION DAYS**

Mission Days are the days in which a student is not required to wear his or her uniform to school. In order to participate in a Mission Day, the student must bring in a minimum of 50 cents, which is donated to a Catholic service organization, which changes each year. Mission Days are noted on the school calendar. Should a day be added during the year, you will be notified in advance through appropriate means of communication. On Mission Days, students are expected to wear regular casual clothes in a neat and well-groomed manner. Standard policy for shoes, jewelry, etc. is relaxed on Mission Days.

**The following clothing is *NOT* permitted:**

- Short shorts or skirts---shorts or skirts measuring more than 2 1/2 inches above the knee.
- Strapless or spaghetti strap shirts, halter tops, and tank tops T-shirts or tops that expose the midriff when arms are raised
- Jeans or pants that expose navel or lower back
- Oversized or baggy jeans worn low or below waist
- Any clothing containing words referencing alcohol, drugs, or inappropriate language
- Beach shoes or flip-flops

On Mission Days, dresses or skirts worn with leggings must meet the length requirements stated above. Long shirts worn with leggings must come to the middle of the thigh.

**Note:** Because of the constant changing nature of fashion, the school reserves the right to classify any style of dress as inappropriate.

***Abuse of Mission Day rules may result in any of the following:***

- Loss of Mission Day privileges
- Parent called to bring proper clothing

- If parents cannot be located, student will be loaned a school uniform from the used uniform store and charged if not returned cleaned.

## **TAG DAYS**

Tag Days are the days in which a student is not required to wear his or her uniform to school. Should a day be added during the year, you will be notified in advance through appropriate means of communication. On Tag Days, students are expected to wear regular casual clothes in a neat and well-groomed manner. Standard policy for shoes, jewelry, etc. is relaxed on Tag Days Only. Hair and makeup is still expected to be within policy on Tag Days.

### **The following clothing is *NOT* permitted:**

- Short shorts or skirts-----shorts or skirts measuring more than 2 1/2 inches above the knee.
- Strapless or spaghetti strap shirts, halter tops, and tank tops, T-shirts or tops that expose the midriff when arms are raised
- Jeans or pants that expose navel or lower back
- Oversized or baggy jeans worn low or below waist
- Any clothing containing words referencing alcohol, drugs, or inappropriate language
- Beach shoes or flip-flops

On Tag Days, dresses or skirts worn with leggings must meet the length requirements stated above. Long shirts worn with leggings must come to the middle of the thigh.

**Note:** Because of the constant changing nature of fashion, the school reserves the right to classify any style of dress as inappropriate.

### ***Abuse of Tag Day rules may result in any of the following:***

- Loss of Tag Day privileges
- Parent called to bring proper clothing
- If parents cannot be located, student will be loaned a school uniform from the used uniform store

## **EMERGENCY DRILLS**

Emergency drills (Fire, Lock-Down, Severe Weather) are held in accordance with all state and local laws. In instances of severe weather, when watches and warnings have been issued by the National Weather Service, it is imperative that telephone lines to the school be left open in case conditions warrant an emergency response. Parents are requested not to call the school as we will communicate with families through our automated messaging system.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

In instances of severe weather, when watches and warnings have been issued by the National Weather Service, it is imperative that telephone lines to the school be left open in case conditions warrant an emergency response.

In the event of inclement weather, Saint Mary's Catholic School will usually follow the directives of the Floyd County and/or the Rome City School System unless otherwise announced. If an emergency situation arises, our automated call system will contact each family to relay the information regarding the conditions at school. Again, it is imperative that telephone lines to the school be left open in case conditions warrant an emergency response, so parents are asked not to call the school. School closings will be announced through the school's

automated message system and our social media outlets.

Children need fresh air and unstructured play; however, recess will be held inside if it is raining, if it is lightning, if the wind chill or actual temperature is below 32 degrees Fahrenheit, if the heat index is above 104 degrees Fahrenheit, or if other hazardous conditions exist.

## **SCHOOL CLOSURES**

In the event of a natural disaster, disease outbreak or any other circumstances which, in the judgement of the Superintendent of Schools, make it infeasible, unsafe or otherwise imprudent to continue campus-based education, all Archdiocesan schools shall resume as soon as practical via distance learning and/or other methods adopted and/or developed by the school administration and faculty and approved by the Office of Catholic Schools. Due to continuing financial obligations relating to operational costs, including administrative, faculty and staff salaries, there shall be no suspension, reduction or refund of tuition or applicable fees.

## **CLINIC**

A clinic visit notification slip will be emailed whenever a student visits the nurse. The school nurse may be reached at 706-234-4953 ext. 212.

**Student Emergency Care Form:** Forms must be complete and on file with the school nurse by the first week of classes.

**Immunization Forms:** Form 3231 must be on file for every student annually before the student may attend classes. Students may not attend school without this form on file. Forms need to be signed by your child's pediatrician. There are no religious exemptions from immunizations.

Please note: Middle School attendance requires that students entering 6<sup>th</sup> grade have two doses of Varicella (or proof of disease), two doses each of Measles and Mumps, and one dose of Rubella vaccines. Middle School attendance requires that students entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade have Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis) and MCV (meningococcal conjugate) vaccines.

## **Head Injury Policy**

If your child should hit his/her head, you will receive a phone call or a note from the school nurse. In the case of a note, please sign and return it to school.

## **Head Lice Policy**

Head lice are highly contagious. If the school detects lice, you will be notified. Your child should be treated at home and he/she may return to school after the first treatment if the head is clear of lice and/or nits. Please notify the nurse if you have treated your child at home. The school nurse will re-check your child upon return and for approximately 7-10 days after the first home treatment. If you discover head lice, please inform the school nurse immediately so that all parents in the grade level of your child can be notified of the outbreak. No names will be used in this communication.

## **Communicable Diseases Policy**

Notify the school nurse if your child has a communicable disease. You will be notified if your child has a temperature of **100 or above**. He/she will be kept in the clinic until you are able to pick him/her up.

In the case of a communicable disease (i.e.: measles, chicken pox, TB, etc.) a release card from the local health department, or a letter from a physician indicating that the health department regulation has been satisfied, must be presented to the main office before the child can return to school. Notes from parents/guardians are not

accepted as assurance that the health department regulation has been satisfied. In the case of head lice or other parasitic infestation (i.e.: ringworm, etc.), students will be sent home until there are no longer any visible signs of infestation.

Saint Mary's School pays student insurance so that all students have accident insurance in case they are injured at school and/or a school sponsored event. The insurance is secondary to a family's health insurance coverage.

### **48 hour Policy**

A child must be free of fever and/or vomiting for at least **48 hours unmedicated** before returning to school.

### **Pick-Up Policy**

If the school calls you to pick-up your child due to illness or injury, pick-up must occur within 30 minutes. We will call the next emergency contact person after 30 minutes. Please ensure your "approved pickup" list is up to date.

### **Physical Examinations**

A comprehensive physical examination is required for all new students. This must be signed, not stamped, by a licensed physician or designee working under the directions of a licensed physician.

### **Medication Permit Form**

A medication form will be sent home with each student for the parent/guardian/physician to sign.

Please note: Medication is defined as prescription medications as well as over-the-counter products as directed by a physician.

All medication should be given outside of school hours if possible. Three-times-a-day medications should be given before school, after school and at bedtime for optimal coverage. If necessary, medication can be given at school only under the following conditions:

1. If medication is needed while the student is in school, this form must be completed by the parent/guardian, **signed by the physician**, and returned with the medication to the school office or nurse.
2. All necessary medication prescribed for a student by a doctor or dentist must have the Medication Permit Form signed by the physician and parent. All prescription medication must be in the original prescription bottle and labeled with a current pharmacy prescription label. "Over the counter" medication must be in the original labeled container. Medications sent in baggies or unlabeled containers will not be dispensed.
3. The parent is responsible for bringing all medication to the clinic/office and for picking up unused medicine. Unused medications left at school will be destroyed.
4. Experimental medication/dosages will not be given. Herbal medication, dietary supplements, and other nutritional aids not approved as medication by FDA will not be administered at school.
6. All medications will be kept in a locked cabinet/drawer in the school office/clinic and administered in the school office/clinic.
7. Students may not keep any medications on their person with the exceptions of inhalers and epi pens, which may be carried by the student if 1) the appropriate forms (as detailed above) are on file, 2) the student is determined to be correctly self-medicating, and 3) the student reports to the clinic immediately after self-medicating to allow recording to the medical log. Failure to follow the above

procedures will result in loss of the privilege.

8. Only the parent or adult designee may perform nebulizer treatments in school.

## **INFECTIOUS DISEASE POLICY**

The primary responsibility for the prevention and control of infectious diseases lies with individuals, families and public health authorities. Schools are not responsible for providing expert infectious disease advice or treatment for students; this is the role of medical practitioners and health authorities. Attendance at any school may be denied to any student reasonably suspected of or diagnosed with a contagious or infectious disease that could make the child's attendance harmful to the welfare of all other students, faculty and staff.

Schools reserve the right to require a statement from the student's primary care physician authorizing the student's return to school. Schools will respect all students' privacy. Parents of other children attending the school may be notified that their child has been exposed to a communicable or infectious disease in a manner that avoids identifying the particular student identified with the disease to the maximum extent appropriate in each particular circumstance.

Local school procedures may include:

- Prevention techniques – hand washing education, coughing and sneezing education; hand sanitizers in classrooms; sanitizing wipes in classrooms for computers, desks, common areas, etc.; tissues in all rooms; sanitation procedures; and if appropriate, the mandated use of facial masks along with social distancing.
- Preparedness – Schools may comply with CDC, State Department of Health guidelines, and directives from the Office of Catholic Schools.
- Response – Schools may follow the Office of Catholic Schools policy for school closures (Policy 5285) and directives from State and Local (County and Municipal) jurisdictions. The Office of Catholic Schools may provide a written Reopening of Schools Plan specific to the infectious or communicable disease present.
- Recovery – Schools may publish a return to school procedure in accordance with directives from the Office of Catholic Schools which aligns to the Reopening of Schools Plan approved by the Superintendent of Schools.

## **ASSUMPTION OF THE RISK RELATING TO COVID-19**

The novel coronavirus, COVID-19, has been declared a worldwide pandemic by the World Health Organization. COVID-19 is extremely contagious and is believed to spread mainly from person to person through respiratory droplets when an infected individual coughs, sneezes or speaks. As a result, government agencies at all levels and federal, state and local health agencies recommend social distancing and have placed limits on the congregation of groups of individuals.

Saint Mary's School has put preventative measures in place to reduce the spread of COVID-19; however, the school cannot guarantee that you or your child(ren) will not become infected with COVID-19. Further, attending activities on the campus of Saint Mary's could increase your risk and that of your children for contracting COVID-19.

While Saint's Mary's will make all reasonable efforts to lower the risk of COVID-19 exposure and spread at school, the school is unable to provide any guarantee that students or their families will not be exposed to or infected by COVID-19. By enrolling your child(ren) in and attending school, you acknowledge the contagious nature of COVID-19 and voluntarily assume the risk that you, your child(ren), and or other family members

may be exposed to or infected by COVID-19.

It is expected that students and other school family members will follow the preventative measures and guidelines implemented Saint Mary's including not coming to the school premises if demonstrating any signs or symptoms of COVID-19.

### **SAINT MARY'S SCHOOL BEHAVIOR**

We, the Saint Mary's community, strive to provide and maintain an environment that teaches and preserves Catholic Christian values. This environment revolves around "The Great Commandment" of our Lord: "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:37-39). Everything that promotes love of neighbor as oneself is encouraged in the school community, and anything that takes away from the growth of such mutual respect is discouraged.

The expectations outlined by the administration, faculty, and staff seek to facilitate the growth of self-discipline within each student. Students are expected to make proper choices and to accept responsibility for their actions. The faculty will be consistent in emphasizing the application of these expectations.

The faculty, staff, and administration of Saint Mary's Catholic School encourage discipline in a positive manner. All members of the community are encouraged to view conduct in light of the Gospel values.

### **RESPECTING PERSONS**

The good name, reputation and personal safety of each student, faculty/staff member, and adult volunteer are vitally important. In order to protect students, employees, volunteers, and the school itself, each student is expected to treat the good name and reputation of other students, school employees, volunteers and the school with dignity and respect and not engage in any activity or conduct, either on campus or off campus, that is in opposition to this guideline and/or is inconsistent with Catholic teaching or values, as determined by the school in its discretion.

Catholic teaching prohibits actions which violate respect for the dignity of the human person. Actions considered by the school to violate this respect, including those of a demeaning, harassing, derogatory, racist, or discriminatory nature, whether communicated by word or deed, in-person or electronically, by gesture, image or in any other manner, will result in disciplinary action, which may include suspension and/or expulsion from school. Parents or guardians are to support this guideline in their relationships with school employees, students and their families; failure to do so may result in the parents being asked to withdraw their children from the school.

### **CONDUCT GUIDELINES**

Each teacher will establish his/her own classroom management plan. The rules and consequences of the plan are discussed with the students and families at the beginning of each school year. The rules are designed to help the student grow in responsibility. As the student rises through the grade levels, more responsibility is given, and more accountability for actions is expected. In addition to adhering to classroom rules, the students are expected to follow all school rules. A specific rule need not be written for every variation of behavior that affects the orderly mission of the school. Students are always to conduct themselves in a manner that best represents Saint Mary's Catholic School.

The Saint Mary's Catholic School Conduct Guidelines set forth the expectations of each student, parent, teacher and administrator that are required to build and nourish this welcoming, stimulating and respectful environment.

This discipline is directed toward developing traits necessary to cope with real life situations, to develop good relationships, to become productive individuals, to accept accountability for personal actions, and to participate fully in the life of our Catholic community. The consistent, fair administration of our Conduct Guidelines will allow Saint Mary's Catholic School to maintain a positive educational environment that enables the development of each student. This environment revolves around structure and self-discipline, which are as fundamental to Catholic education as they are to a Christian way of life. Working together, students, parents, teachers and administrators foster a positive multi-level educational experience encompassing academics, spirituality and social adeptness.

### **Student Responsibilities:**

- Model the actions of Jesus and live the mission of the school by showing courage, wisdom and the love of God.
- Demonstrate honesty in all actions.
- Conduct oneself as a representative of Saint Mary's Catholic School in all places.
- Respect all adults and peers.
- Be accountable for all personal actions.
- Be present and on time for school.
- Be prepared for school and participate in class.
- Follow all school and classroom procedures.
- Adhere to the school dress code.
- Fulfill the commandment to honor the day of the Lord by attending Mass or Church on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.

### **Parent Responsibilities:**

- Model the actions of Jesus and live the mission of the school by showing courage, wisdom and the love of God.
- Read, understand, discuss and adhere to the policies and procedures as outlined in this Parent Student Handbook.
- Make certain your child is prepared for school: lunch, homework, and transportation.
- Respectfully cooperate with school personnel when addressing concerns and/ or grievances.
- Make certain your child adheres to the dress code.
- Sign in at the school office when visiting or volunteering at school.
- Be responsible with confidential information, especially when working or volunteering at the school.
- For safety and liability reasons and the preservation of our facility and property, directly supervise and be responsible for all of your children while attending parish and school functions.
- Receive VIRTUS training and background checks prior to volunteering or working with children. This includes accompanying your child on field trips.
- Seek conferences to resolve behavioral or academic concerns in a timely manner.
- Model and instruct your child on the values of a good Catholic Christian citizen.
- Support the decisions of our parish and school administration.
- Fulfill the commandment to honor the day of the Lord by attending Mass or Church on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.
- Demonstrate support for the mission of the school and all the teachings of the Roman Catholic faith by not contradicting or criticizing them publicly, in words or actions, including through online social media venues.

## **Administrators, Faculty And Staff Responsibilities:**

- Model the actions of Jesus and live the mission of the school by showing courage, wisdom and the love of God.
- Fulfill the commandment to honor the day of the Lord by attending Mass or Church on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.
- Strive to help each child to reach his/her academic, spiritual potential and behavioral expectations.
- Create a rigorous learning environment that encourages excellence through diverse teaching methods.
- Respect and encourage students.
- Consistently and fairly uphold the Faculty & Student Handbook.
- Regularly seek opportunities for professional and spiritual growth.
- Be responsible stewards of our resources and mindful of the financial impact your requests have on families and the parish.
- Maintain confidentiality of students, parents and each other, except as otherwise required by law.
- Support the decisions of our parish and school administration.
- Demonstrate support for the mission of the school and all the teachings of the Roman Catholic faith by not contradicting or criticizing them publicly, in words or actions, including through online social media venues.

## **DISCIPLINE**

### **Disciplinary Actions**

Teachers are in charge of their respective classrooms and are expected to set, explain and enforce their Teacher Discipline Plans that are consistent with our Mission, Conduct Guidelines, and Handbook. Upon weighing the circumstances, the results of conduct, and the severity of the incident, the teacher and school administration will determine the appropriate consequences listed below, which may be above and beyond those consequences outlined in the Teacher Discipline Plan.

a) Warnings

b) In-class consequences

c) Parent notification

d) Behavior plan

e) Detention

f) Conferences with all concerned

g) Suspensions

1) In-school suspension is defined as 1 to 2 days served in the office doing classroom work.

2) Out-of-school suspension is defined as 1-5 days served off school premises doing classroom work. It is the parent's responsibility to arrange for proper adult supervision on these days.

h) Expulsions

1) Expulsion is considered a termination of enrollment.

2) In most cases, the parents will be contacted for a conference prior to an expulsion. The student may not return to school, however, while such a conference is being scheduled.

3) The school administration will confiscate any unauthorized items, weapons and/or substances and notify the necessary authorities (police and/or parents).

4) If a suspicion arises that a student has any unauthorized items, weapons and/or substances, the school administration may search the student's belongings or clothing.

## **Offenses Warranting Disciplinary Action**

Recognizing that it is impossible to list all types of misconduct, any comparable offenses will be resolved by the teachers and/or administration. Conduct, whether inside or outside of school, that is inconsistent with the mission or policies of the school or that is detrimental to the reputation of the school will warrant disciplinary action. Below are a few such examples:

### 1) Offenses inappropriate to the learning environment:

- a) Disrespect to others through language or actions
- b) Failure to follow school procedures
- c) Disruptions to the class
- d) Lack of preparation for school or class
- e) Public display of affection

### 2) Offenses that may warrant suspension

- a) Bullying or threatening or hazing another child physically or emotionally
- b) Fighting or causing harm to another student or teacher
- c) Stealing
- d) Cheating
- e) Lying or dishonest behavior
- f) Foul language
- g) Vandalism of school property or another student's property
- h) Leaving school grounds without the permission of school administration
- i) Being under the influence, possessing, using or passing any unauthorized substance at school or school-sponsored events
- j) Any incident deemed serious in nature by the school principal
- k) Truancy

### 3.) Offenses That May Warrant Expulsion

- a) Having a gun, knife, or any other weapon on parish property or at school functions
- b) Use, sale, distribution, or possession of any drug, legal or illegal, tobacco or alcoholic beverages on or near school premises;
- c) Physical action or threats with malicious intent toward a student, staff member, or any other person at school
- d) Repeated offenses or any incident deemed serious in nature by the school principal

The principal reserves the right to waive and/or deviate from any and all disciplinary regulations for just cause at his/her discretion.

Students asked not to return the following year for behavior reasons are not considered to be expelled. The student has not been accepted for re-enrollment in the next academic year because of prior behavioral problems.

Students not allowed to return due to failure to meet required academic standards are not considered to be expelled.

Expulsion is considered a termination of enrollment. Expulsion shall be used only as a final measure or in response to an egregious offense. Expulsion results from repeated refusal to obey school rules or from conduct which endangers the property, health, or safety of self and/or others, and if deemed to be in the best interest of the school community. The accumulation of thirty (30) or more demerits in a school year will result in the student being referred for expulsion. One extremely serious single offense may also be cause for expulsion.

The Archdiocesan Superintendent of Schools will be informed before any action leading to expulsion is taken. If the decision to expel the student is made, parents are notified, in writing, of the action. Parents/guardians have the right to appeal the decision to the Archdiocesan Superintendent of Schools.

## **BEHAVIOR OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL**

Out of school behavior which is illicit, immoral, illegal and/or which reflects adversely on Saint Mary's Catholic School and which is inconsistent with the school's mission will be handled according to the school disciplinary procedures and may be grounds for suspension or expulsion from Saint Mary's. This includes comments posted on social media websites, blogs, texting, etc.

All incidents of bullying should be reported to a teacher, counselor or administrator. Once reported, the incident will be investigated and disciplinary procedures as stated in the school's disciplinary policy will be implemented if deemed appropriate.

## **SEARCH AND SEIZURE**

The school reserves the right to search all school property including, but not limited to desks, lockers, and cabinets. Additionally, the school reserves the right to search all personal property including, but not limited to telephones, computers, laptops, backpacks, and purses.

## **HARASSMENT**

Maintaining an educational environment that encourages optimum human growth and development is imperative. Respect for the dignity of each person is essential to Catholic tradition. It is vital that each school and religious education program maintain a learning and working environment free of any form of harassment or intimidation toward students.

The Archdiocese of Atlanta is committed to providing a learning environment that is free from harassment in any form. Harassment of any student by any other student, lay employee, parent, religious worker, or priest is prohibited. The school will treat allegations of harassment seriously and will review and investigate such allegations in a prompt, confidential and thorough manner.

A charge of harassment shall not, in and of itself, create the presumption of wrongdoing. However, substantial acts of harassment will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Students found to have filed false or frivolous charges will also be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Harassment occurs when an individual is subjected to treatment that is hostile or intimidating because of the individual's perceived differences including but not limited to race, creed, color, national origin, physical disability, or sex. Harassment can occur any time during school or during school related activities. It includes, but is not limited to, any or all of the following:

- **Verbal Harassment:** Derogatory comments and jokes, threatening words spoken to another person, which may also include online harassment.
- **Physical Harassment:** Unwanted physical touching, contact, assault, deliberate impeding or blocking movements, or any intimidating interference with normal work or movement.

- **Visual Harassment:** Derogatory, demeaning, or inflammatory posters, cartoons, written words, drawings, gestures.

To file a grievance, the following procedure will be utilized:

- 1) The student must immediately report the harassment to the principal (or a teacher who will report it to the principal) or to the Superintendent if the principal is the subject of the allegation. Additionally, in the case of sexual harassment allegations, the student is free to raise the issue with another same sex administrator if he/she prefers to do so.
- 2) The parents of the student alleging harassment will be notified immediately, and the student will be asked to complete a formal, written complaint. The claim will be investigated thoroughly, involving only the necessary parties. Confidentiality will be maintained as much as possible.
- 3) The investigation will include a meeting with the person alleged to have harassed, sharing with that person the nature of the allegations as well as the name of the person bringing the allegation. The alleged person may be removed from the school setting during the course of the investigation. If appropriate, the alleged harasser may be placed on administrative leave during the course of the investigation.
- 4) Once the facts of the investigation have been gathered, the principal, in consultation with the Superintendent, and, if appropriate, the pastor, will decide the nature, context, and seriousness of the harassment and determine appropriate disciplinary action.

Filing of a grievance or otherwise reporting harassment shall not reflect upon the individual's status or affect grades.

## **BULLYING & CYBERBULLYING**

Saint Mary's Catholic School takes a strong stance against bullying behaviors and expressly prohibits the bullying of any person by any means or method. Bullying can take many forms including verbal, written, physical and relational.

Verbal bullying occurs when oral communication is used to intimidate, harass, or threaten another person with the intent of causing harm to that person or that person's reputation.

Written bullying occurs when written communication of any kind (paper and pen, e-mail, text, etc.) is used to intimidate, harass, or threaten another person with the intent of causing harm to that person or that person's reputation.

Physical bullying occurs when physical contact or the threat of physical contact of any kind is used to intimidate, harass, or threaten another person with the intent of causing harm to that person or creating an environment whereby the person feels threatened and intimidated.

Relational bullying is when exclusion from, or conditional inclusion in, social groups is used to intimidate, harass, or threaten another person with the intent of causing harm to that person or that person's reputation.

Cyberbullying is defined as bullying that takes place on the internet through the various Social Media outlets, such as Facebook, Snapchat, Vine, Vimeo, Instagram, Twitter, etc. Social Media encompasses the various ways that persons communicate with each other. While the school does not prohibit the use of Social Media by students, conduct, whether inside or outside of the school, which is detrimental to the reputation of the school or is demeaning to a student, teacher, or administrator of the school, may result in discipline of the student account holder. The school and the parents are partners in the education of children and, if in the opinion of the principal that partnership is no longer viable, the school maintains the right to require the parent to withdraw the student from the school.

## **SAFE ENVIRONMENT GUIDELINES**

All students entering kindergarten, and all students new to the school, will receive instruction through the Archdiocesan approved Virtus program for children. This program provides guidelines to the students on how to recognize and report problems or people that worry them to a trusted adult. The program is presented with a Christian perspective and is approved by the Archdiocese of Atlanta. If families wish to opt out of their children receiving the required VIRTUS training they should notify the school counselor or the principal by September 1<sup>st</sup>.

**CHILD ABUSE REPORTING**

Teachers and other school personnel (including volunteers) are bound by the laws of the State of Georgia as Mandated Reporters, to report any *suspected* cases of child abuse or neglect. Please refer to **O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 (c) (1)**

**ASBESTOS NOTIFICATION**

Saint Mary’s School is certified as free of asbestos and asbestos-containing materials. The certification is on file in the principal’s office.

**RIGHT TO AMEND**

This handbook may be amended by the school administration at any time during the year with proper notification of these changes being communicated in writing to Parents and Students.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Signing of this handbook is an acknowledgement of the acceptance to be governed by the rules, regulations, conditions, and requirements of the school as stated in this Handbook as well as those policies of the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

## Saint Mary's Catholic School

### Staff 2021-2022

<u>Teacher</u>	<u>Grade</u>
Mrs. Josclyn Giles	Pre-K3
Mrs. Katherine Avery	Pre-K4
Mrs. Beth Abbott	Kindergarten
Mrs. Kyser Pritchett	1st Grade
Ms. Melanie Ferguson	2nd Grade
Mrs. Susan Speed	3rd Grade
Mrs. Amanda Fricks	4th Grade
Mrs. Lindsey Lynn	5th Grade
Mrs. Marti Miller	Middle School Social Studies/Religion
Mrs. Julie McCormick	Middle School Science
Mrs. Kelly Armstrong	Middle School Math
Mrs. Ann Marie Tillery	Middle School Literature/Grammar
Mrs. Therese Cox	Library/Elementary Religion
Mrs. Megan Hunsaker	Art
Mr. Gordon Powers	Physical Education
Mrs. Leigh Ann Lundy	Music
Mrs. Gabriela Zini	Spanish
Ms. Towers Maddox	Extended School Care Director/Classroom Parapro
Mrs. Kay Doss	Classroom Parapro
Mrs. Elizabeth Palopoli	Classroom Parapro

<u>Staff</u>	<u>Position</u>
Mrs. Terri Borchardt	Business Manager
Mrs. Dee Brewer	Transportation
Ms. Robin Cole	School Nurse
Mr. Andres Flores	Facilities Director
Mrs. Christa Jackson	Director of Advancement & Admissions
Mrs. Lisa Mazur	Receptionist
Mrs. Rebecca Motes	Associate Advancement Director
Ms. Jenny Rittgers	Principal
Mrs. Angela Vinson	Transportation
Dr. DeAnn Simon	Counselor

All teachers and school staff can be reached via email: first initial, last name, smsrome.org  
ex: jrittgers@smsrome.org

*We hope this handbook will provide our community with the information, guidelines, and expectations needed to assist the school in accomplishing its mission. Only in working together can we truly achieve our goals. We are delighted to have you as a part of the Saint Mary's Catholic School Community!*

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## **PARENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I have received a copy of the 2021-2022 Saint Mary's School Parent/Student Handbook. I will explain the rules and procedures contained in it to my child(ren). I understand that my family is bound by the rules and policies contained in this handbook and those set forth by the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

Signing of this handbook is an acknowledgement of the acceptance to be governed by the rules, regulations, conditions, and requirements of the school as stated in this Handbook as well as those policies of the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

Family Name: (Please Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**I/we agree with and support all that is outlined under expectations of students and parents/ guardians.**

**I/we agree with and support all disciplinary standards of Saint Mary's Catholic School. I/ we agree with and support all school policies.**

**I/we understand that the school has the right to amend policies. I further understand that I/we will be given written and e-mail notice of any policy change.**

**I/we realize the importance of strong parental support of all school policies and regulations, and understand and support the consequences that will result from a failure of compliance.**

**Please print and sign this page only and return it to your child's grade level or homeroom teacher no later than Friday, August 13, 2021.**

