

St. Mary's Catholic School

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K - 6th

Parent/Student Handbook

2023-2024



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Diocese of Alexandria

AdvancEd/Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

Louisiana State Department of Education

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A Letter from the Principal

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year! This year, St. Mary's School celebrates a momentous milestone in our history: 135 years of academic excellence and faith formation.

Since 1888, St. Mary's School has been faithful in its commitment to the development of the hearts, minds, and spirits of our students. Guided by our mission statement, which reads, "*Founded on Catholic values and committed to excellence, St. Mary's Catholic School is dedicated to forming the whole child to know, love, and live the faith,*" the faculty and staff have dedicated themselves to providing a holistic education that includes academic rigor, spiritual growth, and the development of character and values.

Throughout our history, we have consistently pursued academic excellence, instilling in our students a love for learning and a thirst for knowledge. We take great pride in the achievements of our graduates, who have gone on to excel in various fields, becoming leaders, innovators, and contributors to their communities.

Our primary mission at St. Mary's is faith formation, as we strive to foster meaningful relationships with God in the hearts of our students. Through daily prayer, weekly Mass, religious education, and a nurturing faith community, we aim to develop their academic abilities and spiritual well-being, equipping them with a strong foundation of faith to face the many challenges of life.

As we celebrate 135 years of academic excellence and faith formation, we reflect on the countless lives touched, the achievements celebrated, and the impact we have had on our students and community. We remain dedicated to providing a well-rounded education that nurtures the whole person, preparing our students to be compassionate leaders and active contributors to society.

This handbook reflects the current policies of St. Mary's Catholic School for the 2023-2024 school year. We ask that you read this document and sign the attached agreements. Your signature indicates that you intend to abide by the policies of St. Mary's Catholic School during the 2023-2024 school year. I greatly appreciate your support in reinforcing these policies at home and discussing their importance with your child. By working together, we can ensure a positive and productive learning environment for all students.

I look forward to an excellent academic year and cannot wait to share the great things your children do throughout their days here at St. Mary's.

Yours in Christ,



Stephen Wren, M.S. Ed.

Principal

MOTTO

Mary But One

MISSION

Founded on Catholic values and committed to excellence, St. Mary's Catholic School is dedicated to forming the whole child to know, love, and live the faith.

St. Mary's Catholic School's primary goal is the total education of the student. The school believes it can attain that goal only within a highly disciplined environment. Therefore, St. Mary's Catholic School has developed a Behavior Policy designed to provide for the orderly growth and development of the individual student and to promote faith, health and safety of all.

Students must behave in a manner consistent with their status as members of the St. Mary's Catholic School community at school, at school-sponsored events, and at all times. Students conduct, therefore, must contribute to:

- meeting the personal and academic needs of the student as well as those of their classmates
- advancing the educational process in general
- supporting the good name, reputation and integrity of St. Mary's.

SPECIAL NOTE:

It is neither the province nor the desire of St. Mary's Catholic School to prescribe what limits of freedom parents may specify for their sons' and daughters' behavior. Nevertheless, there are times and places in which the behavior of students reflects on St. Mary's Catholic School and the school's policy will be administered judicially and rigorously by the school administration. **St. Mary's Catholic School follows the tenets of the Roman Catholic Church and the edicts set forth by the Diocese of Alexandria. All students, faculty, and staff will stand for the Pledge of Allegiance, national anthem, prayer, and mission statement.**

St. Mary's Catholic School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in: (i) the admission of students; (ii) the offerings of rights, privileges, programs, or activities generally made available to their students; or (iii) the administration of educational policies, admissions policies, loan programs, athletic programs, employment practices or policies, or other school-administered programs.

In all things...be ready to give your best effort, be there, on time, acting honorably, dressed your best!

“READY TO GIVE YOUR BEST EFFORT”

School Calendar

The School Calendar is online at smstigers.org. Interested parties may also subscribe to the calendar on their devices on that page.

Academic Records of Students

St. Mary’s Catholic School (SMS) abides by the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) with respect to the rights of parents, and in the event of divorce, their rights of custodial and noncustodial parents. In the latter case, in the absence of a court order to the contrary, the school will provide the noncustodial parent access to the academic records and to other school-related information regarding the students. If a court order specifies that no information is to be given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with a copy of the court order.

Admission Policy

Every applicant to St. Mary’s Catholic School deserves serious consideration as a potential recipient of the organization’s best efforts toward a holistic Christian education. The following criteria are used to evaluate candidates for admission to St. Mary’s:

- the individual school record (academic, standardized test scores, and behavioral history)
- recommendation of the St. Mary’s Admission Team
- interview with each applicant and his/her parents
- admissions test in reading and math

Candidates for admission to St. Mary’s Catholic School must meet the academic requirements of the school where currently enrolled, as well as the academic promotion requirements of St. Mary’s Catholic School in order to advance in grade placement. If the incoming student scores low on the admissions test or has previous behavior problems, the student enters St. Mary’s Catholic School on a probationary status.

Special Needs

St. Mary’s does not offer a special education program or services. A student needing minimal accommodations must provide documentation of diagnostic services of any learning exceptionality. If this can not be provided,, the school may make recommendations on how to go about obtaining this information. If the student’s behavior or special needs interfere with learning in the classroom environment, then the student may not be allowed to continue attending St. Mary’s.

Progress Reports & Report Cards

Progress reports are completed and emailed to parents in the middle of the fifth week of each term. The purpose of these reports is to inform parents of their child’s current grades and work ethic. Parents of students who have earned grades of D or F on progress reports are advised to contact the teacher(s). Refer to the school calendar for dates.

Report cards are issued approximately one week after the end of each term via email.

Academic Appeal Process

A dispute about a grade must be handled within two weeks of the grade being posted. Students and parents are to attempt to resolve the issue with the **teacher** of the course before contacting administration.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

The week after report cards are emailed, parents are encouraged to set up an appointment during a teacher's planning time if there are any questions or concerns. Also, a teacher may reach out to the parent for a conference if the teacher feels a conference is needed.

Grading System

	REGULAR COURSES	DESCRIPTION	QUALITY POINTS
A	93-100	Excellent	4
B	85-92	Above Average	3
C	77-84	Average	2
D	69-76	Below Average	1
F	Below 69	Failing Work	0

Standardized Testing

- **Kindergarten through sixth grade students** will take standardized assessments as determined by diocesan and/or school administration.
- During the week of testing the following stipulations should be followed:
 - No students are allowed to check out during testing time
 - No other events may be scheduled during this week, including but not limited to, academic classroom tests. Pending exceptional or emergency situations, all students are required to be at school and must participate in the testing.

Vacations should not be scheduled during testing week. Access the school calendar at smstigers.org/calendar to plan around testing week.

Academic Competitions

It is considered an honor to represent SMS in academic competitions. **If a student is asked to represent SMS in an academic competition and is unable to do so, he or she must decline the honor in ample time to find a replacement.** Not showing up at an academic competition may result in disciplinary actions.

“BE THERE”

Attendance

Louisiana requires students to attend school for a certain number of days to be promoted to the next grade and earn credit for a course. Under the law, students must attend school from age 7 to 18 or until they graduate from high school. Students are required to attend school regularly and can only miss **10 unexcused days** per year to earn credit and be eligible for promotion to the next grade.

Emails will be sent to parents, when necessary, for those students who have excessive absences and/or tardies.

Arrival and Dismissal

All St. Mary’s students are transported by personal vehicle to and from school each day. **Students who arrive earlier than 7:15 AM will not be supervised. The doors remain locked until 7:15 AM. The school will not be held responsible for those students who arrive before 7:15 AM.**

P3-5th grade students will be dropped off, using the inner driveway, in front of the main building and report to the gym to sit in their designated area. **Sixth grade** students will be dropped off under the covered awning using the outer driveway. At 7:40, a bell will ring to begin morning prayer, Pledge, and announcements. Any student not in the gym at this time will be marked tardy.

Dismissal for students will be at 2:45 PM. Pre-K through third grade students who ride with a high school sibling will be brought outside to the statue of Mary to wait on their older sibling. Pre-K through fourth grade students will wait in their designated area in front of the chapel and be picked up using the inner driveway. Fifth and sixth grade students, waiting on a ride, will gather under the covered area and be picked up in the outer driveway.

Absences

- Any absence, accompanied by a doctor’s excuse, or any other legitimate/genuine documentation should be sent to the school office upon returning to school.
- **All absences whether parent or doctors must be received within 3 days after returning to school or it will be recorded as “unexcused”.**
- The office will modify any absence codes within RenWeb.
- All absences, whether considered “excused” or “unexcused”, are collected and recorded cumulatively for each student.
- Per Non-Public Bulletin 741, “exceptions to the attendance policy can be made only in the event of extended personal illness, verified by a physician, or at the discretion of the principal”.

Attendance & Athletics \ Extracurriculars

- A student will be permitted to participate in a conditioning, tryout, game, or practice of an extracurricular activity only if he/she has been in attendance at least 50% of the academic school day.
- Students who miss more than 50% of the academic school day must have a doctor’s excuse to be able to participate.

Make-Up Work

- Students/Parents are responsible for contacting the teacher to make up any missed work or tests.
- With exception of extreme cases, all make-up work is to be completed within the same amount of days

that the student is absent (e.g. a student is absent two days then they will have two days to make up their work).

- For an assessment, quiz, or assignment announced prior to a student's absence from class, **the student is responsible for the test or assignment the next time the class meets if they have information needed.**
- For an assessment, quiz, or assignment announced during the class that a student is absent, the student will be provided additional time to make up any missed work or tests. It is the student's responsibility to consult with the teacher to determine deadlines for missed work.

Checking Out During the School Day

- Any off campus appointments for students (with doctors, dentists, etc.) should be scheduled for times outside of school hours.
- Any student who becomes ill during the school day must report to the school office. In no case will a student be allowed to leave school without the permission of the Administration and that of a parent.
- All absences due to checking in or checking out require written documentation in the form of a doctor's note in order to be excused.
- For the safety of the student body and the faculty and staff, no student will be released to parents during a crisis situation, evacuation, lock-down, or during extreme weather conditions.

"ON TIME"

Recording Absences and Tardies

A student must be on time for every class. Any student tardy for ANY period of the day must report directly to the office to receive an admit slip. Students shall be in their seats or assigned places when the tardy bell rings. This practice preserves instructional time and is necessary for maintaining an orderly environment. Missing more than half of a class due to tardiness results in a recorded absence. **Students late for school must be signed in by a parent.** **Accumulated tardies will reset at the end of each nine weeks**

Consequences for Tardies

	Kindergarten - 3rd Grade	4th - 6th Grade
1st Tardy		Verbal warning
2nd Tardy		Verbal warning
3rd Tardy	Parent email, sit out of recess one day	Verbal warning, Parent email
4th Tardy		Parent email, sit out of recess one day
5th Tardy		Parent phone call, sit out of recess for three days
6th Tardy	Parent email, sit out of recess one day	Parent phone call, sit out of recess for one week, tardy will be recorded as an "unexcused absence"
Any Tardy After	Parent phone call, sit out of recess one day, tardy will be recorded as an "unexcused absence"	

“ACTING HONORABLY”

Daily Prayer

Students participate in prayer as a student body at the beginning of each day and at the beginning of each class, activity, and event.

Weekly Mass

All students will be attending weekly grade-level Mass and all-school Mass monthly. All-school Mass is held in the gym. The Mass schedule can be found on the school calendar on the St. Mary’s website.

Religion Department

The Religion Department strives to blend religious studies and the dynamics of human development, encouraging students to undertake the lifelong search for ultimate Catholic values and personal growth. Service to others, especially to those in need, is stressed at every level.

Religious Functions

- All students are expected to attend and respectfully participate in all school religious functions – regardless of their own church affiliation. Students and parents acknowledge that St. Mary’s is a Catholic School operated by the Minor Basilica of the Immaculate Conception Church. The mission of the school flows from the beliefs and practices of the Catholic Faith.
- **Attendance at Mass is a foundational part of spiritual formation, which is a critical part of a St. Mary’s education. Parents are strongly urged to support this mission by not scheduling appointments during Mass or otherwise allowing their child to miss Mass.**
- Attendance at school grade-level retreats is mandatory. Absence from a retreat will require documentation from a doctor or the prior approval of the principal. Students who miss a retreat will be required to make up the day in a manner prescribed by the Administration.
- **An unexcused absence for any religious function may result in an immediate write up and/or other disciplinary action.**

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty - i.e. plagiarism, cheating on tests, passing off another’s work as one’s own (including homework and research papers) - **will not be tolerated**. A student who is guilty of academic dishonesty will receive a zero for the work done. The teacher is the judge of whether or not the student is cheating. Parents will be notified by the teacher each time this occurs. See consequences of cheating below.

Honor Code

Cheating in any form is repugnant to the St. Mary’s Catholic School, and is both an academic and disciplinary issue. **All students and their parents or guardians are required to sign an Honor Code, which is a binding agreement.**

Consequences for Violation of the Honor Code	
1st Offense	Parent notification; zeroes on work
2nd Offense	One day out-of-school suspension, parent-teacher conference, zeroes on work

3rd Offense	Three days out-of-school suspension including all activities, meeting with administration, zeroes on all work
Additional Offenses	Disciplinary action will be determined by the Administration

Assemblies and School Functions

At all times students must conduct themselves appropriately and in a manner befitting a student of a Christian school. The following is exemplary, but not inclusive of such behavior: being sensitive to the needs of others, being cooperative with those in authority and furthering the mission of St. Mary’s Catholic School.

Respect

Each person at St. Mary’s Catholic School has a right to his or her own dignity and individuality. Thus, anyone who harasses or demeans another person whether seriously, in jest or online - including on social media - will be subject to appropriate corrective action. Harassment can involve verbal, electronic, Internet, written, physical, or behavioral intimidation of another. In almost all cases, harassment would be determined not by what one “meant” or “intended,” but by how the action affected or impacted the person to whom the action is directed.

Electronic harassment, such as misusing social networks and texting, is subject to disciplinary action. Impersonation of a classmate or faculty member is also considered a form of harassment. Authorities may be involved in these types of cases. All students, parents, and fans are expected to abide by a code of conduct which incorporates Catholic values at all athletic and other school sponsored events. Foul or otherwise profane language will not be tolerated. Arguing, booing, throwing items or any behavior towards athletes, officials or administrators which is disruptive to the event will not be tolerated. Any person showing unsportsmanlike conduct may be asked to leave and may not be allowed to return to future events.

Conduct that digresses from what is considered to be good behavior, following policy, or is contrary to Christian principles is subject to appropriate disciplinary action. St. Mary’s reserves the right to take disciplinary action and or/suspend a student either temporarily or permanently if the administration feels that such action is in the best interest of the individual, the student body, or the school. Should corrective action be necessary, St. Mary’s administration will choose from among counseling, denied privileges, detentions, suspensions, and expulsions depending upon the severity of the incident.

Medication

The use of or possession of **any medication** while a student is on campus must be given to the School Nurse. A form is to be completed by the prescribing physician and parent and turned in with the medication. These forms can be obtained from the school nurse or on the school’s website. **The school is not permitted to give a student even simple medication without the expressed permission of one of the student's parents.** Once all provisions have been met, the student may obtain the prescribed dosage from the school nurse. All medications are to be turned in to the front office in clearly labeled packaging prior to the start of the school day. Any violation will be subject to disciplinary action as deemed by the administration.

NOTE: As required by law, student prescriptions MUST BE ON FILE with the school nurse and WILL NOT be accepted after the fact. It is the parent’s responsibility to notify the school nurse if the student begins a new medication during the school year. If it is not on file, the positive result will be considered a failed drug screen.

Inappropriate Objects or Materials Brought on Campus

Certain substances and objects are considered harmful, dangerous or otherwise inappropriate for students to possess on the campus. The school reserves the right to examine a student's cubby, book bag, purse, wallet or other enclosure in order to confirm or deny possession of any questionable materials. Such materials, which are subject to confiscation, include but are not limited to the following:

- Weapons
- Drugs or alcohol
- Tobacco products
- Vapes

Weapons

A weapon is defined as any instrument that is used or may be used to cause bodily harm. No student is permitted to possess any type of weapon while on the school grounds or at any school related function. Anyone violating this regulation is subject to immediate dismissal.

Other Prohibited Objects

Fireworks, stink bombs, water balloons, water guns, and similar objects that serve no purpose at school must not be brought onto campus (including parking lots) or at the Athletic Complex. Bringing such objects onto the campus could result in corrective action, including suspension or dismissal.

Searches

The school administration reserves the right to search at any time both persons and belongings, including but not limited to cubbies, electronic devices, and student's online school account. Furthermore, if the school has reason to believe, in its sole discretion, that a student is carrying illegal substances, alcohol or prohibited objects. These searches can occur at all school functions, both on and off campus. In addition to random drug screenings, the school administration reserves the right to obtain a drug screen from an independent testing source in cases of probable cause. Probable cause is defined as, but not limited to the following: repeated absences, inappropriate conduct or radically impaired academic performance, smell of illegal substance, or other evidence deemed sufficient by the Administration.

Cell Phone; Smart Device; Personal Computer/Device

Kindergarten through 6th grade students are not allowed to bring cell phones to school.

Smart devices such as Apple watches, Fitbits, etc. are NOT permitted during school hours and will result in disciplinary action. Students are not allowed to bring a personal computer/device to school. If a cell phone, smart device, or personal computer/device is confiscated during school hours, the following consequences apply:

1st Offense	The student may get his/her device at the end of the day. He/She will pay \$20 the next morning and will serve one day of morning or afternoon detention. If a student fails to meet these requirements, the next level of consequences will be applied.
2nd Offense	The student may get his/her device at the end of the day. He/She will pay \$40 the next morning and will serve three days of morning or afternoon detention. If a student fails to meet these requirements, the next level of consequences will be applied.
3rd Offense	The student may get his/her device at the end of the day. He/She will serve one day of OSS

	and pay \$60 upon their return to school. If a student fails to meet these requirements, the next level of consequences will be applied.
4th Offense and any time after that	Disciplinary action will be decided by the Administration.

Fighting

For St. Mary’s students, fighting is a serious offense (on or off campus) that may result in suspension or dismissal. Fighting is defined as an act of physical aggression resorted to when alternatives are available for avoiding such an act.

Bullying Policy

St. Mary’s is committed to maintaining a safe and positive learning environment so that no student or teacher feels threatened while in school or participating in any school-related activity. Bullying and intimidation will not be tolerated. Patterns including, but not limited to, direct physical battery, verbal intimidation, electronic intimidation (aka Cyber Bullying), social isolation and/or social manipulation are grounds for the application of the bullying policy.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is a form of harassment to others through electronic means by sending or posting harmful material over the Internet. Cyberbullying is the use of information and communication technology such as email, cell phones, social media websites, etc. In the state of Louisiana, this is considered criminal behavior and in some cases the school is obligated to report this behavior. Any form of harassment is in direct violation to the mission of our school. Harassment that dramatically affects the learning environment and well being of the St. Mary’s community whether conducted on or off campus can be subject to disciplinary action. Furthermore, parents are expected to aid the school in creating a positive learning environment. As such, parents are not only expected to help monitor their children’s online behavior with others, but also are responsible in some cases to address offenses themselves. St. Mary’s Catholic School cannot police and discipline all online behavior.

Appropriate conduct is expected in both face-to-face, and electronic interactions. Parents or students who feel that they have been the victims of cyberbullying should provide evidence in a confidential and responsible manner to the school administration. Students are, especially, not allowed to use their school issued Google account to conduct cyberbullying. Consequences may include, but are not limited to, the loss of computer privileges and account access, detention, suspension, dismissal from school, and/or police involvement.

PBIS

PBIS stands for Positive Behavior Interventions and Support. The philosophy of this program is that by rewarding students for positive behavior through tickets, positive praise, and rewards, students will begin to build intrinsic motivation to behave in a positive way which will help create a positive learning environment in all areas of the school.

Discipline Policy

Level 1 Offenses

Level 1 offenses are non-aggressive student misbehaviors such as, but not limited to the following:

- Littering
- Excessive talking (class or Mass)
- Uniform violations (fixable on the spot, e.g. shirt untucked, tie askew, unshaven, etc.)
- Wearing of unapproved outerwear
- In a non-permitted area of school
- Tardy to class without an admit (except at first hour)
- Mild PDA

Sanctions for Level 1 offenses may include:

- Student conferences
- Parent contact
- Behavior contracts, if needed

Level 2 Offenses

Level 2 offenses are for habitual and mildly aggressive student misbehaviors such as, but not limited to the following:

- Habitual violation of school rules
- Disrespect for a school official
- Use of profanity
- Willful disobedience
- Horseplay (pushing, shoving, etc.)
- PDA
- Cutting class
- Verbal confrontation
- Technology violation

Sanctions for Level 2 offenses include:

- Will be determined by the administration and school disciplinary guidelines
- *4 minor offenses become a major offense*

Level 3 Offenses

Level 3 offenses are for aggressive student misbehaviors such as, but not limited to the following:

- Fighting
- Using profanity directed at an adult
- Extreme disrespect for any school personnel
- Vandalism of school property
- Theft
- Possession of weapons
- Possession of drugs and/or alcohol (see Drug Policy)
- Harassment/bullying/cyberbullying/hazing (see Cyberbullying Policy)

Sanctions for level 3 offenses include:

- Will be determined by the administration and school disciplinary guidelines.

Discipline Documentation

Teachers will record and document violations using discipline referrals in the form of pink slips, which are considered minor offenses. Pink slips will be turned into administration. The Dean of Discipline will keep track of infractions. A student's 4th minor offense turns into a major offense.

Minor Behavior Sanctions

Detention

The day, date, and time of the detention for the student will be provided by the Dean of Discipline (before school, after school, Saturday). Failure to attend will result in the next level of consequences. Detention takes precedence over appointments, practices, lessons, tutoring, ball games, etc.

Major Behavior Sanctions

In-School Suspension

Students who are given an in-school suspension will be required to report to school each day and work with a substitute teacher paid for (\$75.00) by the suspended student's parents. The student will be provided the work missed in the classroom to complete. This will be graded by the regular teacher accordingly without any additional penalty. **If the parent is unwilling to pay for this penalty, then the violation becomes an Out of School Suspension.**

Out-of-School Suspension

A student may be suspended for serious misconduct or repeated occurrences of less serious behavior. Suspension places the student in jeopardy of being dismissed from school. A suspended student is not allowed to attend classes or any school related activities. The student must make up the assignments missed during the suspension time. The student shall not receive higher than a 50% once all missed work has been completed (including missed tests). If all work is not completed, the student shall receive a "0" for all work missed.

The student who receives either type of school suspension also **forfeits the right to participate in any extracurricular activity for the day(s) of his/her suspension. The student MAY NOT attend practices/rehearsals on those days, nor attend any game, assembly or meeting. The coaches and/or club sponsors have the discretion to lengthen the consequences of suspension.**

Probation

A student may be placed on behavioral probation if in the judgment of the St. Mary's administration the student has experienced chronic behavioral problems and/or a serious behavior problem. Behavioral probation places the student in jeopardy of being dismissed from St. Mary's Catholic School. During probation time, no serious misconduct will be tolerated and the faculty and administration will be looking for positive signs of responsible improvement in the student's behavior and overall attitude. At the end of the probationary period, a student may be removed from probation, may have the probationary period extended or the student may be dismissed from school.

The Administration will inform the parents of any action taken regarding their child.

Dismissal from St. Mary's

Dismissal requires that the student withdraw immediately from St. Mary's Catholic School. The following procedure will be used in the case of a student subject to possible dismissal:

- The Administration will meet with the student and recommend either for or against expulsion.
- The parents will be called in for a conference with the Administration.
- The Administration will review the information and recommendations concerning the case. The Administration may establish a committee of faculty members to serve as a Discipline Board to make recommendations in disciplinary cases. The decision of the Administration is final.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology Resources Policy

St. Mary's Catholic School promotes the use of technology as a tool for lifelong learning and as a means to facilitate communication in support of research and education. The school attempts to prepare students to assume their roles in a global society and workforce by teaching them to be ethical and responsible in their use of technology and the Internet. Students must adhere to the Responsible Use of Technology Policy and the Internet User Policy and Rules for continued access to the school's electronic and technology resources.

No Expectation Of Privacy of Electronic Communications Policy

Users should never consider electronic communication to be either private or secure. The school's administration and technology coordinator have access to all email.

St. Mary's Catholic School also has the right to monitor any and all aspects of its computer system. Users consent to allowing the school to assess and review all materials users create, store, or receive on the computer system, Internet, or any other component of the computer network.

Users understand that the school may use human or automated means to monitor use of the computer resources. Such monitoring may include, but is not limited to, monitoring sites visited by users on the Internet, reviewing material downloaded or uploaded by users to the Internet, and reviewing email sent and received by users.

Internet Content Filtering

All Internet access is filtered in accordance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). St. Mary's uses Google Education Suite as well as Lightspeed Relay to filter the Internet. These filters block access to inappropriate sites and apps, including, but not limited to, those that are obscene or indecent, that engage in live chatting, or that are in any way deemed unsuitable. In addition, students are to avoid sites and apps that promote values that are counter to the mission of St. Mary's Catholic School. The Internet is a constantly changing environment; thus the administration reserves the right to add or remove access to any site or app as the need arises, with or without notice.

No filtering product can block all inappropriate sites. We assume no liability in the event that the filter is not 100% effective. In the event a site is blocked that has educational value, teachers may appeal to have that site removed from the filtering list.

Supervision and Monitoring

School and network administrators and their authorized employees monitor the use of information technology resources to help ensure that uses are secure and in conformity with this policy. Administration reserves the right to examine, use, and disclose any data found online or on location, in order to further the health, safety, discipline, or security of any student or other person or to protect property. They may also use this information in disciplinary actions and will furnish evidence of crime to law enforcement officials.

Internet User Policy And Rules

The purpose of the Internet is to provide information about various topics to the students and staff. All persons using the Internet agree to do so in an appropriate manner. Internet use is a privilege, not a right, which may be lost by persons abusing this privilege.

All Internet users agree to the following rules:

1. Respect and protect the privacy of others.

- Use only assigned accounts.
- Do not view, use, or copy passwords, data, or networks to which you are not authorized.
- Do not share passwords nor use another student's passwords.
- Do not distribute private or personal information (address, phone numbers, etc) about yourself or others, nor misrepresent yourself or others.
- Do not store personally identifiable data on any school device.

2. *Respect and protect the integrity, availability, and security of the computing system.*

- Observe all network security practices, as posted.
- Do not bypass the school filters by using VPNs ("hotspots") or proxy server sites.
- Do not access the Internet without a teacher or staff member in the classroom.
- Report security risks or violations to a teacher or administrator.
- Do not destroy or damage data, networks, or other resources.
- Do not install or download any software without permission.
- Conserve, protect, and share networks with other network users.
- Do not move any technology equipment without the teacher's permission.
- Do not use email accounts for anything other than educational purposes.
- Do not use email accounts to set up accounts for non-educational websites.

3. *Respect and protect the intellectual property of others.*

- Do not infringe upon copyrights (no making illegal copies of text, pictures, music, games, or movies).
- Do not plagiarize: Copying the work of another, without giving credit to the source, will be considered cheating and subject to the cheating policy in the student handbook.

4. *Respect the values of the Catholic Church within all transmission of material on the Internet.*

- Communicate only in ways that are kind and respectful, using appropriate language.
- Report threatening or inappropriate sites or materials to a teacher or administrator.
- Do not intentionally access, transmit, copy, or create material that is illegal (such as obscenity, stolen materials, or illegal copies of copyrighted works).
- Do not use the resources to conduct cyberbullying nor further acts that violate the school's code of ethics.
- Do not send spam, chain letters, or other mass unsolicited mailings.
- Do not buy, sell, advertise, or otherwise conduct business on school computers.
- Do not view or transmit at any time objectionable material, as determined by the administration.
- Use the Internet for educational purposes only.

5. *Utilize your school issued account for educational purposes only*

- Log-in for school Chromebooks
- Communications with teachers and classmates about classroom assignments and information.
- Correspond with colleges and universities.
- Join Google Classroom and other educational forums
- Do not use your school issued account to open other accounts without express permission from the school.

Students are to notify an adult immediately, if by accident, he/she encounters material that violates the rules stated above.

Consequences may include, but are not limited to, the loss of computer privileges and account access, detention, suspension, dismissal from school, and/or police involvement.

K-6th Responsible Use of Technology Policy and Regulations

Purpose: Believing that technology is a valuable educational tool, St. Mary's Catholic School has purchased technology equipment for students to use as an instructional tool in the classroom.

Goal: The school's goal is to provide students with a reliable piece of technology equipment for use in the classroom. Students are not allowed to bring their own laptops or Chromebook devices to school.

General Guidelines for School Owned Devices

- All devices are the property of St. Mary's Catholic School and will be inspected by school faculty or administrators at any time. **Any faculty or administrator has the right to monitor, collect and/or inspect any device (school owned or personal) at any time.**
- Students may use school owned devices in any classroom, but only with the permission of each teacher.
- **Students may not use any school owned device or service for non-educational purposes during school hours.** Students engaged in off-task behavior (games, etc.) on the device, during the school day, may have that device collected for inspection and/or account suspended.
- No personal files or applications may become a permanent part of a school owned device.
- Screensavers, backgrounds, and home screens must not contain inappropriate photographs or other material in conflict with Catholic Christian values or the mission of St. Mary's.
- **Students must demonstrate honesty, integrity, and respect for others at all times in the use of a school owned device. Harassment; or threatening, profane, or abusive language or messages transmitted shall be forbidden.**
- No device may be used to record, store, or transmit any type of image, sound, or video from St. Mary's, except for approved projects with the express permission of the teacher.
- Students are to acknowledge ownership and origination of all information and language borrowed from a source.
- Responsible use of the Internet is expected according to St. Mary's Responsible Use of Technology Policy and Internet User Policy.
- School owned devices must not be password-protected.
- Parents are responsible for the cost of repair (whether deliberate or accidental) or replacement of damaged, lost, or stolen school owned equipment. Some in house repairs are free of charge depending on severity of repair needed.
- If repairs are to be made to any device the school technology supervisor must be notified. Students are not to attempt to make repairs to school owned devices.

Consequences for Technology Violations

The use of a school owned device is a privilege and not a right. If reasonable belief exists that the student has violated the terms of this agreement, or other school policy, the device and/or school issued account may be inspected and/or confiscated by teachers, staff or administration. Subsequent or additional disciplinary action involving misuse of technology may extend to loss of technology privileges or further action as determined by the administration.

Social Media Policy

Sites such as Facebook®, Twitter®, Snapchat®, Instagram®, and Google+® or other social media sites are used for social networking. Users of these sites have little control over the content that "friends" post on their sites because these sites are in the public domain. It is imperative that you educate yourself on the dangers involved in social networking. With this in mind, no student or parent shall create or maintain a public electronic presence that in any way links to or publicizes St. Mary's Catholic School. This includes but is not limited to pages/sites that share homeroom, athletic team, grade level and/or school information. The only

official St. Mary's Catholic School Facebook page is the one created and monitored by the SMS technology staff. A parent who chooses to create such an account may subject his/her child(ren) to separation from the school. The following guidelines apply:

- SMS families/students may not use St. Mary's Catholic School information such as logos, official seals, or photographs.
- SMS families/students may not link their personal website to the SMS website.
- SMS families/students may not post inappropriate photographs or negative content containing any form of SMS identification, or faculty or staff members. Negative or defamatory comments about the school, the faculty, other students, or the parish made on a student or parent's Facebook® page may result in the student being separated from the school. In the event that a student is involuntarily separated from the school, there will be no reimbursement for tuition and/or fees.
- Be mindful that online content is not private and there could be long-term ramifications.
- SMS students and faculty/staff may not "friend" one another in a context that is social.

St. Mary's Catholic School works to protect the confidentiality rights of all students. The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1973 (FERPA) and the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) were designed to protect personally identifiable information of minors. SMS adheres to these laws in its attempt to protect the privacy rights of all students.

SCHOOL RESOURCES

School Nurse

If students become ill during the instructional day, teachers will send the student to the nurse's office. If students are to be sent home, they will remain with the nurse or in the classroom until the parent arrives.

Guidance Services

The guidance counselor strives to help each student reach his/her full potential in a caring, Christian environment. She provides a variety of services to students, parents, teachers, and administration. The guidance counselor provides individual and small group counseling support to students, handles career and college planning, and assists students with personal growth and development. Other services of the department include, but are not limited to, student testing, student scheduling, academic counseling, RenWeb support, and parent conferences.

Lunch

- Students from P3 - 8th grade may bring their lunch from home provided a doctor's excuse is on file, stating reasons the child must be on a special diet. High school students may bring their lunch from home, without providing a doctor's excuse.
- No soft drinks in fast-food cups or any other labeled container may be consumed.
- All students are to be present in the cafeteria during their specified lunch times.
- If meals are brought to school for students, they can not be in a restaurant wrapper or cup.

Child Nutrition Program

The Child Nutrition Program of St. Mary's provides nutritious meals at reasonable prices for students and faculty. The Child Nutrition Program of St. Mary's is a part of and is governed by the Catholic Schools Office within the Diocese of Alexandria. All students are encouraged to complete a National School Lunch/Child Nutrition Program form. All students determined to be eligible for free or reduced lunch

become a part of data used to determine the level of federal appropriations awarded to St. Mary's.

Sending Money to School

Parents are to send checks only when sending payment to school. Please secure in an envelope and write on the outside the reason the money is provided. All checks are submitted to the Cashier.

After-School Care

See the After School Care handbook for information about this program.

Facts RenWeb

St. Mary's uses the RenWeb service to maintain an online record of grades, assignments and disciplinary actions. Parents must create an account to log into ParentsWeb. ParentsWeb is an online portal that allows parents the opportunity to monitor student grades. This portal can be found at

RenWeb.com/logins/parentsweb-login.aspx.

Creating a ParentsWeb Account through Renweb:

1. Go to www.renweb.com
2. Click LOGIN (Top right corner of the screen)
3. Click "ParentsWeb Login"
4. Click "Create New Family Portal Account" (located under Family Portal Login)
5. The district code for St. Mary's is: SMS-LA
6. The email that needs to be used is the one on file with St. Mary's. The account has to be linked to the schools database system.
7. Click Create Account
8. A message will pop-up telling you an email has been sent. Check your email and click the link in that email. The link you will take you to the page where you can create your username and password.
9. For security purposes the link is only active for 6 hours.

OTHER SCHOOL INFORMATION

Textbooks

Students are responsible for all textbooks and library books. Those that are lost, damaged, defaced or stolen must be returned, or paid for, to receive report cards or progress reports. Each teacher will conduct, and record, a textbook inventory at the end of each term.

Asbestos Warning

St. Mary's School has been inspected for asbestos-containing substances required by federal law. It was found to contain friable and non-friable asbestos. Periodic inspections are made as required by law. Inspection records are on file in the office as is the school's Asbestos Plan. The public upon request may view them.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

St. Mary's believes that a positive, ongoing relationship between parents and the school is vital to the success of the school, and more importantly to the success of the student. Parents are encouraged to be a part of the educational and social life of the school to the degree that they are reasonably able. St. Mary's wants parents to

know that they are a part of the life of the school.

Service Hours

Contact Debbie Norman at dnorman@smstigers.org for more information about Service Hours.

- Each family is financially responsible for participating in both a fall and spring fundraiser as set forth by the school's administration.
- Parents are required to volunteer at least 10 hours each school year or pay a fee of \$300.00 (10 hours at \$30.00 per hour). Any hours not worked will be billed at \$30.00 an hour).
- These service hours include participation with fundraisers, service projects, working concession stands at all sporting events, and other events sponsored by the school.
- Emails are sent out when opportunities become available.
- A form to record hours worked is provided on the school website. Your name, the activity worked, and a school representative's signature will be required.
- If required volunteer hours are not completed, the balance remaining will be added to next year's tuition.

All volunteers and parents who intend to chaperone students must follow the guidelines set forth by the Diocese of Alexandria, and become VIRTUS trained to spend time with St. Mary's students in the school setting. This training also includes a background check and monthly computer updates. This means that if a parent is asked to help with a group of students or work with students on a project in class, they must be Virtus trained. Simply attending a field trip with your child or attending class parties does not warrant Virtus training unless you are responsible for other students besides your own. Please call the school office (318-352-8394) to get information about VIRTUS training.

Facility Security

In order to address school safety, and to aid in prevention maintenance, all exterior doors of all campus buildings and classrooms are locked during every instructional school day. Visitors to the campus will request permission to access the front door of the main building by "buzzing" the office for entry. All visitors, including parents, must register at the front office by signing in and providing their destination while on campus.

Visiting the School

VIRTUS, Protecting God's Children® for Adults program is an "awareness" program that raises the issue of child sexual abuse and provides information that elevates an adult's awareness about the nature and scope of the issue. This program educates and trains adults (clergy, religious, teachers, staff, volunteers, and parents) about the dangers of abuse, the warning signs of abuse, the ways to prevent abuse, the methods of properly reporting suspicions of abuse, and responding to allegations of abuse.

Any and all teachers, staff, substitute teachers, parents and volunteers, involved in any student-centered activity of St. Mary's, must be VIRTUS trained, and must keep their training updates current. Each individual must also complete and sign a release form for a background screening. For example; if accompanying a field trip, only the adults in charge of a group of students, that are not their own children, need to be VIRTUS trained.

For liability purposes, any group of St. Mary's students traveling for out-of-town athletic or extracurricular events will utilize the school owned bus or vehicle. In the event that parent vehicles are utilized for transportation, at least two, over 18-year-old VIRTUS-trained individuals, should be present in each vehicle.

Classroom Visitation

Parents are typically asked not to visit student classrooms during school hours. Items from home which may need to be given to a child can be left at the office. Outside of emergencies, students are not allowed to take phone calls during school. Parents who are specifically concerned may request permission from the principal to visit a specific classroom for a specific reason. This permission should be sought in advance.

Interaction with Teachers

Parents should first contact teachers directly with questions about their child. If an issue is unresolved, parents and teachers can schedule a meeting with the school principal. Individual conferences can be scheduled by teacher or parent at any time.

Student Counseling

Any student that receives counseling, or is speaking privately with any St. Mary's or Church employee, will do so in a room with a window or door that provides an unobstructed view.

PTO

The Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) supports St. Mary's by addressing specific needs at the school. Membership in the PTO is open only to parents of currently enrolled students. All parents are encouraged to participate.

Contact Information

If there is an emergency and you need to talk to your student during school, please call the office (352-8394).

If you need to talk to the school staff, Please call the office (352-8394) to arrange for an appointment.

If you need to talk to the assistant principal or principal, please call the office (352-8394) to arrange for an appointment. Please make sure you have addressed all issues by following the chain of command before contacting the principal. The teacher should always be contacted first.

If you need to talk about anything concerning athletics, contact the Athletic Director (352-8394).

If you need to talk about anything concerning registration or fees, contact Mrs. Debbie Norman (352-8394).

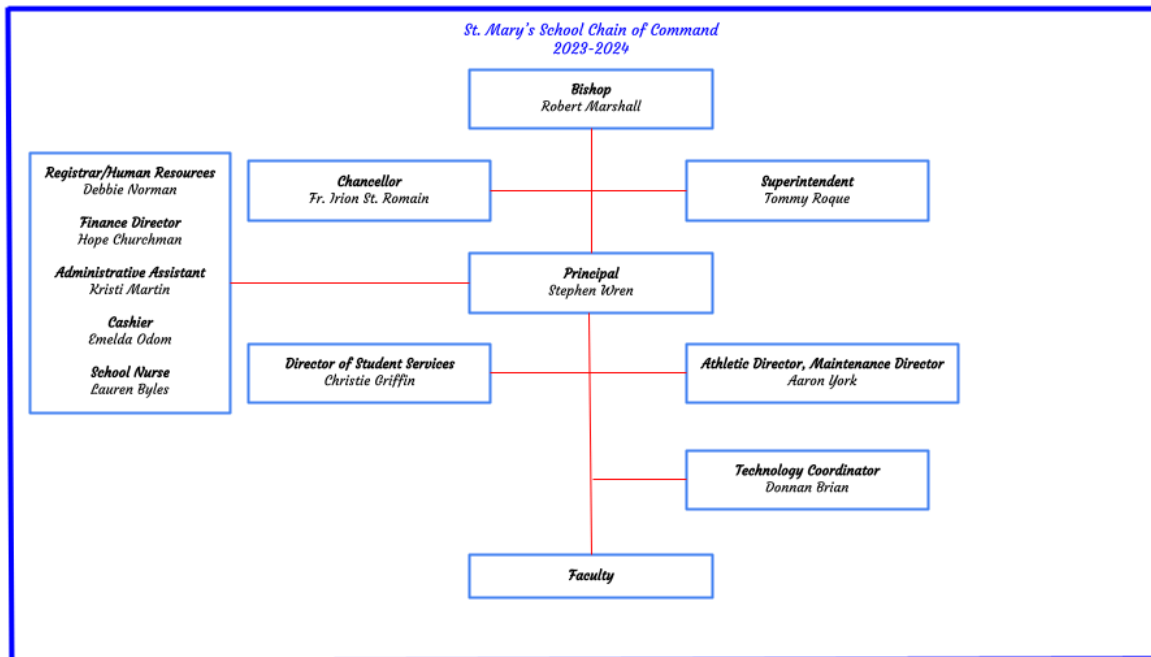
If you need to talk about anything concerning discipline, contact Mr. Stephen Wren (352-8394).

If you need assistance with technology, contact Mrs. Donnan Brian (352-8394).

If you need to talk to the Chancellor about a situation at school, please discuss the situation with the principal first. If, after discussing the matter with the principal, you are unsatisfied and feel that the principal has not adequately addressed your concern, please contact Fr. St. Romain at the Office of the Minor Basilica (352-3422).

Chain of Command

Parents will be instructed to communicate any issues or questions about academic issues to the teacher first. If resolution cannot be reached, the principal may be contacted. If resolution is still not satisfactory then the Pastor may be consulted. **Please follow the proper chain of command as outlined.**



Unwritten Regulations

This policy booklet is limited in content. Emphasis has been placed on those things which are deemed most pertinent and beneficial to the students, parents, and personnel of St. Mary's Catholic School at the present time.

It would be impossible to anticipate all problems which may arise in the future. Yet, each year, a few distracting "fads" and circumstances show up on our school grounds. Anything that distracts from or disrupts the spirit, education, philosophy, or dignity of St. Mary's Catholic School will be held to be unacceptable even though not explicitly set forth in these policies. Such situations will be dealt with in accordance with the principles implicit in our existing policies on an as-needed basis. Final decisions in this regard are reserved to the Administration.

St. Mary's Catholic School reserves the right to amend this Handbook. Notice of amendments will be sent to parents through email communication.

COVID-19

St. Mary's Catholic School reserves the right to move into COVID protocols in accordance with the CDC guidelines. In the event this should occur, St. Mary's will follow the current CDC guidelines in place.

K-6 Handbook Agreement

I have read and agree to comply with all of the policies and procedures set forth in the Grades K-6 Handbook. Please sign and return to the homeroom teacher by the end of the second week of school.

Print Student's Name

Print Parent's Name

Student's Signature

Parent's Signature

Date