

# SAINT MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Parent/Student Handbook  
2026 - 2027



Saint Mary's Catholic School  
101 Hampton Avenue  
Greenville, South Carolina 29601  
(864) 271-3870  
[www.smsgvl.org](http://www.smsgvl.org)

Tradition  Virtue  Excellence

*“From the first moment that a student sets foot in a Catholic school, he or she ought to have the impression of entering a new environment, one illumined by the light of faith...an environment permeated with the Gospel spirit of love and freedom.”*

*#25, Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School  
Vatican Congregation for Education*



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Dear Parents and Students,

With the foundations of tradition, virtue, and excellence, St Mary's Catholic School welcomes you and your children to the extraordinary experience of a Catholic education. In choosing St Mary's Catholic School, you have demonstrated a commitment to your vocation of parenting the children entrusted to your care according to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This Parent-Student Handbook reflects the policies of St Mary's Catholic School for the 2026-2027 school year. Please read this document carefully. **By enrolling a child in our school, a family agrees to abide by our policies. A form that confirms this agreement will be sent to parents in August.**

St Mary's Catholic School has a 126-year history of excellence, and we look forward to working with you to promote the academic, athletic, and spiritual development of your children under the guidance of the teachings of the Catholic Church. Together let us pray that we may lead our children to Jesus Christ as His faithful disciples.

In Our Lady of the Sacred Heart of Jesus,

Mr. Steven Zimmerman  
Principal



**2027** Cognia Accredited  
**2026** Newman Guide Recommended School  
2020 National Blue Ribbon School

## INTRODUCTION

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### MISSION STATEMENT and MOTTO

The mission of Saint Mary's Catholic School is to invite our students to follow the Lord Jesus Christ as faithful disciples and to prepare them for outstanding achievement in high school and later life. Our rigorous curriculum integrates academic excellence, athletic challenge, artistic expression, and character formation in service of the evangelical mission of Saint Mary's Catholic Church and School.

The mission of Saint Mary's Catholic School is summarized in our motto: *Tradition, Virtue, Excellence.*

#### *Tradition*

Along with the writings of Sacred Scripture, Catholics accept Sacred Tradition as the revealed truth of the Gospel. Sacred Tradition is the spoken teaching of Christ entrusted to Peter and the Apostles and upheld by the Holy Spirit in the teaching authority of their successors, the bishops of the world in union with the pope. From our reverence for Sacred Tradition flows a love for various liturgical and devotional traditions and even for time-honored school traditions, as well as a commitment to educational methods founded on the dignity of the human person, the primary role of parents, and a sincere respect for those in authority. (See MT 16:18-20, LK 10:16, MT 28:19-20 and *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #74-83, 1700, 2221.)

#### *Virtue*

A virtue is a strength, or a good habit, which allows one to choose and do what is true and good in a way that is prompt, easy, and joyful. Virtues are developed by God's grace and the ongoing practice of good acts. The virtuous life is the happy life, the good life, because virtue is the ability to live in freedom from the slavery and weakness of sin and selfishness. The theological virtues (faith, hope, and charity) are a gift given by God at Baptism, through which God Himself dwells within us and directs our lives to Him. At Saint Mary's we learn about the life of virtue by focusing on the practice of a specific Catholic virtue each month.

#### *Excellence*

All are called to holiness. This includes striving to develop our individual talents for the glory of God and having the zealous desire to fulfill His plan for us each day and throughout our lives. At Saint Mary's we learn each month about Saints who fulfilled this call and our faculty and staff act as living witnesses by role-modeling the zeal of giving one's all for God and by holding our students accountable to the highest expectations, calling them to personal excellence: spiritual, academic, artistic, and athletic. (See MT 25:14-30 and *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #2013-2015, 2030.)

**PARISH and SCHOOL EMBLEM and LOGO**

Saint Mary’s Catholic Church and School share as their emblem and logo the seal of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the fleur-de-lis. Use of the name of the parish and/or school with these symbols is reserved to the Pastor and Principal or others with their approval.

*Seal of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart of Jesus*

The parish and school seal shows Our Lady holding the Infant Jesus surrounded by the Latin text, “*Ecclesia Dominae Nostrae A Sacro Corde Iesu,*” which is translated “Church of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart of Jesus,” followed by the foundation date of the parish, 1852. At its foundation, the parish was entrusted to Mary under the title of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, a popular devotion at that time, which recognized that as God Incarnate, Jesus Christ loves us with a human heart, and that along with all of His flesh, He received this heart from Our Lady, His mother, Mary. Although specifically dedicated to Our Lady under this title, both the parish and school are recognized by the shorter name, St Mary’s.



*The Fleur-de-Lis*

*Fleur-de-lis* is French for “lily flower” and this traditional symbol of Mary is a stylized lily. The lily is a symbol for purity, and Mary, preserved from all stain of sin, is the purest of God’s creatures. At Saint Mary’s the *fleur-de-lis* is used interchangeably with the parish/school seal and is embroidered on our school uniform. In the window above the main altar of our church this symbol can be seen in the pattern on Mary’s mantle.



**SCHOOL MASCOT AND COLORS**

Selected by student vote in 2005-2006, our Saint Mary’s school mascot is the Duck. Ennobled as it is by many athletic championship titles at the local and state level, our students are proud to be, “once a Duck, always a Duck.” Our school colors are blue and white, occasionally offset by gold. These are the traditional colors which represent Our Lady, as she is often pictured wearing these colors in sacred art.



## HISTORY

Saint Mary's Catholic School can trace its history back over 125 years to the founding of Sacred Heart Academy by the Ursuline Order of Sisters on September 24, 1900. Sacred Heart was a free parish grammar school and boarding academy for young ladies, located in the rented home of Elias Earle.

The school outgrew its quarters within the first year, so a more spacious building was constructed on Hampton Avenue. A large addition was added in 1923, but by the late 1920's the student population had again outgrown its facilities.

In 1930, the present elementary building, Mercy Hall, was constructed and named Saint Mary's Catholic School. Three years later, operation of the school was taken over by the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy of the Diocese of Charleston, South Carolina. In 1962, a second school building was opened to house a middle school. In 2006 the Dominican Sisters of Saint Cecilia Congregation of Nashville, Tennessee assumed the school's administration. Beginning in 2017 the first lay principal was named.

Until the 1970's St Mary's School encompassed grades 1-9. Then the 9<sup>th</sup> grade was eliminated, and a 5-year-old kindergarten was added. In 1998, a 4-year-old kindergarten was added to the school community and in 2013 a 3-year-old kindergarten. The Saint Mary's campus continues to add new facilities that enhance the educational experience. In 1998 the Monsignor Charles J. Baum Recreation Center was dedicated, followed in 2000 with the complete restoration of Gallivan Hall into a performing arts center for the school, and in 2001, the Jamile J. Francis Athletic Field was dedicated. In the spring of 2006, Pazdan Hall was reopened after the completion of a \$2.2 Million renovation. Among the many enhancements to the middle school building are the installation of 4 SMART boards and wireless technology. In 2018, the upper floor of Sacred Heart Hall was renovated to create two brand-new, fully-equipped classrooms for Spanish and French. In 2023, the parish's athletic facilities were expanded with the construction of the Clinkscales Family Center, which serves as a second court, practice facility, and meeting space for church and school use. In 2025, the plaza outside Gallivan Hall was renovated to provide a beautiful, covered meeting space for students and families. This space was named Gwynn Garden in honor of Monsignor Andrew Keene Gwynn, pastor of Saint Mary's from 1900 to 1951.

St Mary's was named a National Blue Ribbon School by the US Department of Education in 2009 and again in 2020, one of the only Catholic schools in the Diocese of Charleston to earn this prestigious designation twice. In 2026, Saint Mary's was recognized by The Cardinal Newman Society as a Newman Guide Recommended K-8 school for our commitment to upholding standards of faithful Catholic education.

During the 2025-2026 school year, Saint Mary's celebrated her 125th Anniversary. During the first 125 years, several thousand students have had the opportunity to experience "a very special place" to learn about God, their fellow students and about themselves. Periodically, alumni and former students return to Saint Mary's campus to relive their younger days, to renew old friendships, and to thank the dedicated sisters, lay teachers, and staff for preparing them for the future. Today St Mary's Catholic school continues to fulfill her mission of forming students in tradition, virtue, and excellence.

## PHILOSOPHY

In addition to transmitting the Gospel to our students, we seek to instill in them all of the human virtues celebrated in classical wisdom and Catholic tradition. By teaching our children to love righteousness in all its forms, we prepare them to serve Christ and His Church by respecting the human dignity of each person, and through regular participation in the Most Holy Eucharist and systematic catechesis, our students are introduced to the Christian life in all its richness.

Our program is designed for children of families with deep commitment to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and genuine respect for the classical forms and disciplines of Christian education. The faculty and staff of Saint Mary's Catholic School are dedicated to the integral formation of our pupils, working with our parents as a single community of many families to serve and motivate every student.

## SAINT MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL OBJECTIVES

- To assist parents in fulfilling their role as the primary educators of their children.
- To recognize and respect the dignity of each individual.
- To provide academic programs that will promote continuous student growth in building competence in critical analysis, inquiry, and creative thinking.
- To integrate our Catholic faith in everyday life.
- To instill a spirit of service to Christ and His Church among the students within the community.
- To provide all students with a foundation in knowledge, skills, and Gospel values to prepare them for the future.
- To introduce students to the Fine Arts and to provide opportunities for creative activities that will inspire an appreciation for the good, the true, and the beautiful.
- To foster an atmosphere of dedication, loyalty, and teamwork through athletic competition.

## **PARENTAL ROLE**

In keeping with the educational philosophy of the Catholic Church, Saint Mary's Catholic School recognizes parents as the primary educators of their children. Saint Mary's Catholic School strives to assist parents in the academic and Christian formation of their children. Therefore, it is vital that a mutual attitude of respect and support be present between home and school. In accordance with the Catholic principle of subsidiarity, any concerns should be resolved at the lowest level: parents should speak to the teacher before addressing the Principal, and to the Principal before addressing the Pastor.

Parents are expected to support the school's mission, philosophy, and commitment to Christian principles in both word and deed; support the school's policies and regulations outlined in the handbook; support the educational programs of the school; and remain informed about and involved in the religious instruction of their children.

If parental involvement and/or behavior seriously disrupts the teaching/learning process or undermines the academic or spiritual mission of Saint Mary's Catholic School, the school reserves the right to require parents to withdraw their children from the school.

### **THE OPERATION OF THE SCHOOL IS BASED ON THE FOLLOWING FACTORS:**

- The best interest of the child is the first consideration in administrative procedures, practices and decisions.
- The teacher is the key factor in instruction and well-qualified professional personnel should instruct every child.
- The high standard of education should be maintained by continuous evaluation and revision of the curriculum, organizational structure, and methodology based on the latest valid research, changing goals in society, and school objectives. Close communications should be maintained among the Pastor, Principal, teachers, parents, and the community.

It is the aim of Saint Mary's Catholic School to provide a Christ-centered atmosphere in which each child can be challenged to strive for the highest possible level of formation, both spiritual and academic. The administration, faculty, and staff strive to instill a love for truth and a love for learning in each student. If effective learning is to take place, there must be an atmosphere of study, free from distractions that arise from disorder of any kind. All students are expected to practice self-control and good order at all times for the common good of the school. Saint Mary's Catholic School looks to the home for support and cooperation in the implementation of these directives.

**ATTENDANCE AT SAINT MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL INDICATES WILLINGNESS TO COMPLY WITH THE SCHOOL'S REGULATIONS.**

## ACADEMIC CREDENTIALS

Saint Mary's Catholic School holds membership in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Charleston, South Carolina, Educational System and is formally accredited through Cognia. Reaccreditation occurs routinely on a five-year schedule.

All members of our professional teaching staff hold relevant degrees, state certification, and/or appropriate endorsements.

## LOCATION

Saint Mary's Catholic School is located at 101 Hampton Avenue off Academy Street in downtown Greenville. It is part of the Saint Mary's Catholic Church campus and is bordered by Hampton Avenue and West Washington Street.

## ADMISSIONS POLICY

Nondiscriminatory Policy: Schools in the Diocese of Charleston admit students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the schools. They do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of educational policies, admissions policies, or athletics and other school-administered programs.

Saint Mary's Catholic School observes the following priority consideration with all new students applying for admission:

1. Children of Active Saint Mary's Church parishioners and siblings of currently enrolled students
2. All other applicants

A Saint Mary's Catholic Church parishioner has priority over all other applicants, including siblings of non-Saint Mary's Catholic Church parishioners.

Prior to admission in our youngest grades, children must be able to use the restroom independently. In grades K5-8 academic testing is used to determine eligibility and grade-level placement. Students are not considered enrolled until all appropriate forms and fees have been submitted. Details regarding the admissions process are posted on [the school website](#).

All students are accepted at the pastor's discretion, and he has the final say in all admissions and enrollment decisions.

## **PART I: ACADEMIC PROGRAM**

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### **CURRICULUM**

Saint Mary's Catholic School curriculum is formulated according to the directives and curriculum guides of the Diocese of Charleston. The school and the diocese are accredited through Cognia (formerly SACS).

Saint Mary's Catholic School provides a well-rounded, academically challenging curriculum in Grades K3-8. The goal is to provide a firm foundation in Catholicism, Reading, Mathematics, and Language Arts. Saint Mary's Catholic School does not offer any special education alternatives or individualized programs.

The curriculum concerns itself with the whole child in his fully human and specifically Christian development. The school seeks to provide a sound academic program. As an integral part of the instructional program, the faculty makes use of resource persons, field trips, media, and technology.

In addition, the Religion curriculum seeks to instill an appreciation and understanding of the basic truths and practices of our Catholic Faith with emphasis on the sacramental life of the Church. Special religious activities of Saint Mary's Catholic School include weekly Masses, Reconciliation Services, and seasonal liturgical celebrations. The school emphasizes the role of faith in daily life by focusing on different virtues and Saints each month.

The K-12 Diocesan Curriculum was developed in multiple stages by Grade K-12 teachers, diocesan administrators, and initially led by ACE Collaborative Staff from the University of Notre Dame. The curriculum was developed using the knowledge of research-based classroom practices, the needs of the Diocese of Charleston students, the expertise of Diocese of Charleston teachers, and referenced standards from other sources. The Diocesan Curriculum development is a cyclical process. In order to accommodate the changing needs of our current and future students, each curriculum will be reviewed and modified every five years.

### **COMPUTER USAGE**

Saint Mary's Catholic School frequently integrates technology within the curriculum. The school has a Mac Lab for weekly instruction. The K5 through 8<sup>th</sup> grades and the Science Lab enjoy wireless technology enhanced with projectors and document cameras. All Middle School students are issued 1-to-1 devices to use during the school year and sets of iPads are available for periodic use in the Primary and Elementary Grades.

Before students are granted access to computers and the Internet at school, they and their parents sign the agreement to the Technology Acceptable Use Policy:

## Technology Acceptable Use Policy

St Mary's Catholic School is committed to the effective use of technology to enhance both the quality of student learning and the staff efficiency of school operations. It also recognizes that safeguards must be established to ensure the protection of our staff and students. Safeguards also protect the school's investment in hardware and software, ensure the benefits of technology and prevent negative side effects.

The provisions of this policy and associated guidelines and agreements are subordinate to school, local, state, and federal law. School computers are to be used in a responsible, ethical, and legal manner in accordance with the mission and rules of St Mary's Catholic School. The school reserves the right to investigate any suspected violations of this policy.

This policy applies both on-campus and off-campus (including, but not limited to, sporting events, field trips, class trips, academic competitions, etc.)

1. Access to the Internet must be related to a student's class work responsibilities, or for the purpose of education or research, and be consistent with the educational objectives of the diocese and school.

2. The use of technology is a privilege, not a right. Inappropriate use may result in a suspension or cancellation of those privileges, disciplinary action (up to and including expulsion), and/or appropriate legal action. Whether the use is considered inappropriate or violates this policy is a matter within the discretion of the Principal.

3. Some examples of unacceptable use include but are not limited to:

- Using the network for any illegal activity, including violation of copyright or other contracts, or transmitting any material in violation of any U.S. or State law;
- Unauthorized downloading of software (i.e. applications, images, music, videos, etc.), regardless of whether it is copyrighted;
- Accessing any site (games, etc.) without teacher permission; using any equipment without teacher permission;
- Invading the privacy of individuals;
- Using/Sharing another user's password or account or sharing one's own password or account;
- Using pseudonyms or anonymous sign-ons;
- Accessing, submitting, posting, publishing, or displaying any defamatory, inaccurate, abusive, obscene, sexually-oriented, gambling, threatening, racially offensive, harassing, illegal material or other information and/or materials that are inconsistent with objectives and/or teachings of the diocese and/or school;
- Using inappropriate language;
- Use of any proxy sites/servers to access sites that are restricted by the normal course of the network; the school will limit the network using filters and/or additional software to keep

inappropriate information away from users, but cannot guarantee this in all situations, particularly given the inappropriate use of proxy sites/servers.

- Damaging computer hardware, computer systems, files, programs, or networks;
- Vandalizing or damaging the property of another individual, including data files;
- Employing the network for commercial purposes (i.e. to buy or sell items).
- Utilizing artificial intelligence (AI) to assist or complete schoolwork partially or in full in any subject for any reason. **Use of AI assistance is strictly forbidden unless explicit permission is given by the teacher for a singular assignment.**
- **Unacceptable use also includes online activities occurring outside the school that may be detrimental to the school environment (defamation, threats, harassment, cyber-bullying, etc.)**

4. Students may not post any photograph, image, likeness, video or personally identifiable information regarding any employee, student, parent, or parishioner on any Internet or web-based site, or in any electronic communication without his/her knowledge and approval.

5. Creating a website or social media presence (i.e. Facebook, Instagram, SnapChat, TikTok, X (Twitter), LinkedIn, etc.) that represents the school or transmits the likeness, image, photograph, video, or personally identifiable information about any employee, student, parent, or parishioner is prohibited, except with the express permission of the Principal.

6. Students may not allow a non-employee or non-student to use a school computer, account, or other equipment unless the person is specifically authorized to do so by the Principal.

7. The school reserves the right to monitor student use of school computers including Internet use and e-mail use and content.

8. In the event that the school must utilize a Distance Learning Plan for extended online instruction, students remain bound by both this Technology Acceptable Use Policy as well as the school attendance and discipline policies.

9. Students and their families are responsible for any damages to school-issued devices. Damages requiring more than \$25 worth of repairs and/or full device replacements will be charged to families automatically via FACTS.

These policies and measures are designed to protect both students and employees and to ensure the integrity of the electronic information systems used for educational and administrative purposes in this school. Inappropriate use of St Mary's Catholic School's computers may result in a loss of access to use them as well as other disciplinary and/or legal actions.

## ACADEMIC EVALUATION

The school year at Saint Mary's Catholic School is divided into four marking periods/quarters according to the school calendar. Progress Reports are distributed at Parent-Teacher Conferences during the first quarter of each school year. Report Cards are issued electronically at the end of each quarter for grades K3-8. Final report cards are electronically issued at the end of the school year.

Standardized Achievement Tests are administered to all students in grades K5 through 8 at times set by the Diocese of Charleston Catholic Schools Office.

Academic grades are available to parents through FACTS (Formally "RenWeb"), our Student Information System. Parents can access the parent portal using the RenWeb Home app on [iOS](#) or [Android](#) devices or by clicking "Family Portal" on the official school website. All parents have unique login credentials and can contact the school office if they need assistance with the login process. Parents are encouraged to stay in communication with the teachers concerning their child's performance.

Although extra credit may be offered at the teacher's discretion (either as part of a regular assessment or as a completely separate assessment), grades within the gradebook system and on report cards will be capped at a 100-point maximum.

### CODE FOR MARKING & GPA EQUIVALENTS (GRADES 1 – 8)

A+ = 99 - 100 = 4.000	A = 97 - 98 = 4.000	A- = 95 - 96 = 3.667
B+ = 92 - 94 = 3.334	B = 88 - 91 = 3.000	B- = 85 - 87 = 2.667
C+ = 82 - 84 = 2.334	C = 78 - 81 = 2.000	C- = 75 - 77 = 1.667
D = 70 - 74 = 1.000	F = FAILING - Below 70 = 0.000	

### HIGH-SCHOOL-LEVEL COURSES

Seventh Grade students take a full year, high-school-level course in Spanish I Honors or French I Honors. Eighth Grade students may take a full year, high-school-level course in Algebra I Honors, English I Honors, and Spanish I Honors or French I Honors. **The Administration reserves the right to cancel or change any course or program should the need arise.** In order to prepare students properly for their high-school-level foreign language course, students are not permitted to switch their foreign language of study after 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

## CO-CURRICULAR COURSES

A variety of co-curricular courses are offered on all grade levels, including: Spanish in Grades K3-8, French in Grades K3-8, Music in Grades K3-8, Art in Grades K3-8, Physical Education in Grades K4-8, Library Skills in Grades K3-7, and Computer Lab in Grades 1-8. **The Administration reserves the right to cancel or change any course or program should the need arise.**

As co-curricular courses meet less frequently than daily core academic courses, they are weighted less (0.25 credits) when calculating overall GPA for grades 1 through 8.

## EXAMS

Middle school students take both mid-term and end-of-year exams based on the following chart:

Grade	Subjects	Exam Weighting
6 <sup>th</sup>	English and Math	10% of the semester average
7 <sup>th</sup>	English, Math, Science, and Social Studies	15% of the semester average
8 <sup>th</sup>	English, Math, Science, Social Studies, Foreign Language, and Religion	20% of the semester average

Eighth grade students with a cumulative average of 99 or above in a subject are eligible to exempt that subject's final exam.

## HOMEWORK

It is the policy of Saint Mary's Catholic School to give homework. The purpose of homework is to foster habits of independent work-study; to reinforce learning that has taken place in school; to bring the home and school closer together; and to relate school learning to out-of-school interests. It is essential that students be instructed in the importance of daily homework assignments. Although homework will be posted in Family Portal, each student must also keep a written account of homework. This is his/her responsibility. Please make it a practice to ask your child about homework and papers to be signed.

Since the goal of homework is independent study, parents are encouraged to taper their assistance over the years. In no case should a parent supply answers to tests, etc. to their children. Studying test answers rather than studying a body of material undermines learning and will be considered cheating (see discipline code), even if answers are supplied by parents. Using AI to complete homework or projects without the teacher's explicit permission is also considered cheating and will result in a 0 for the student's grade as well as further disciplinary consequences.

In order to facilitate time for families over weekends and holidays, teachers will make every effort to avoid assigning new homework on a Friday that is due the following Monday (or the first day back after a long weekend or holiday). However, there might be long-term homework, assignments, or class projects that require work on the weekend or over holidays if they were not completed by the student during the school week, and general exceptions to this policy may occur throughout the school year depending on a variety of factors (i.e. missed school days requiring make-up work, extra practice needed for a unit at the teacher's discretion, etc.). Students are instructed and encouraged to develop and exercise good time-management skills and avoid waiting until the last minute to complete assignments so as to minimize their amount of schoolwork over weekends and holidays.

### HONOR CODE FOR STUDENTS IN GRADES 4-8

**Preamble:** The Honor Code of Saint Mary's Catholic School is intended to promote an atmosphere of trust and fairness in the classroom. Saint Mary's Catholic School students who pledge are bound by honor to abide by the code and are expected to evidence a high standard of personal conduct as outlined below.

**Code:** I agree not to give or receive unauthorized, dishonest assistance inside or outside the classroom on any homework, projects, classwork, or tests. All assignments presented will be my own.

I agree not to plagiarize. Plagiarism includes the word-for-word repetition, without acknowledgment, of the writing of another author. Plagiarism includes the use of information on the Internet without proper acknowledgment. Plagiarism includes the use of AI tools to assist or to complete any part of any assignment, either written or artistic or otherwise.

**Pledge:** I understand the Saint Mary's Catholic School Honor Code and pledge to follow it. I understand that I will be held responsible for any violations of the Honor Code.

### HONOR ROLL

At the end of each marking period, an Academic Honor Roll is electronically published for Grades 6, 7, and 8. Students who have earned "A's" (95 - 100) in all subjects will be listed as receiving High Honors; and students who have earned "A's" and "B's" (85 - 100) in all subjects will be listed as receiving Honors. This includes grades in co-curricular classes (Art, Music, PE, Computers).

### **PROMOTION POLICY and RETENTION POLICY (K3, K4, K5)**

Students enrolled in St Mary's K3, K4, and K5 classes are not guaranteed automatic promotion to the next grade level at the conclusion of the current school year.

The decision on whether to promote or retain students is at the sole discretion of the school and is based on a variety of factors including, but not limited to:

- Conversations with the child's parents or guardians
- Teacher's observation and evaluation of the student throughout the entire school year, including items that may not appear on the official quarterly report cards
- Student's emotional and behavioral development (maturity, self-control, attentiveness, ability to follow instructions, ability to grasp new information, etc.)
- Student's age/birthdate
- The student's performance during the February "Readiness Screening" (K4 only)
- MAP test scores (K5 only)
- Attendance record (excessive absences in either K3 or K4 may jeopardize a student's eligibility for enrollment the following year)

The decision to promote or retain students is NEVER determined solely by academic performance (what is in the gradebook or on the report card), it is NEVER influenced by school enrollment or grade-level waitlists, and it is NEVER punitive in nature. St Mary's teachers and the administration care deeply about each student, and we always seek to make decisions that are in the best interest of the child.

All decisions regarding promotion or retention will be made by March 1. If it is determined that a student will potentially need to be retained, the parents will be notified in mid-February and will have an opportunity to meet with the teachers to review the student's situation. In some circumstances, the school will leave the final decision to the student's parents or guardians, but that decision must still be made by March 1.

### **PROMOTION POLICY and RETENTION POLICY (1<sup>st</sup> Grade – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade)**

Advancement to the next grade at Saint Mary's Catholic School is based on a student's daily performance, test results, recommendations of teachers, adequate attendance throughout the year, and the student's ability to work successfully on a more advanced level.

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

Students may also be TRANSFERRED to the next grade. A student who is transferred to another grade may not be allowed to continue as a student at Saint Mary's Catholic School.

## PART II: SCHOOL POLICIES and PROCEDURES

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### ACTIVITIES

Students of Saint Mary's Catholic School may participate in Altar Serving, Lector Team, Band, Choir, Orchestra, Middle School Sports Programs (Basketball, Cross Country, Track, Volleyball, and Golf), Safety Patrol, Student Council, Yearbook, Chess Club, Coding Club, Rosary Club, Art Club, Youth in Government, National Junior Beta Club, and more, as well as in various parish activities.

All students are encouraged to become participants in our school activities, extra-curricular activities, and in the Church athletic and scouting programs.

### ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

Saint Mary's urges extreme caution to parents and students regarding the potential negative effects that AI adoption can have on students' education, formation, and critical thinking skills. The school will at all times consider any unauthorized AI use either at home or at school to be academic dishonesty of the highest caliber which may result in serious academic and disciplinary consequences, including 0's on any impacted assignments and consequences ranging from detention up to expulsion.

Saint Mary's encourages all families to read [Antiqua et Nova](#) paragraphs 77 through 84 to learn more about the Catholic church's evaluation of the relationship between AI and education.

### ARRIVAL - MORNING

Adult supervision is provided for students before school beginning at 7:20AM. Once on campus, students are **NOT** allowed to wander through the school buildings or leave the school property. School hours are 8:00AM-3:00PM.

Parents may not leave children unsupervised or allow them to wander

## ASBESTOS

### Asbestos Hazardous Emergency Response Act (AHERA) School Building Survey

Saint Mary's Catholic School has completed a survey for asbestos materials in our school buildings. EPA has, as required under Section 203 of Title II of the Toxic Substance Control Act (TSCA), issued a final rule requiring all local school agencies (public and private) to identify all asbestos-containing materials (ACM) in their buildings and to take appropriate actions to control the release of asbestos fibers. Accredited personnel have inspected each building, taken samples of all suspected materials, and then, after analysis, returned and labeled all asbestos-containing materials. As part of this survey, accredited personnel have also developed a management plan. The management plan will identify: all samples taken, those samples that contain asbestos and their locations, the type and percentage of asbestos present, the current physical condition of the asbestos-containing material, and a written plan to control future asbestos fiber release.

Asbestos does not need to be removed from a building to control fiber release. Fiber release can be controlled by encapsulation, enclosure, and/or repair. When handled properly, fiber release can be far below the South Carolina "acceptable for occupancy" level of 0.01 fibers/cc.

The completed management plan is on file in the administrative office and can be examined any school day during normal working hours.

## ASSEMBLY AND LITURGICAL SERVICES

All students are to be on their best behavior while attending Mass and other liturgical services. Middle school students must wear their formal uniform (pants and long sleeve shirts with ties for boys and vests for girls) on school days when there will be Mass or other liturgical services. Courtesy is expected of all students during any assembly program and students are to always give guests and speakers a respectful welcome.

## ATTENDANCE

Punctual and regular attendance is critical for student success at St Mary's Catholic school. Chronic absences are a violation of school policies and South Carolina state truancy legislation. Furthermore, chronic absences place an undue burden on teachers, who must set aside time to provide make-up work or supplementary instruction to absent students upon their return to school.

Excessive student absences can interfere with progress reports and report cards, interrupt class routines, delay curriculum progress for the rest of the class, and undermine instruction for the absent student.

With this in mind, parents should make every possible effort to ensure their children are present and punctual as consistently as possible. Absences should be kept to an absolute minimum:

- Whenever possible, routine appointments (doctor, dentist, etc.) should be scheduled after school hours or on days without school.
- Parents should avoid scheduling family vacations that overlap with school days.
- Students should not miss school because friends or family members are visiting from out-of-town.
- Parents are required to follow the protocols outlined below under HEALTH POLICY AND PROCEDURES. However, parents are asked to minimize student absences for smaller non-contagious health concerns or discomforts whenever possible (E.g.: seasonal allergies, student lethargy, student anxiety, mental health days, etc.)
- Parents of students with chronic ailments that may result in extended or frequent absences should notify the principal as early as possible so a plan can be put in place for the child's academic success.
- Doctor's notes must originate from the doctor's office (email or phone call). Any physical notes handed to the school office **MUST** be signed and dated by the doctor's office.
- Excessive absences (either excused or unexcused) could result in a child being ineligible to receive credit for high school classes in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade (Algebra I, English I, Spanish I, or French I). Families anticipating excessive absences in a child's 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade year must reach out to the principal as early as possible to see if arrangements can be made.
- Since St Mary's is unable to offer interventions such as seat time recovery or homebound instruction, excessive absences (either excused or unexcused) may necessitate a student to withdraw or may render them ineligible for future enrollment (including K3 and K4).

The school's policies regarding absences can be broken down according to the circumstances below:

### 0 to 10 Absences

- Permitted by school policy - will be marked as "Excused" by default.
- Parents must communicate the reason for the absence to the school by emailing [school.office@smcgv1.org](mailto:school.office@smcgv1.org) AND [nurse@smcgv1.org](mailto:nurse@smcgv1.org) by 9:00am the day the student is absent.
- Parent notes for small illnesses are sufficient. Doctor's notes are only required for long-term ailments that will result in three or more consecutive days of missed school.
- Students missing more than 2 hours during the day will be marked as absent for half a day.
- Students present for less than 2 hours total during the day will be marked absent for the full day.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>11+ Absences – EXCUSED</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Granted for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Illness with a doctor’s note</li> <li>○ Medical appointment with a doctor’s note</li> <li>○ Graduation, sacramental celebration, or other milestone ceremonies for a sibling, etc.</li> <li>○ Wedding in the immediate family (<i>Verification required if absent more than one day</i>)</li> <li>○ Death in the immediate family (<i>Verification required if absent more than one day</i>)</li> <li>○ High school shadow day (<i>Grade 8 only</i>)</li> <li>○ School-sponsored class trips (<i>Count as “Present”, not “Absent”</i>)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• It is the student’s responsibility to make up all work and assignments missed.</li> <li>• The provision of assignments for an anticipated excused absence is at the discretion of the teacher; parents should realize that the provision of such assignments is not a right and, in some cases, may not be possible. If requesting assignments in advance of an anticipated excused absence, parents should contact the teacher no less than one week in advance of the absence.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>11+ Absences – UNEXCUSED</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any absence after #10 that does not qualify as EXCUSED as dictated by this policy will be considered UNEXCUSED (Including family vacations, excessive third-party athletic competitions, and illnesses without an official doctor’s note).</li> <li>• No work will be provided in advance by the teacher, other than the work provided in advance as normal to the entire class.</li> <li>• <b>A student with an UNEXCUSED absence beyond their tenth absence will receive a 0 on any missed assignments and assessments on the day of the absence.</b></li> </ul>
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<p><b><u>Tardies</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any student arriving after 8:00am will be considered tardy.</li> <li>• Tardy students must be walked up to the front office in Mercy Hall by a parent or guardian to be signed in.</li> <li>• Tardies are marked EXCUSED if they result from illness or a medical appointment with an official doctor’s note. All other tardies are marked UNEXCUSED.</li> <li>• If a student amasses 5 unexcused tardies, they will be converted to 1 full-day absence with regards to attendance and will be subject to the conditions outlined above.</li> <li>• Excessive unexcused tardiness will be referred to the disciplinarian.</li> </ul>
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<p><b><u>Early Dismissals</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early dismissals for medical appointments, school athletic competitions, or other legitimate reasons are permitted before 2:30pm. A doctor’s note or appointment confirmation should be provided to the front office.</li> <li>• Please do not schedule early dismissals between 2:30pm and the end of the school day at 3pm, as this interferes with the conclusion of the school day and the normal dismissal process.</li> <li>• An early dismissal that occurs before 1pm will be marked absent for half a day if the student does not return to school after their appointment.</li> </ul>
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## BELL SCHEDULE - MIDDLE SCHOOL

	<u>Normal Day</u>	<u>Noon Dismissal / Half Day</u>
Homeroom	8:00 - 8:05	8:00
Period 1	8:05 - 8:50	8:00 - 8:30
Period 2	8:50 - 9:35	8:30 - 9:00
Period 3	9:35 - 10:20	9:00 - 9:30
Period 4	10:20 - 11:05	9:30 - 10:00
Period 5	11:05 - 11:50	10:00 - 10:30
Lunch/Recess	11:50 - 12:30	None
Period 6	12:34 - 1:19	10:30 - 11:00
Period 7	1:22 - 2:07	11:00 - 11:30
Period 8	2:10 - 2:55	11:30 - 12:00
Dismissal	3:00	12:00

Middle School students walking between Mercy Hall, Pazdan Hall, Sacred Heart Hall, and the Baum Center for their classes are expected to travel in a quiet and orderly fashion and to arrive promptly. Travel time is built into the daily bell schedule to give students time to walk between buildings, but consistently arriving late or unprepared will result in academic or disciplinary consequences.

## BELL SCHEDULE - START-OF-DAY & END-OF-DAY (ALL SCHOOL)

7:20AM	Doors Open
7:45AM	Silent Reading/Study
8:00AM	School Begins with morning prayer
2:55PM	Closing Exercises
3:00PM	Dismissal

## BETA CLUB

The St Mary's Beta Club is a participant in the National Junior Beta Club, whose mission is "to promote the ideals of academic achievement, character, service, and leadership among elementary and secondary school students."

Students entering 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade are eligible for an invitation into the St Mary's Beta Club based on their academic achievement from the prior year. Rising students in 4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade must have achieved a 3.7 cumulative GPA for the prior school year, and rising students in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade must have achieved a 3.6 cumulative GPA for the prior school year. Students will not be eligible to participate if they receive more than 1 demerit or detention in a given school year or if they violate any of the four key pillars of Beta outlined in the Mission Statement. Students are

required to attend and be attentive at the monthly Beta Club meetings and are only permitted to miss 1 meeting in a given school year (not including excused absences due to illness).

Students who have joined Beta Club whose GPA then drops below the necessary threshold for participation will be given a warning and a single probationary marking period to improve their GPA. If their GPA does not meet the threshold, they will no longer be permitted to participate. If students improve their grades in the future, they are eligible to resume participation at the Beta Club advisor's discretion.

### BIRTHDAYS

It is acceptable to send in small treats to celebrate a student's birthday. The teacher should be notified at least the day before. We strive to minimize the presence of nuts on campus: please do not send in treats that contain peanuts or tree nuts (walnuts, cashews, almonds, pistachios, hazelnuts, etc.). Please see the **Health Policy and Procedure** section for more information.

Distribution of invitations on the school grounds for out-of-school parties is prohibited unless the entire class (or entire gender) is invited. Parents/guardians are requested not to send flowers or balloons to school on their child's birthday.

Students may dress out of uniform on their birthday, except on mass days. If a birthday falls on a mass day, on the weekend, or during the summer months, students may pick another day of their choosing to dress out of uniform to celebrate their birthday. If a student's birthday is celebrated during the fall and spring when uniform shorts are allowed, the student may wear **knee-length shorts** on the day of the celebration. See **Dress Code/Guidelines for Non-Uniform Days**.

Parents are invited to come to school during their child's lunch period to have lunch with them on the child's birthday (or the day when the birthday will be celebrated), but the school requests that parents do not bring or drop off lunch (fast food, take-out, etc.) or utilize services like DoorDash for their child at any other time during the school year outside of this birthday celebration.

### BOOKS

Books are rented for the current school year. Each student is responsible for keeping his books in good order and for having a cover on all hardcover textbooks belonging to the school. Any books lost or damaged by a student must be paid for before the school provides a new book.

### BOOKBAGS / BACKPACKS

Students are encouraged to have bookbags/backpacks, even in K3 and K4. Students in K5 and above should get full-sized bookbags (NOT kid-sized or miniature). Please no rolling / wheeled bookbags.

### BUCKLEY AMENDMENT

Saint Mary's Catholic School adheres to the Buckley Amendment (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act) in regard to student records and the rights of non-custodial parents.

### BUILDINGS

Students are expected to take pride in the physical setup of the school. It is our intention to keep the school buildings and grounds neat and clean. Students are reminded not to mark or deface any school property. Damage to any school property must be compensated.

### CALENDAR

The school calendar is set up with Diocesan guidelines and approval. Only in rare instances will changes be made. If changes are necessary, you will be notified in the periodic newsletter, through a special parent memo, or via electronic communication. The school calendar for the current school year can be found on the school website.

### CELL PHONES & SOCIAL MEDIA

St Mary's Catholic School's official recommendation to parents in ALL grade levels is that **NO student should own or be in possession of a personal smartphone or other internet-capable smart device, and NO student should have profiles on or access to any social media platform**, including Instagram, SnapChat, TikTok, Facebook, X/Twitter, etc. St Mary's Catholic School takes no responsibility for the abuse of such devices or platforms outside of school hours and off of school property since the use of these devices/platforms is at the discretion of the parents and is in direct opposition to St Mary's recommendation against them.

We encourage school parents to work together to delay cell phone and social media use among their children for as long as possible. For further information, please see "Wait Until 8<sup>th</sup>" (<https://www.waituntil8th.org>).

### **CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

A change of address, telephone number, and email address and/or parish affiliation must be promptly reported to the school office and updated directly by the parents/guardians within Family Portal using the “Family Demographic Form” under the Web Form menu.

### **CLOSED CAMPUS**

Between the time a student arrives in the morning and departs at the end of the school day, he/she is to remain on the school campus, unless specifically given permission by the Principal to leave.

### **CONDUCT IN PUBLIC PLACES**

The people of the Greenville area look to Saint Mary's Catholic School students to conduct themselves in public places as an indicator of the education they are receiving at Saint Mary's Catholic School. Therefore, it is their duty to conduct themselves in an appropriate and well-behaved manner at all times. When worn off-campus, the school uniform should be worn properly and in its entirety.

### **CRUTCHES / MEDICAL DEVICES**

If a student suffers a severe injury that requires crutches or any other medical device, the school must receive explicit communication from a doctor's office verifying this need. Parents may not send students to school with crutches, walkers, wrist guards, or any other medical device without a note from a doctor. Parents should be mindful that Sacred Heart Hall is the only school building with an elevator, and students with limited mobility may, at the school's discretion, be restricted from participating in recess, PE, or walking across campus to the cafeteria or other buildings.

### **CUSTODIAL AGREEMENTS**

The school must have on file full, complete copies of any custodial agreements in the case of divorced or separated parents, especially if it pertains to the child immediately prior to, during, or after school hours. The school will follow the custodial agreement to the letter when determining student dismissal from school. The school follows the Buckley Amendment in reference to school records. Every parent/guardian has the right to view their child's school records unless there is a court order to the contrary.

## DISCIPLINE

One of the most important lessons education should teach is discipline. It is the training that develops self-control, character, orderliness, and efficiency. It is the key to good conduct and proper consideration for other people. Therefore, school authorities with action appropriate to the situation will handle any infraction, which would result in a breakdown of this atmosphere. All students are governed by the same regulations and penalties.

The school reserves the right to discipline students for conduct, whether inside the school, outside the school/program, online, etc., which is detrimental to the learning environment or to the reputation of the school. Students of Saint Mary's Catholic School are to have respect and courtesy for all persons and for all property.

When there is an instance of inappropriate student behavior, staff members may only discuss resulting disciplinary consequences with the parents of the individual student receiving the consequence and may not share disciplinary information with the parents of any other student regardless of that student's role in the underlying event.

When addressing inappropriate student behavior, the school disciplinarian will often instruct the offending student to notify their parents of their behavior first to build moral character and instill a sense of personal responsibility *before* the disciplinarian reaches out to discuss the incident with parents. A lack of immediate communication by our disciplinarian does *not* indicate that a discipline issue brought to our attention is not being investigated and addressed.

### Discipline Terminology

A Demerit System is a system of rules and regulations that will be enforced by a system of guidelines administered by a Disciplinarian.

A Disciplinarian is the person responsible for administering and interpreting the Demerit System.

A Demerit is a mark against a student's conduct record. Demerits are cumulative during the school year.

A Detention is the punishment that accompanies a deed of misconduct and/or demerits. Detention will be held on Wednesdays, from either 7:00AM until 8:00AM or from 3:00PM until 4:00PM, depending on the availability of the supervising teacher. Detention is for those receiving demerits and/or assigned to detention by the Disciplinarian. Students are to report to detention on time; tardiness may require the student to serve additional detentions. **Detention takes priority over any other commitment.** If a student is unable to attend an assigned detention because of extenuating circumstances, the parents must contact the Disciplinarian prior to the detention to be served and the detention will be rescheduled.

Suspension is the removal of a student for a specific time period from Saint Mary's Catholic School. If a student fails to correct his/her behavior following suspension, he/she may be requested to withdraw.

Probation is a trial period in order to correct inappropriate behaviors or academic deficiencies.

Expulsion is the permanent removal of a student from Saint Mary's Catholic School.

An infraction is the failure to observe the rules of Saint Mary's Catholic School. For every infraction, there will be a consequence. These consequences are at the discretion of the Principal and may consist of detention and/or demerits, suspension, expulsion, notification of proper authorities, or legal action.

### Discipline - General Rules of Conduct

#### Halls and Stairs

In the halls and stairways, students are to walk in single lines, on the right side, quietly during the school day. Loud talking, shouting, pushing or shoving is entirely out of order. Students are not to be in the halls during class time without permission and are never to enter a classroom unless supervised by a teacher. Students may be sent to the restroom individually or in small groups. Students are not to do anything that interferes with the safety or learning of others.

#### School Grounds

- 1) At the sound of the bell, students are to stop whatever they are doing, and then walk quietly to their line.
- 2) Students are not to play during the morning drop-off (7:20AM-8:00AM) and the afternoon pickup (3:00PM-3:30PM).
- 3) Students are to stay within walkways.
- 4) Students are to put all trash in the trashcans.
- 5) Students are not allowed in front of the school.
- 6) No student is to leave the schoolyard without expressed permission.
- 7) Fighting, pushing, and shoving are not permitted.
- 8) When a whistle blows, everyone must STOP immediately.
- 9) When entering or leaving Mercy Hall, students (all grades) should be silent so as to avoid disturbing other classes.
- 10) ***No student may ever be alone outside.*** 5th -8th Grade students may be outside with a "buddy" or with the class; K3-4<sup>th</sup> Grade students must have an adult with them.

#### Morning Arrival:

- 1) Students (K5-5<sup>th</sup>) will line up in number order and remain in line in Gallivan Hall. Middle school students will arrive and find a seat in the cafeteria in Pazdan Hall.

- 2) Silence in Gallivan Hall will be maintained after 7:45am. Students K5-5 should read or study quietly until 8:00am. Middle school students can continue to converse softly in Pazdan Hall until 8:00am.
- 3) No toys, cards, games, etc.

Lunch:

- 1) Stay seated except to throw trash away or use the restroom (K4-2<sup>nd</sup> ask permission to use the restroom).
- 2) Use inside voices (each teacher monitors his/her homeroom).
- 3) K4-5<sup>th</sup>: Silence is maintained as grades are dismissed by table. (K5, 1st and 2nd place lunch boxes by GH and begin recess; K4 walk to SHH Playground with lunch boxes for recess, 3-5 put lunch boxes by GH and pray by GH after recess)
- 4) Grades 6-8 wipe tables after lunch and pray in Grace Grotto after recess.

Outside Recess:

- 1) Students are to stay away from Church buildings, sidewalks to the Church, school steps, cars and designated parking areas, from the Church grass, and out on the street during recess. They should always be in view of the teacher on duty in the schoolyard.
- 2) All teachers are to be outside before the bell rings to line up and bring in their class. Students are reminded to walk quietly (not run) to lines, into and out of buildings, etc.
- 3) Students must get permission from recess personnel before going inside buildings to restrooms, etc.
- 4) Swings are for swinging straight only. No pulling on legs, no locking of legs or hands, and no more than one person on a swing at a time.
- 5) Students should not use the slides or monkey bars if they are still wet following rainfall.
- 6) At all times, all students must stop immediately when a whistle blows or the bell rings.
- 7) No one is allowed on top of cross bars. Only one person sits on the slide at a time.
- 8) Equipment is to be used for play and not for abusing others.
- 9) No one is allowed in the Gym or School building during recess without permission.
- 10) Swings and courts must be shared equally among all grades at all times.
- 11) K4-5<sup>th</sup>: when the whistle blows, students go down on one knee and wait for instructions.
- 12) At the end of recess, K4-5<sup>th</sup> students line up in number order, pray, and enter the building in silence. At the end of Grades 6-8 recess, students report to Grace Grotto for prayers.

Outside Dismissal:

- 1) K4-5<sup>th</sup> leave the building quietly, single-file, in number order and form two lines on the school yard, facing the car line. Grades 6-8 report to their area of the schoolyard.
- 2) No toys, cards, etc.
- 3) Listen for names to be called.

### Indoor Dismissal (Inclement Weather):

- 1) K3 & K4 wait in the Gallivan Hall entrance area.
- 2) K5 sits silently in the hallway outside the computer room.
- 3) 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders sit silently at desks in their classrooms (teachers at doors).
- 4) 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders sit silently on stairs and in hallway outside the office.
- 5) 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders sit quietly in Pazdan Hall.
- 6) Listen for names to be called.

### Specials & Foreign Language:

- 1) Middle school students walking between buildings for class are expected to arrive on time and prepared for class (this includes completing any restroom or water breaks before class begins)
- 2) Middle school students walking between buildings for class are expected to walk quietly and not disrupt students in other grade levels.
- 3) Individual students will not be permitted to return to their classroom without special arrangements.
- 4) Any disciplinary issues will be handled in the classroom where they occur.

### Distance Learning:

- 1) If inclement weather or other emergency necessitates the school enact our Distance Learning Plan for extended online instruction (via Zoom, Teams, Google Classroom, etc.), students are expected to behave appropriately in accordance with the school discipline policy: students should be attentive, should participate, should not be a distraction to their peers, and should be respectful to others.
- 2) Participation in online learning is a requirement: either through live attendance or by watching recorded lessons and by completing and handing in all assigned work on time.
- 3) During Distance Learning, students are not required to wear their uniforms, but must adhere to the rules for a Casual Dress Day
- 4) Students must be mindful of the rules and restrictions listed in the Technology Acceptable Use Policy

### Discipline-Demerits

The number of demerits for each offense is at the discretion of the school's Administration and Disciplinarian. The number of demerits for a violation may vary from the schedule listed below because of mitigating or aggravating circumstances and may include suspension. The principal has sole final discretion as to the consequences applied after a disciplinary incident. A partial listing of common violations and estimated demerits can be found below:

An infraction of the following rules will ordinarily carry one (1) demerit:

1. Improper uniform without permission (including rolling of skirts or shorts)
2. Chewing gum (forbidden at all times).
3. Eating in class without permission.
4. Throwing objects without permission.
5. Hitting/shoving/scratching another student (not to be confused with fighting).
6. Excessive talking in class.
7. Playing on jungle gym and/or off-limit areas (i.e., in bathrooms).
8. Running/pushing in school hallways and stairs.
9. Disregarding rules of traffic.
10. Creating classroom or hallway disturbance (excessive noise).
11. Primary-Elementary grade anti-bullying policy: documented third offense of bullying behavior, a conference with the student, and a phone call to the parent.
12. Failure to inform parent/guardian of a prior disciplinary infraction.

An infraction of the following rules will ordinarily carry three (3) demerits:

1. Possession of obscene literature.
2. Missing detention.
3. Using or writing profane, obscene, indecent, immoral, libelous, or offensive language or imagery, including racial slurs and/or gestures and including inside jokes or internet memes that might carry more offensive connotations than the student might realize or intend.
4. Destroying or defacing school property.
5. Being put out of class by a teacher. (Student must report to the school office)
6. Defacing school and/or other students' property (i.e., writing on desks and minor graffiti). Damaging another student's uniform could result in a family being charged for a replacement via FACTS.
7. Failure to report to any individual teacher when requested to do so.
8. Use of cell phone (voice and/or text transmissions) without teacher permission.
9. Improper use of school iPads, Chromebooks, MacBook Neos, or iMacs in violation of the Technology Acceptable Use Policy
10. Rudeness/disobedience to a teacher.
11. Primary-Elementary grade anti-bullying policy: documented fourth offense of bullying behavior, a conference with the student, and a phone call to parent.
12. Elementary-Middle School grade anti-bullying policy: documented first offense of bullying behavior and a phone call to the parent.

An infraction of the following rules will ordinarily carry five to ten (5-10) demerits and may require the student to be sent home immediately while the situation is investigated and addressed:

1. Possession of cigarettes, lighted or unlighted, or other tobacco products on their person.
2. Fighting, major disturbances.
3. Leaving the school grounds without permission.
4. Truancy: Any student guilty of cutting class or school.
5. Cheating: All cheating offenses, including plagiarism or the use of AI to complete work. Cheating may also result in grades being marked 0.
6. Stealing.
7. Lying: Includes forgery, etc.
8. Sexual harassment (verbal).
9. Elementary-Middle School grade anti-bullying policy: documented second offense of bullying behavior and a parent conference.

The following are considered serious infractions and will be dealt with on an individual basis by the Administration and Pastor. Demerits will be given for these offenses and the student will be eligible for suspension or expulsion:

1. Any incident of indecent or sexual touching or exposure OR any knowingly false accusations against another student about such behavior.
2. Possession, distribution, or conversations about pornography or sexually explicit material.
3. Possession, selling or consumption of drugs, marijuana, or alcoholic beverages at any time on school property or at any school-sponsored activity.
4. Coming to school intoxicated from alcoholic beverages, beer, marijuana, or other drugs.
5. Intimidation or threats of physical violence against classmates.
6. Threats, even made as jokes, involving school shootings or gun violence towards St Mary's or classmates.
7. Hitting/striking a teacher.
8. Vandalism to a teacher's property.
9. Disrespect to a teacher and/or teacher's property by word, gesture, or action; Insubordination; Obscene or profane language and/or gestures to a teacher.
10. Possession of any kind of knife or illegal weapon on school grounds or at any school-sponsored activity.
11. Accumulation of 25 demerits.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive. Any activity that causes disorder is unacceptable. Whenever a student becomes a source of disorder, he interferes with the general good of the school. If, in the judgment of the Administration, a student is a constant source of disorder, he will be asked to leave school.

### Discipline-Penalties

One (1) Demerit =	One detention.
Ten (10) Demerits =	Letter from the Administration sent to Parents. A conference with parents is requested.
Fifteen (15) Demerits =	Letter from the Administration sent to Parents. A second conference with parents is requested.
Twenty (20) Demerits =	The Pastor is officially informed; a conference with the Parents and School Administration is held; possible suspension.
Twenty-five (25) Demerits =	A conference with the Pastor, Parents, and Administration is held; Possible expulsion.

A student accused of serious wrongdoing can be placed on home study until the matter is resolved.

A student that has been expelled from Saint Mary's School may not attend after-hours events, such as Trunk or Treat or Spring Fling, even if their siblings remain enrolled at Saint Mary's

### Bullying Behavior Policy

Saint Mary's Catholic School promotes the following student rights as the basis of the anti-bullying program. Each student at Saint Mary's Catholic School has the right to:

1. Learn in a safe, Christian environment where everyone is a friend.
2. Grow and learn without encountering harassment about race, gender, religion, or ethnic background.
3. Be free of harassment about appearance, dress, learning style, interests, or behaviors.
4. Receive the help of caring adults if any of the above rights are violated.

The definition of bullying is: *use of superior strength or influence to intimidate (someone), typically to force him or her to do what one wants; the behavior is targeted and done intentionally and consistently over an extended period of time.*

Saint Mary's Catholic School defines bullying behaviors as described by victim or observed by faculty/staff:

- Verbal bullying – constant teasing, insulting or threatening.
- Sexual harassment – making unwanted sexual advances, gestures, or remarks.
- Physical bullying – pushing, hitting, kicking, choking, scratching, or poking.
- Social bullying – spread rumors or intentionally exclude people out of groups or activities when they want to be included: ostracizing groups or individuals.
- Cyber-bullying – using the Internet, cell phone, or any form of digital communication to threaten, harass or embarrass groups or individuals at school or anytime, and can also include intentionally excluding classmates or gossiping about classmates using group chat services or social media or by abusing photography apps such as SnapChat.

Students are instructed to do the following if bullying behaviors are seen or heard. Students:

- Do not laugh at or join in the teasing or gossip; they need to show their displeasure.
- Find others who do not support bullying observed and together tell the students who are displaying bullying behaviors to stop, and report to the teacher/staff/adult.
- Help the person being bullied by talking to the person in a kind manner and asking if they can do anything for them.
- Get help from an adult.
- Any student who serves as a willful bystander to bullying behavior and intentionally avoids reporting the bullying behavior to a teacher or an adult may receive a 1 demerit punishment for their tacit approval of the inappropriate behavior and for failure to intervene on behalf of a classmate.

Students are instructed to do the following if bullying behaviors are done to them. Students:

- Tell the person to stop in a calm, confident manner and then walk away.
- Stay calm and not show feelings of being upset until they are in a safe place.
- Talk to a trusted adult (parent, teacher or counselor) about the bullying behaviors.
- Stay with friends and do not be alone with a person who exhibits bullying behaviors towards them.

### Disciplinary Action Policy

All allegations of bullying will be investigated by the Principal and the Disciplinarian. All reports of bullying will remain confidential to ensure all students the freedom to come forward to report incidents. The manner in which an allegation is investigated depends on the circumstances of the infraction, but in a broad general sense investigations include: (1) interviewing adult/teacher/aide/faculty/staff witnesses, (2) interviewing student witnesses, (3) interviewing the accused / suspected student(s), (4) reviewing physical material if present (notes, pictures, drawings, physical damage, injuries, etc.), (5) reviewing security camera footage if available (most usually for outdoor/recess infractions), among other steps.

After the fifth non-physical offense for K3 - 4 grades and third non-physical offense for 5<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grade, the student will be put on a 1-day out-of-school suspension. Physical bullying will result in an immediate 1-day out-of-school suspension, even for a first offense. Further offenses result in an extended out-of-school suspension, mandatory counseling, and possible expulsion from school.

During all school suspensions, students will receive a "0" for all missed work, projects or tests/quizzes. Students are responsible for completing all missed content material while under suspension.

The Principal or Disciplinarian will notify the parents before the student is suspended or expelled.

This policy is based on the principles of fairness, common sense, and professional discretion.

## DISMISSAL – CAR LINE PROCEDURES

Parents should be mindful of the following procedures when arriving on campus for afternoon dismissal car line:

- **Please keep your name tag in your front window, clearly visible, until your child(ren) are physically in your car.** This is the most important item to ensure car line moves quickly and efficiently.
- **Remember to approach from Butler Avenue** whether you are doing the elementary car line or the middle school car line. Please see the campus map at the end of this handbook for more information and a helpful visual.
- **Always pull ALL the way up as far as possible.** Children are instructed to walk as far forward as possible before getting into their vehicle.
- **Arrive at 3:05 or even 3:10 to pick up your children if you want to avoid the traffic.** The more parents that "spread out" their arrival time, the smaller the traffic jam that overflows onto neighboring streets.

## DISMISSAL - SUPERVISION

Adult supervision is provided for students immediately after school during dismissal (from 3:00pm until around 3:15pm). Any students not picked up by the time the carpool line is cleared and dismissal concludes will be sent to the Extended Day Program (EDP/Late Stay). Parents will be charged accordingly. Students are to remain in the designated area until you or someone authorized by you picks him/her up. Students are not permitted to wander through the school buildings or leave the school property. Student athletes are permitted to walk from Pazdan Hall to the gymnasium for after-school practices, but younger siblings must remain in the designated supervision areas outside Gallivan Hall and/or Pazdan Hall until a parent or guardian comes to retrieve them. Younger siblings may not cut across campus without parent or guardian supervision.

Parents may not leave children unsupervised or allow them to wander. For safety during Arrival and Dismissal, any parents with children must cross the car line only at the supervised crosswalk toward Pazdan Hall.

After school, students are permitted to play on the field or playground until 3:45 PM if they are supervised by a parent or an adult designated by the parent. Students are not permitted to climb on top of the enclosed slide or on any of the trees or campus landscaping. Students should not play in the church parking lot. The field and playground are to be cleared no later than 3:45 PM for Extended Day Program use.

Children must be under adult supervision at all times while on St Mary's campus and while attending St Mary's sports games/special events. The school does not accept the responsibility of supervising unaccompanied children at any school-related events and, if necessary, will call parents to pick up their child or children.

## DRESS CODE

### Uniform Requirements

All uniform items must be purchased through Lands' End: [www.landsend.com](http://www.landsend.com) . Go to School Uniforms section and find St Mary's School dress code. St Mary's preferred school number is 900155649.

### General Rules

1. All students are expected to dress and groom themselves neatly. Neatness and cleanliness in personal grooming is understood to be basic.
2. Students are not allowed to wear hats in the buildings during school time.
3. "Fad" haircuts for both boys and girls are not permitted. Colored, dyed, bleached, or highlighted hair is not permitted, not even the tips. Tops of eyebrows and ears should be visible. No shaved designs or patterns in eyebrows. For boys, hair length should be consistent on both the sides and top of the head. Hair is not permitted to touch the collar.
4. Boys - no facial hair is allowed. Earrings are not permitted.
5. No permanent tattoos OR temporary (henna) tattoos are permitted.
6. Girls are not permitted to wear make-up, including colored nail polish, unless permission is given by the Administration for special occasions.
7. Girls with pierced ears may wear only small, plain gold/silver, pearl, diamond studs in one hole per ear.
8. Non-Smart digital or analogue watches are permitted (1st grade and up). Religious medals must be worn inside the shirt. Necklaces and bracelets, rings or pins are not permitted. Any item worn to excess is not permitted.
9. Smartwatches, Fitbits, or other wearable internet-connected devices are not permitted.
10. Uniform jumpers and skirts are to touch the TOP of the knee throughout the entire school year. Girls **must** wear solid navy, white, or black colored shorts, tights, or leggings under their jumpers and skirts.
11. All shirts must be tucked in. No oversized shirts permitted.
12. Belts **must** be worn with uniform slacks and uniform shorts (exception-K3 through K5).
13. Parents may use iron-on letters for the purpose of identification on the inside of clothing.
14. Athletic shoes/sneakers or dress shoes should be sturdy and comfortable. The color is to be **navy blue, black, brown, gray or white** or any combination of these colors with no brightly or neon-colored markings/shoelaces, charms or lights. Open-toe or open-back shoes (clogs or heels) are not allowed on non-uniform dress days. High-tops and boots are only permitted on casual dress days.
15. Only St Mary's Catholic School regulation outerwear is to be worn at school. During cold weather, jackets are permitted on the playground at recess. No oversized outerwear. An SMS jacket is available through Lands' End but is not required for any student.
16. Uniform shorts may be worn from the first day of school up to the end of the first nine weeks and then again beginning on the first day of the fourth nine weeks.
17. Accessories: Hair bows/ribbons, hairbands, barrettes, and clips worn by girls should be simple and of uniform colors (plaid, navy blue, white, or yellow). No monograms. Hairbands are not to exceed 1 ½" in width. Holiday bows/pins will be permitted on designated days only.
18. All uniform pants and shorts must include the small fleur-de-lis embroidery above the back pocket available via Lands' End. All uniform shirts and outerwear must include the school logo via Lands' End. Lands' End does provide custom fit orders for families that need them.

### GIRLS K3 through Grade 5

- Plaid jumper\*
  - Solid navy-blue dress slacks with the fleur-de-lis embroidery (*See Rule 18 above*)
  - Solid navy-blue shorts (These may be worn during the 1st and 4th quarters. Must be knee-length throughout the school year. Not permitted on Mass days or other formal days.) Must include the fleur-de-lis embroidery. (*See Rule 18 above*)
  - Solid black, brown, or navy dress belt. (exception: K3 through K5)
  - Solid white knit shirt with school logo
  - Solid navy, white, or black **crew** or **knee** socks (no emblems)
  - Solid navy, white, or black colored shorts, tights, or leggings under jumpers.
  - St Mary's ¾ zip fleece or cardigan with school logo
- \*K3 Parents: If your daughter cannot fit comfortably into the smallest size jumper, a navy blue dress with school logo is available in sizes 2T and 3T.

### GIRLS Grades 6 through 8:

- Plaid skirt
- Solid white knit shirt with school logo
- Solid navy, white, or black **crew** or **knee** socks (no emblems)
- Solid navy, white, or black colored shorts, tights, or leggings under skirts.
- St Mary's navy vest with school logo required for Mass days and other formal days.
- St Mary's ¾ zip fleece or cardigan with school logo

### BOYS K3 through Grade 5:

- Solid navy-blue dress slacks with the fleur-de-lis embroidery (*See Rule 18 above*)
- Solid navy-blue shorts (These may be worn during the 1st and 4th quarters. Must be knee-length throughout the school year. Not permitted on Mass days or other formal days.) Must include the fleur-de-lis embroidery (*See Rule 18 above*)
- Solid black, brown, or navy dress belt (exception-K3 through K5)
- Solid white knit shirt with school logo
- Solid navy, white, or black **crew** socks (no emblems)
- St Mary's ¾ zip fleece with school logo

### BOYS Grades 6 through 8:

- Solid navy-blue dress slacks with the fleur-de-lis embroidery (*See Rule 18 above*) (Required daily during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarters, and for all Mass days throughout the year)
- Solid navy-blue shorts (Permitted during the 1st and 4th quarters. Must be knee-length throughout the school year. Not permitted on Mass days or other formal days.) Must include the fleur-de-lis embroidery (*See Rule 18 above*)
- Solid white button-down shirt with school logo. (Short sleeves permitted except on Mass days. Long sleeves required during Mass days or other formal days.)
- Solid navy, white, or black **crew** socks (no emblems).
- Navy/gold striped tie from Lands' End required for Mass days and other formal days. (no clip-on ties permitted)
- Solid black, brown, or navy dress belt.
- St Mary's ¾ zip fleece with school logo

### Shoes BOYS and GIRLS K3 through Grade 8

Athletic shoes/sneakers or dress shoes should be sturdy and comfortable. The color is to be **navy blue, black, brown, gray, or white** or any combination of these colors only with no reflective or shiny markings/shoelaces, charms, glitter/sparkles, checkered patterns or animal prints, or lights. Open-toe or open-back shoes (clogs and heels) are not allowed on Dress-up Days and Casual Dress Days. High-tops and boots are only permitted on casual dress days.

### Physical Education Dress Code

Regulation uniforms are purchased through Lands' End and are worn during all gym classes (*Please be mindful to check the box to include the school logo when ordering online*). Students in Grades 5-8 wear the St Mary's gym uniforms; navy, white, or black socks; and sneakers. Both boys and girls should buy the boys' cut gym shorts listed on Lands' End. Uniforms must be kept neat and clean and marked with the owner's name. For reasons of health and cleanliness, students should NOT share uniforms with each other.

Girls in Grades K4-4 should wear their own navy, white, or black colored shorts under their jumpers on gym days. Boys in Grades K4-4 do not need to wear shorts for gym.

Failure to wear the regulation uniform in grades 5 through 8 will affect students' Physical Education grade and will be treated as an infraction of the discipline code.

### Guidelines for Non-Uniform Days

Periodically throughout the school year, students are permitted the privilege to wear clothes other than the official school uniforms. These days are traditionally called "Dress-up Days", "Casual Dress Days", or "Spirit Wear Days". **When permitted (see below), non-uniform shorts, skirts, and dresses cannot be any shorter than two inches above the knee. Failure to wear appropriate-length shorts, skirts, and dresses will necessitate a call to parents or for the student to wear a uniform for the day.**

On a "Dress-up Day", students may wear their "Sunday" dress clothes ~ i.e., boys may wear dress or casual slacks and girls may wear dresses, skirts, or slacks. Slacks made of jean or denim material with topstitching are not acceptable for a "Dress-up Day". Students must wear appropriate dress shoes for a dress-up day.

On a "Casual Dress Day", students may wear their "Sunday" dress clothes or more casual attire including jeans (not faded, tight, or torn). If a "Casual Dress Day" occurs during a 1st or 4th quarter non-Mass day when uniform shorts are permitted, students may wear shorts. No tight clothing is permitted, including tight shirts. Leggings, elastic denim, etc. may only be worn by girls beneath an appropriate-length skirt.

On a "Spirit Wear Day", students are encouraged to wear St Mary's spirit wear, club or team shirts, or school colors (navy, white, gold). Jeans are permitted (not faded, tight or torn). If a "Spirit Wear Day" occurs during a 1st or 4th quarter non-Mass day when uniform shorts are permitted, students may wear shorts.

Students at St Mary's Catholic School are not permitted to wear tank-tops, sleeveless shirts, or short-shorts. Midriffs must be covered. In addition, girls may not wear mini-skirts, sleeveless dresses, dresses with spaghetti straps, dresses with open backs, low-cut dresses, or sundresses. This rule applies for non-uniform days as well as school dances.

For safety's sake, students may not wear backless shoes (including clogs), sandals, and open-toe or high heel shoes. Students who wear inappropriate clothing may be required to call home for a change of clothes and/or lose the privilege of the next non-uniform day.

### EARLY DISMISSAL (FOR INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS)

All e-mails regarding attendance (sickness, early dismissals, absences, and alternate pick up arrangements) should be directed to [school.office@smcgvl.org](mailto:school.office@smcgvl.org). Please remember to include your child's first name, last name, and grade. All information may be sent via e-mail before 9:00AM; for changes later in the day, please call the school office: 864-271-3870.

Should a student become ill, or a parent/guardian finds it necessary to have a student leave school early, that adult **MUST** report to the school office and **SIGN THE STUDENT OUT**.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS ARE REQUIRED TO NOTIFY THE SCHOOL OFFICE WHENEVER SOMEONE OTHER THAN THEMSELVES OR THE "REGULAR" CARPOOL WILL BE PICKING UP THEIR CHILD. By listing any individual as an Emergency Contact in the FACTS system, parents give the school permission to contact those individuals **only if the school cannot reach the parents/legal guardians in a medical emergency for their child. Those individuals listed do not have automatic permission to pick up that student from school. Any person other than a parent or guardian will be required to present a picture ID prior to leaving school grounds with the child.**

Students, when leaving early, must report to the school office to be signed out by that adult. In addition, if the parents have not communicated the early dismissal to the school office, students will need to wait until the end of class before being dismissed.

Students leaving school for a short period of time, i.e. doctor/dentist appointments, and returning to school on the same day before 2:30PM, **MUST** report to the school office with an adult to be checked back in before returning to class.

Please avoid scheduling appointments during school hours whenever possible. If an early dismissal is necessary, please do so before 2:30pm to avoid interfering with our normal end-of-day dismissal procedures. See **ATTENDANCE** above for more information.

### EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP TRUST FUND (ESTF)

The [Education Scholarship Trust Fund \(ESTF\)](#) is a state scholarship which can be awarded to South Carolina students in K5 through 12th grade from low to moderate income families. Saint Mary's is an approved ESTF service provider so scholarships can be used to pay for tuition. The scholarship amount is over \$7,600 per student and increases annually. Prior enrollment in a public school is not a requirement.

Saint Mary's encourages ALL families who are eligible to apply for the ESTF scholarship for EACH of their rising K5-8th grade students each school year even if you have never had a need to apply for financial aid or tuition assistance in the past. Families will not be permitted to apply for tuition

assistance from the school or parish unless they have first completed an application for the ESTF scholarship.

Any families who have been approved to receive an ESTF scholarship should notify the school administration immediately. The difference between what is received from ESTF and the annual tuition rate must be paid at the beginning of the tuition plan, if applicable. More information can be found in "Tuition and Fees" below.

## ELECTRONICS

*Students are governed by the Technology Acceptable Use Policy which can be found under "Computer Usage" earlier in this handbook. Additional information about the school's philosophy on cell phone and social media use can be found under "Cell Phones & Social Media" earlier in this handbook.*

Saint Mary's Catholic School desires to promote an environment that is conducive to instruction and learning. Wireless devices used by students to communicate with others inhibit the creation of such an environment and are disruptive to the learning process. The school also desires to protect students' personal privacy while on school property and at school events. The emergence of camera wireless device technology has created a new set of privacy and data protection challenges for school officials. Thus, the use of any type of photographic equipment by students other than those officially sanctioned by the administration (such as the official school yearbook camera, etc.) to tape images or sound recordings that are in violation of law or otherwise invade the privacy of other individuals is prohibited and will result in disciplinary action. Any exception to the prohibition of wireless devices requires the advance permission of the Principal. This prohibition shall be strictly construed in favor of protecting the privacy of all individuals. Under this policy, the term "wireless devices" includes, but is not limited to, cellular phones, camera phones, iPods or MP3 players, Fitbits, smart watches, beepers, pagers, and any other devices that are used as telecommunication devices or to transmit text messages, as well as any other wireless electronic telecommunication devices.

Saint Mary's Catholic School prohibits any student, unless authorized by the Principal, from using or operating any electronic telecommunication device, including radio paging service, mobile telephone service, intercom, or electro-mechanical paging system, in any school building, on the school grounds, or during an off-campus school event without permission. Any student using a "wireless device" while on school property on a normal school day or while off-campus during an official school event or activity without permission will have that device confiscated by the Principal or Disciplinarian and face disciplinary consequences. Wireless devices will only be returned to the parent/guardian. The school reserves the right to examine the contents of any wireless device found or confiscated in violation of this policy.

Cell phones specifically may only be turned on and utilized by students after school hours if there is a demonstrable need by the student and the student receives direct permission from a teacher or coach before turning on the device. This includes during after-school athletic practices and games.

This policy applies both on-campus and off-campus (including, but not limited to, sporting events, field trips, class trips, academic competitions, etc.).

### **EMERGENCY CONTACT**

In case of an all-school emergency or an unplanned event, parents/guardians will be contacted via the **FACTS Parent Alert System**. Parents/guardians will be called on mobile and/or home phone numbers. This telephone broadcast system will deliver an automated informational message from the Principal or Assistant Principal to both live-answer and answering machines. The FACTS Parent Alert information uses the contact phone numbers listed in a family's demographic information in Family Portal, so parents are reminded to please notify the front office of any changes to their contact info as soon as possible. Parents should review their demographic information in Family Portal annually to ensure everything is accurate.

### **EMERGENCY DRILLS**

Each teacher will instruct their class in the routine procedures to be followed during fire drills, tornado drills, and lockdown ("Code Red") drills. Fire, tornado, and lockdown drills are important safety procedures of the school. They are held regularly without notice to the students (although teachers are always informed of a drill beforehand). Each grade is assigned to a safe area and the rules are strictly enforced: no talking, no running, or getting out of line. Evacuation procedures are posted in all classrooms.

### **EMERGENCY INFORMATION FORMS**

All students **MUST** have Emergency Contacts listed in FACTS. These contacts can be updated by parents at any time by logging into Parent Portal and navigating to the Family Demographic Form.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES TO CONTACT FAMILIES**

- Parents will receive initial and/or other necessary crisis communication through the Emergency Broadcast System, FACTS Parent Alert.
- Parents will not telephone the school since phones will be needed to manage the situation.
- Parents will keep the areas around the school clear of vehicles so that emergency responders can effectively do their job.

Parents or authorized adults will retrieve their student(s) only after emergency responders determine that a safe student release is possible. Student sign-out forms will be utilized at this time.

## **EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING OR EARLY DISMISSAL DUE TO WEATHER**

Saint Mary's Catholic School does not follow Greenville County Schools regarding closing, opening late, or dismissing early during inclement weather.

The Pastor of Saint Mary's Catholic Church and School will decide on all alterations of our normal operating hours based on consultation with the Principal and consideration of local conditions and the local weather forecast. Once the Pastor has made a decision, notice will be sent to everyone in the Saint Mary's Catholic School community through our telephone messaging system, FACTS Parent Alert

It is essential that the school have accurate records of all family telephone numbers (home, work, and mobile). Notify the school immediately whenever any of these numbers change.

If school is closed, any adult and/or student school meetings/school functions scheduled for that day/night will be automatically cancelled and (possibly) rescheduled at a later date.

If inclement weather requires the school to conduct an unscheduled early dismissal, parents will be notified of the closing and the new dismissal time via the FACTS Parent Alert system. EDP and all after-school functions will be canceled along with the early dismissal. Parents who are unable to pick up their child(ren) at the early dismissal time should make arrangements for someone else to pick up their child(ren) and notify the front office of the situation immediately.

For the safety of our students, if severe inclement weather strikes during dismissal (i.e. severe thunderstorm, hail, etc.), the school may temporarily suspend dismissal to keep all students safely in-doors. Dismissal will resume once conditions are safe.

## EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING DUE TO ILLNESS

In cases of extreme, widespread illness (particularly during flu season), Saint Mary's Catholic School reserves the right to close the school for one or more days to minimize the spread of illness and to allow time for disinfection and deep cleaning of the facilities. Any changes to our calendar or schedule will be announced as far in advance as possible. The Pastor of Saint Mary's Catholic Church and School will decide on all alterations of our normal operating hours based on consultation with the Principal.

## EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM

Saint Mary's Catholic School offers an Extended Day Program (Late Stay) for K4 - 8<sup>th</sup> grade students until 6:00 PM on most school days. Days with no EDP are indicated on the school calendar and communicated via the weekly Quacker newsletter.

### Extended Day Program Guidelines and Policies:

- The Extended Day Program (Late Stay) will be in operation each school day from 3:00-6:00PM, or until the last registered child leaves the program for the day. The daily schedule includes snack and playtime, supervised homework time, and free time. (No homework time is scheduled on Fridays.)
- Extended Care will be provided on some scheduled early-dismissal days, except for those noted on the calendar.
- No Extended Care will be provided when school is closed or closes early due to inclement weather.
- Students attending the Program follow all School rules and Medication Policies (as stated in the School Handbook). Violations will be referred to the School Disciplinarian. Members of Saint Mary's Catholic School Faculty/Staff will supervise all activities.
- Children will be electronically clocked in as they enter the Extended Day Program. Students will be electronically clocked out once their parent arrives and signs them out. Children must be picked up by a parent or designated adult. If anyone other than a parent is picking up the child, the Director must be notified in advance and in writing.
- Students should bring books from home to read during free time. Toys, games and electronics from home are not allowed.
- The Extended Day Program closes promptly at 6:00PM, or when the last registered child leaves the program for the day. Late charges will be billed per family after 6:00PM.

- Sending a note to the school marked “Dismissal Late Stay Request” may make reservations for children not using the program on a regular basis. However, a required DSS Health Statement must be completed after the first occurrence. Hourly fees for non-registered EDP students will apply. In emergency situations, reservations may be made by calling the school office.
- Bills will be electronically issued on a weekly basis. All EDP fees (whether for registered students or drop-in students) will be done via our FACTS payment system. Parents will see their owed EDP fees in their billing statement next to tuition payments and any other school charges (field trip fees, athletic fees, etc.). A late fee of 5% of the amount due will accrue each month if payment is not received on time.
- An extended day is available for K3 students from 12:00PM to 3:00PM at a daily rate, but K3 students may not participate in EDP or stay until 6:00PM. Late fees will be billed to K3 families who are unable to pick their children up by 3:20PM.

Extended Day Program Financial Obligations are considered to be financial obligations to Saint Mary’s Catholic School. The School Handbook policy on **Tuition and Fees** is also in effect for the Extended Day Program at the end of a school year.

### FIELD TRIPS

Any student going on a class trip, to a club convention, or activity away from school **MUST** have an official school Field Trip/Activity Permission Form signed by a parent/guardian. A telephone call in lieu of the written, signed permission form is **NOT** acceptable. This form includes the name of the sponsoring group, the date of the trip, the mode of transportation, the departure time, and the expected time of return. The permission slip is to be returned to the teacher of the sponsoring group. Students are responsible for all work covered in classes other than the class sponsoring the field trip.

If a field trip requires any fees from parents, the amount due will be listed on the permission slip and will be posted to the family’s FACTS account after the permission slip has been signed and returned.

A teacher, in consultation with the school’s administration, has the prerogative to refuse permission to a student who has not demonstrated satisfactory classroom behavior and/or academic work in class.

In addition to the teacher, field trips must have adequate volunteer adult chaperones in order to help provide proper supervision to our students outside of the school environment. Field trips will be cancelled if there are an insufficient number of chaperones. All field trip volunteers must be screened through the Diocese of Charleston and complete the paperwork required by our Safe Environment Coordinator.

**Parents volunteering to drive students for a field trip are reminded that NO ADDITIONAL STOPS may be made while transporting students from the school to the field trip location and back again.**

## FOREIGN LANGUAGES (MIDDLE SCHOOL)

While students in grades K3 through 5<sup>th</sup> grade receive instruction in both Spanish and French once per week, rising 6<sup>th</sup> grade students (and any newly enrolled students in 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade) must make a selection of either Spanish OR French, which then becomes a core subject that students attend four or five times per week throughout middle school. This choice culminates with 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students receiving high school credit for Spanish I or French I upon graduating from St Mary's.

Parents of rising 6<sup>th</sup> grade students will receive an email in the spring semester of their child's 5<sup>th</sup> grade year asking them to indicate their preference between Spanish or French. Parents should be mindful of the following policies:

- Enrollment is limited due to the size of the foreign language classrooms and the number of desks that are present in each room. If more students request a language than the school can accommodate, then excess students will be required to enroll in the alternative language. The administration gets final say in any enrollment decision and cannot guarantee that all parents' language preferences can be honored.
- Students who speak either Spanish or French as their primary language at home are required to enroll in the other available foreign language.
- Students may not change their foreign language selection midway through their tenure in middle school.

## GYMS

Persons using the gymnasiums must have permission from the parish Athletic Director. For reasons of liability, students using the gyms must always have a supervising adult while in the gyms. No student may be in the gyms after school without adult supervision.

A note from a parent/guardian must be presented to the Physical Education teacher if a student cannot participate in a gym class.

## HEALTH POLICY AND PROCEDURES

There is a Health Room provided where minor first aid and minor maladies will be handled. Any illness or accident during school or on the school grounds should be reported to the school office immediately.

If your child becomes ill at school and is too sick to benefit from school or is contagious to other children, you will be called to come and take him/her home from school. Parents **should not** send a child to school if he/she has:

- 1) Fever in the past 24 hours.
- 2) Vomiting in the past 24 hours.
- 3) Diarrhea in the past 24 hours.
- 4) Pink eye, with white or yellow eye discharge.
- 5) Bad cold, with a very runny nose or bad cough, especially if it has kept your child awake at night.
- 6) Strep Throat (must have been taking an antibiotic for at least 24 hours before returning to school).
- 7) Impetigo (must have received 48 hours of effective antimicrobial treatment and no draining lesions).
- 8) Head Lice (must have parent note to school stating treatment has been done and nits have been removed and must pass an inspection by the school nurse).
- 9) COVID-19 with a positive COVID test.

If parents/guardians are going out of town, the school office must be informed in writing of the name and phone number of the person responsible for your children while you are away.

You must keep your child(ren)'s emergency information forms current should we need to contact you in case of sickness or emergency.

The school Health Room conducts vision and audiology screenings annually for recommended grade levels

Head lice/nits are a common condition during the school year. The health room nurse will conduct periodic screenings for head lice/nits as needed. If the school is notified of or identifies a student having lice, a note will be sent to the parent/ guardians with recommendations for treatment. Parents of the class will be sent a notification of exposure to lice to prevent the spread between students and the class of students will be screened at that time. Parents are expected to assume responsibility of checking their children's hair on a regular basis if they are notified of an active case in the classroom. Upon returning to school, parents must bring the student to the health room to be screened before they may return to class. Retreatment will likely need to be completed 7-10 days later to prevent any missed nits from hatching. It is the sole responsibility of the parent/guardian to properly treat and remove lice and nits in order to prevent the cycle of active lice from continuing.

COVID-19: The school encourages parents to follow the recommendations of their family doctors or pediatricians with regards to COVID-19. The school does not mandate any particular quarantine period, and students are able to return to school when symptoms improve as per the stipulations above or upon the recommendation of a medical professional that the student may return to school.

Peanut and tree nut allergies have become a common occurrence among our student population, so Saint Mary's Catholic School strives to minimize the presence of nuts on campus. The following policies are required:

1. When preparing items for the entire class (i.e. parties, bake sales, etc.), **peanut or tree nut ingredients are not permitted.** This is to ensure the safety of all students and teachers with such allergies who risk a reaction from the slightest exposure.
2. **Students in K3 through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade should not bring items for lunch or snack that include peanuts or tree nut ingredients.** Students in grades 3 through 8 are permitted to bring personal lunch or snack items that contain peanuts or tree nuts but sharing of lunch or snack items between classmates is strictly forbidden at all times in all grade levels.

We consider a food item to contain an allergen if it is listed in the ingredients or if the item's packaging states language such as it "may contain" the allergen. We do not consider a food item to be an allergen if the packaging states "made on shared equipment" or "processed in a facility that also processes" the allergen.

**Note:** Although Saint Mary's Catholic School strives to minimize the presence of nuts on campus and will make every effort to enforce this policy, **the school cannot guarantee a 100% nut-free environment and is not liable for the presence of these allergens on campus in violation of this policy.** Parents of students with severe peanut and tree nut allergies must still educate their child on best practices (i.e. no "trading" at lunch, read labels, and do not eat anything when they cannot identify the ingredients). EpiPens are stored in the school health room and students are permitted to carry them on their person (*see policy below*).

### MEDICATION POLICY

According to a Diocesan policy effective July 1, 2001, students may not receive any medication during school hours without the expressed written permission of the parent/guardian and the doctor or dentist. In order to further explain this process, a sample of the Office of Catholic Schools Diocese of Charleston Medication Authorization form is available in the files in Family Portal. Please complete one Medication Authorization Form for each medication that your doctor wishes your child to receive while at school. Saint Mary's Catholic School will not give your child any over-the-counter medications, i.e. aspirin/acetaminophen/ibuprofen, etc. without the signed Medication Permit Form. Please be specific when listing medication name/dosage/time to administer. Parents/Guardians must personally deliver the completed Medication Permit Form along with the medication (well-labeled in its original container or a current prescription bottle and enclosed in a re-sealable plastic bag) to the Health Room or school office. Parent signed permission is sufficient for giving lip balm or cough drops on an occasional basis. All medicines (prescriptions and over-the-counter) must be kept in the School Health Room.

Parents **MUST** inform the school if there is a change in their child's medication dosage or schedule if it could potentially affect classroom learning (such as ADHD medication).

Exceptions: Epi-Pen, Inhaler, and Insulin Pump. Students prescribed to use these items may, with the Doctor's signed permission, carry these items on their person during school hours, Late Stay, and school

events. The student must supply the Health Room with a back-up epi-pen and/or inhaler. The Diocesan Authorization Forms and the Allergy/Asthma Action Plan must be completed and kept in the School Health Room. Forms are available in Family Portal.

### HOME AND SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

In an effort to keep communication lines open and parents/guardians informed, three modes of home and school communication will be used:

- 1) Online: School forms, class grades, and other important topics of information will be posted online. Parents may access grades and forms through their Family Portal accounts. Every Friday the school emails parents our newsletter, The Weekly Quacker. The newsletter contains a link to the school Google calendar, which is available for viewing online or uploading to devices. The school website also includes detailed information for current parents, including links to the calendar and this handbook.
- 2) Parent Alert: In case of an all-school emergency or an unplanned event, parents/guardians will be contacted via the FACTS Parent Alert System. This broadcast system will deliver an automated informational message from the Principal or Vice Principal via email and text.
- 3) Classroom Communication: As our Student Information System, FACTS Family Portal is the primary method of communication with parents. Homework, quizzes, and tests for the week will be posted to Family Portal by teachers by Monday at 8am (although these are subject to change mid-week depending on how quickly students get through the material, and parents will be notified either via email or with a note in their child's homework planner when there are changes). Parents should check Family Portal first when inquiring about upcoming assignments, grades, class calendar events, or class documents. If the information is not posted to Family Portal, parents should then reach out to teachers directly. In addition, teachers of primary grades communicate information through daily student folders, weekly emailed newsletters, etc. Elementary and Middle School Teachers email parents periodic curriculum updates, etc. Due to the high amount of activity in the classroom and in the school office, parents should not expect staff to reply to email in less than 24 hours. In case of matters that require immediate attention (e.g. early dismissal requests), please call the school office.
- 4) Email Policy: Email is for parental use only. Teachers do not communicate with students via email. Teachers' voicemail extensions and email addresses are available in the Staff Directory in Family Portal.

Any information about rides home, after-school plans, absences, or early dismissals may be emailed to the school office (school.office@stmarysgvl.org) by 9:00 AM. Changes later in the day should be communicated by phone.

Due to the high amount of activity in the classroom and in the school office, parents should not expect teachers or staff to reply to email in less than 24 hours. In case of matters which require immediate attention, please call the school office.

In order to foster the positive parent-teacher relationship that most benefits your child(ren), please take care that messages are written with a tone of gratitude. Always presume that an email may be shared with other staff at the school.

Teachers may respond to an email with an email, a phone call, or a meeting, as they deem most helpful in regard to the subject matter. When emailing a teacher regarding concerns about your child, please include your phone number as well as times you are available for a meeting, should the teachers wish to discuss the concern by phone or in person.

To encourage personal responsibility and independence and to minimize disruptions during the school day, parents are asked to NOT bring items to the school after 8am that were forgotten by the student and accidentally left at home (books, homework, lunchboxes, etc.).

### **HUMAN SEXUALITY PROGRAM**

Saint Mary's Catholic School does not provide instruction or participate in any human sexuality program with students.

However, the school does include *Theology of the Body* as part of the Religion curriculum for students in grades 2 through 8 taught by one of the Dominican Sisters of St Cecilia assigned to Saint Mary's School. *Theology of the Body* is the name given to the series of short addresses Pope St. John Paul II gave from 1979-1984 discussing the *theology* of human sexuality. It covers a wide range of topics, including: why the human person is both body and soul, how we are made in the image and likeness of God, what it means to be truly happy and make a gift of yourself, and how to live an integrated, fulfilled life through the virtue of chastity, lived out in a particular vocation including the sacrament of matrimony.

In each grade level, the instructional material is provided in an authentically Catholic and age-appropriate manner.

Students approaching the end of their 8<sup>th</sup> grade year touch on more sensitive topics, including the gravity of sins such as premarital and extramarital sex, masturbation, pornography, abortion, and contraception. Instruction also includes the Catholic church's teachings on homosexuality and transgenderism in a way that is both sensitive and authentic to the truths about the human person as revealed by God.

## IMMUNIZATION CERTIFICATE

Each student at Saint Mary's Catholic School must have on file in the school office an official South Carolina Immunization Certificate as required by state law. New students have thirty calendar days in which to submit a certificate. By South Carolina Law, a student who does not have the proper certificate may not attend school. Saint Mary's Catholic School does not recognize any religious exemptions from immunizations.

## INSURANCE

School-Time Student Accident Insurance is mandatory for all students. This policy insures the student to and from school, during school, and while participating in school-sponsored programs. This insurance coverage is paid for by the annual tuition.

## LIBRARY

Saint Mary's Catholic School has a library with over 8,000 volumes. The library also has computers for student research. Students are permitted to go to the library during school hours provided the teacher gives them permission. The librarian instructs elementary students how to use the library and arranges for special library programs.

There are no membership dues for the use of the library. However, a fine is levied for books overdue. If a student loses or damages a library book, parents/guardians are responsible for damages and/or losses. See Tuition and Fees.

Saint Mary's strives to keep our school library collection both up-to-date and in compliance with the Literature policy below. In order to grow our school collection and promote a love of quality literature in our students, St Mary's hosts two book fairs annually: our fall book fair is hosted by [Ignatius Press](#) and our spring book fair is hosted by [i55](#).

## LITERATURE AND ARTS POLICY

In accordance with the mission of Saint Mary's Catholic School to "invite our students to follow the Lord Jesus Christ as faithful disciples and to prepare them for outstanding achievement in high school and later life," the school makes the following considerations when selecting literature, music, and artwork for study:

1. When selecting literature or art for classroom study, teachers make every effort to select works of profound value and worth, with the goal to develop the whole child in the Catholic faith and transmit Catholic culture and values.

2. Literature and art are not chosen solely because of their secular value or popularity, for the sole intent of providing entertainment or passing time, or out of mimicry of the curriculum decisions of the public school system.
3. Teachers strive to avoid literature, music, or art that:
  - Is contrary to truth and beauty
  - Leads to despair or a diminishment of faith
  - Includes shocking or profane content
  - Includes explicit discussion, presentation, or depiction of sexual content
  - Promotes or glorifies gender confusion or LGBT ideology
  - Contradicts or undermines Catholic teaching
4. All works, whether inherently Catholic or secular, are taught from a Catholic worldview, and any content, themes, character actions, or explicit or implicit moral judgments within the literature that do not align with Catholic teaching are identified and challenged in an academically honest and age-appropriate manner.
5. Teachers serve as a model of the faith for their students, and their approach to literature or art instruction reflects their position as Catholic role models with the goal to lead students to greater understanding in their faith.

Saint Mary's provides guidance for literature selections for teachers and for parents using the [St Mary's Suggested Reading Guide](#) (borrowed with gratitude from the St Rose Reads list curated by the Dominican Sisters of St Cecilia at [St Rose Academy](#) in Birmingham, AL).

### LOCKERS

Students in the Middle School Building are assigned individual lockers at the beginning of the school year. Students are to keep their lockers well organized. No food or beverage is to be kept in lockers.

**Lockers are the property of St Mary's Catholic School, not of the students. The Administration reserves the right to open and inspect all student lockers.**

### LOST AND FOUND

Lost articles and clothing are stored in the wooden Lost and Found bins located in the basement entrance of Gallivan Hall. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen possessions. Any items left in the Lost and Found over Christmas break or the summer will be sent to either the Ducks Dresser or to Goodwill.

## LUNCH

Students are to bring their lunch daily unless they have ordered “Special Lunch”. Both “Special Lunch” and milk must be pre-ordered biweekly through Family Portal. All lunch charges will be posted electronically through the family’s FACTS account.

Credit will not be issued for missed “Special Lunch” due to absence (i.e. illness) or for ordering on a day that a field trip had already been scheduled.

If we are unable to have a regularly scheduled “Special Lunch” due to the school closing because of inclement weather, the “Special Lunch” will be cancelled. If we have a delayed opening due to inclement weather, we will have the “Special Lunch” as scheduled.

Students who forgot their lunch will be given the option of getting the salad bar or a snack of crackers and an apple. A forgotten lunch charge will be placed in the cart of the student’s FACTS account and must be paid by the end of the year. Regarding unpaid expenses, see **Tuition and Fees**.

Parents are invited to come to school during their child’s lunch period to have lunch with them on the child’s birthday (or the day when the birthday will be celebrated), but the school requests that parents do not bring or drop off lunch (fast food, take-out, etc.) or utilize services like DoorDash for their child at any other time during the school year outside of this birthday celebration.

## MEDIA

On various occasions during the school year, newsworthy information and/or photographs about Saint Mary’s Catholic School and its students will be submitted to area media publications, such as *The Greenville News*, *The Greenville Journal*, or *The Catholic Miscellany*, as well as school publications, i.e., *The Weekly Quacker*, information brochures, school website, social media, etc. All enrolled students are automatically included in the Saint Mary’s Catholic School yearbook unless parents notify the Principal in writing to omit them. A permission form will be sent home on the first day of school.

## NAP TIME (K3, K4)

Students in K3 and K4 have a scheduled nap time each afternoon. Although students are not required to fall asleep, they are required to rest during nap time and must stay quiet and remain on their nap mats. Students who repeatedly cause disruption or prevent classmates from resting may be sent home from school or referred to the disciplinarian. For K3 students, a consistent inability to quietly rest may require the student to be picked up daily at 12:00pm.

## PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION

The Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) is a parent organization that serves to foster unity and support for families within the school. The members work closely with the Principal and faculty, serving as a channel for communication between home and school. This organization sponsors fundraising activities for the benefit of the school and for student field trips, provides volunteer services, and promotes the school to the general public. All parents/guardians are encouraged to participate in Parent-Teacher Organization projects. The PTO leadership can be reached at [pto@smcgvl.org](mailto:pto@smcgvl.org).

## PARTIES AND GIFT EXCHANGES

Distribution of birthday party invitations, St Valentine's Day cards/treats (K3 - 5<sup>th</sup> grade), or Christmas gifts are prohibited unless provided to the entire class or the entire gender within a class. We strive to minimize the presence of nuts on campus: please do not send in gifts or treats that contain peanuts or tree nuts (walnuts, cashews, almonds, pistachios, hazelnuts, etc.). Please see the **Health Policy and Procedure** section for more information on this policy.

Middle school students may not participate in St Valentine's Day gift or treat exchanges.

## PARKING POLICY

The following policies, established by the Pastor governing parking on the campus of Saint Mary's Catholic Church and School, are to be observed by all faculty, staff, and parents of students when school is in session:

- The limited area between the Church Office and Mercy Hall Elementary School Building accessible from Hampton Avenue is NOT a drop-off zone, even for short stops. It is to be used only for authorized staff parking. Unauthorized vehicles in that space will be towed.
- Short-term parking (less than 10 minutes) is available on Hampton Avenue immediately in front of Mercy Hall Elementary School Building. Please use the front door of Mercy Hall Elementary School Building that faces Hampton Avenue.
- Parents/guardians who need more than ten minutes should park in one of two places: the main parking lot on West Washington Street (next to the Church and Pazdan Hall Middle School Building) or the parking area between Sacred Heart Hall and Gallivan Hall.
- School faculty and staff are to park in the main parking lot on West Washington Street or the parking area between Sacred Heart Hall and Gallivan Hall.

- Members of the Church staff are to park in the spaces between the church office and the gymnasium.
- Drivers are requested not to begin forming the car line until 30 minutes before dismissal time. Cars should never be left unattended; drivers must remain with their cars. In the case of an emergency, the driveway lanes must be cleared of all cars/obstacles.

### PERSONAL PROPERTY

Students are personally responsible for their own books, clothing, and other personal belongings. The school does not accept responsibility in this regard. All textbooks and workbooks must be marked with student's name and grade.

### PHOTOGRAPHY

Saint Mary's Catholic School desires to protect students' personal privacy while on school property and at school events. The emergence of camera wireless device technology has created a new set of privacy and data protection challenges for school officials. Thus, the use of any type of photographic equipment by students other than those officially sanctioned by the administration (such as the official school yearbook camera, etc.) to take images or sound recordings that are in violation of law or otherwise invade the privacy of other individuals is prohibited and will result in disciplinary action as well as the confiscation of the device. The school reserves the right to examine the contents of any photography or recording device found or confiscated in violation of this policy.

Parents on campus for school events (chaperoning field trips, volunteering in the cafeteria, assisting with classroom parties, etc.) should only take photos of their own child(ren) and **should not share photos of other children on social media** without the express permission of the parents/guardians of the children present in the photos. The only exception to this policy is large group photos where it is impossible to single out a particular child (i.e. a photo of a basketball game, or of an entire class on stage during the Christmas Program, etc.), but every effort should be made to avoid publicly identifying other children in the photo on social media or the internet without permission from their parents/guardians. Parents are reminded that, during activities where they are chaperoning or volunteering, there is often a designated time and place for photography and parents should not be disruptive of the class activity or school event by taking photos incessantly or at an inappropriate time. Please consult with the classroom or supervising teacher before taking photos.

### POTTY/TOILET ACCIDENTS (K3/K4/K5)

Children are required to be fully potty trained before enrolling in St Mary's K3 or K4 program. If a child has three potty accidents during school hours that require intervention by the teacher or teaching aides, the school requires that the child remain at home until potty training is completed and future accidents are prevented. The duration of this break in attendance is left to the discretion of the parents, but continued potty accidents after this intervention could necessitate a child's unenrollment for the rest of the school year. Students in K5 (or older) with repeat potty accidents will be sent home early after each incident.

### PRAYER

Prayer is an integral part of the daily life of Saint Mary's Catholic School. Each day begins and ends with prayer. Participation in liturgical and para-liturgical celebrations is expected.

### QUITTING (CLUBS & ATHLETICS)

To be removed from a club or an athletic roster, students must meet with the club advisor or the team coach and the athletic director to discuss the situation. If a student decides to drop out of a club or team, for reasons other than poor academic performance and/or a disciplinary infraction, they may be ineligible to participate in other school clubs or the next team sport for that school year. There are no refunds of any club or athletic charges or fees if a student decides to drop out of an activity.

### REUNIFICATION SITE

In the event of an emergency evacuation of the campus, the designated reunification site for parents and students is Greenville Water located one block away at 407 W Broad St, Greenville, SC 29601. In the case of an evacuation, parents will be notified via the FACTS Parent Alert system as quickly as possible.

### RIGHT TO AMEND

Saint Mary's Catholic School reserves the right to amend this Handbook. Notice of amendments will be sent to Parents through email and/or posted revisions on Family Portal.

## SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL

The School Advisory Council acts as a consultative and advisory group to the Pastor and Principal in the development of Saint Mary's Catholic School, and as a liaison between the school and the parish communities.

## SCHOOL FUNCTIONS

School regulations are in effect for all school functions.

## SOCIALS

Middle School dances and other school events for students are regularly scheduled during the school year. A teacher, in consultation with the school's administration, has the prerogative to refuse attendance to a student who has not demonstrated satisfactory behavior during school or who is not adhering to the dress code for the dance or event. All student social activities sponsored by the school are properly chaperoned and end by 10:00pm.

## SCHOOL YEARBOOK PHOTOS

School Yearbook photos will be taken during the 1<sup>st</sup> marking period. **All students, except Eighth Graders, are required to dress in the school uniform.** Sixth and seventh grade students should wear their mass day uniforms including ties and vests. Eighth Grade students will be allowed to have a **Dress-Up Day**. These photos will be used for the school yearbook.

## TARDINESS / LATE ARRIVAL

Students who arrive to school after the 8am bell are considered tardy and **MUST** be checked in at the front office by a parent or guardian. Parents or guardians should **NOT** walk students directly to a classroom without checking in at the front office first. After the student has been signed in, parents of middle school students will need to escort their child across campus to Pazdan Hall. See **ATTENDANCE** above for more information.

## TELEPHONE

Students will be allowed to use the school phone only in emergency situations. Please support us in our efforts to develop a sense of responsibility in the students by having them make all travel/visiting arrangements outside of school time.

Students will **NOT** be called to the telephone except in an extreme emergency.

**Cell Phones:** If approved by a parent for use after school, students may keep cell phones in their backpacks; however, they must be turned off, and calls are not to be made during school hours OR during after school athletic practices or games. Calls may be made after school with the permission of a teacher or coach. Violators will be required to forfeit their cell phones and will be subject to disciplinary action. A parent may pick up confiscated cell phones from the Disciplinarian. Additional information about the school's philosophy on cell phone use can be found under "Cell Phones & Social Media" earlier in this handbook.

## TRAFFIC PLAN

Parents and guardians must follow the Traffic Plan designed for the safety of the students. Parents/guardians must follow the flow of the Traffic Plan and park in designated school parking lots when conducting school business. Individuals not following this plan may be putting our students' safety in jeopardy. For safety reasons, cell phone use is not permitted during drop-off and pick-up times. (See **Parking Policy**)

## TUITION and FEES

By default, all families are enrolled in the 10-month tuition payment plan each year. Under this default plan, drafts will occur automatically each month beginning on August 15<sup>th</sup> and ending on May 15<sup>th</sup>.

Families who wish to pay their entire tuition balance in full before the school year begins should notify the Director of Administration before the advertised deadline each year. One-time tuition drafts occur the first week of August, and families who utilize this option will receive a 2.5% discount on the tuition total.

Families who wish to pay their tuition via two payments before the start of the Fall and Spring semesters should notify the Director of Administration before the advertised deadline each year. Two-time tuition drafts occur the first week of August and the first week of January, and any family who utilizes this option will receive a 1% discount on their tuition total.

Tuition plans will be handled through the family's FACTS account. Enrollment in FACTS is mandatory for all families. Any tuition payment (including complete pre-payment for the year) can be paid ahead of time by either initiating a payment electronically on FACTS.

Payment after the indicated dates will result in late fees as described below.

### Late Payments and Fees

The late fee for all returned checks or unpaid bills will be 5% of the total owed, and this fee will accrue each month until the debt is paid. **Until all financial obligations are fulfilled, the school will release no records, report cards, transcripts, or diplomas, and returning students will not be considered reenrolled for the following school year. All delinquent accounts are reviewed regularly by the school administration. Graduating students will not be permitted to participate in class night, the 8<sup>th</sup> grade awards ceremony, or the graduation ceremony unless all financial obligations have been met. Families who repeatedly fail to meet their tuition deadlines will be unenrolled from St Mary's Catholic School at the pastor and principal's discretion.**

### Unenrollment

Any family who unenrolls their student before the end of the school year will receive a prorated refund of any paid tuition based on the number of days attended versus the number of days remaining in the payment period. Fees are nonrefundable.

### Tuition Rates

Saint Mary's Catholic School has a single tuition rate for all students. The school's tuition rate is updated annually and communicated to families and posted on the school's website.

Catholics who verify mass attendance St Mary's Church each Sunday (except for occasional trips away or serious illness) are eligible for a 25% discount on school tuition if and only if the following four conditions are fulfilled:

1. They must attend Mass at St Mary's Church each weekend either on Saturday afternoon or Sunday morning and demonstrate attendance by placing a stewardship envelope in the collection. This requirement cannot be fulfilled without placing a stewardship envelope in the collection because that is how we take attendance.
2. They must be registered and active members of the parish and receive regular communication from the church.
3. They must support the parish financially according to the standard stewardship guidelines with a minimum weekly gift of at least \$40. Any family unable to offer this minimum level of giving is welcome to meet with the pastor to request an adjustment for the duration of their extenuating circumstances.
4. Families who make donations by Electronic Fund Transfer must still attend Mass each week and verify attendance with the stewardship envelope. The discount is given for verified Mass attendance, not in exchange for support of the church.

This 25% discount is not automatic, and eligibility for the discount is reviewed every semester by the pastor. Any family which does not fulfill all these requirements will lose the verified Mass attendance discount and be required to pay full tuition.

### State or City Ordered School Closures

If school is closed due to weather or a public health concern, parents/guardians will still be responsible for payment of tuition. The education of each student will continue with virtual/remote/e-learning. Teachers will continue to plan standards-based lessons and evaluate student work. Report cards will be distributed at the end of each grading period. If a parent/guardian cannot make the regular tuition payment, the principal should be notified as soon as possible.

### Financial Aid

Direct financial aid is not available to those who are not members of the parish, but three types of financial aid are available to active parishioners of St. Mary's Church:

1. Active parishioners who cannot afford tuition even after the parishioner tuition discount is deducted are welcome to apply for financial aid, a process that begins with the completion of a financial aid questionnaire at [www.factsmgmt.com](http://www.factsmgmt.com). Applications for financial aid from active parishioners are open from mid-January through February, and the amount awarded to each applicant is determined by the recommendation of FACTS and the total funding available to the parish in each academic year. For families with divorced households, the school may require both parents to formally apply in order to be eligible for aid. Award decisions will be announced as soon as possible, usually by late March. All applicants requesting tuition assistance must first apply for the South Carolina Education Scholarship Trust Fund (ESTF). St Mary's School is not responsible for providing additional tuition assistance for families failing to apply or meet requirements for receiving funds from ESTF. For more information, see "Educational Scholarship Trust Fund" above. Please contact the Director of Admissions & Financial Aid for more information.

2. The school also maintains an emergency aid fund, which is used to assist families who experience a crisis during the school year. In the case of injury, illness, or job loss when there is no time to apply for financial aid as described above, please contact the principal to describe the situation. The award of funds is unique to each situation and depends upon the total funding available to the school in each academic year.

3. Finally, in addition to financial aid awarded after completion of a FACTS application, active parishioners with genuine financial need may qualify for a reduction in the minimum weekly offertory gift to the parish without losing the parishioner discount. Anyone in financial need who desires to request a reduction in their average gifts to the church while remaining eligible for the parishioner tuition rate must meet with the pastor of St. Mary's to review the need and agree to a plan for remaining

active in the parish. To arrange this meeting with the pastor, please call 864.679.4100 and ask for an appointment to discuss school enrollment. This may be done at any time during the school year.

### Donations for Financial Aid

The funds given in financial aid through the regular annual disbursement of aid and the emergency fund come from the general parish budget and from restricted gifts given for this purpose. Anyone who desires to make more funds available for the benefit of families in need is welcome to make a gift to the church or school for just this purpose. Such gifts are tax deductible and are received with gratitude. Please note that these donations cannot be accepted on behalf of an individual student because that would simply constitute paying the tuition of a specific student, and tuition payments are not tax deductible. Anyone who desires to pay tuition for a student other than one's own children is welcome to do so, but those funds would be accepted by the school simply as the payment of tuition.

### VACATIONS

Families should take vacations during regularly scheduled school breaks, i.e. summer, Christmas, etc. If students miss school days, it will be the student's responsibility to "catch up" as much as possible when he/she returns. Vacations that result in school absences after a student has already accrued 10 school absences will be marked UNEXCUSED and will result in a grade of 0 for any missed assignments or assessments. See ATTENDANCE above for more information.

### VISITORS

For the well-being and safety of our students, and to provide a learning environment free of unnecessary distractions, all visitors, parents included, are **required** to report to the school office in Mercy Hall Elementary School Building whenever present on the Saint Mary's Catholic School campus and must wear a bright yellow visitor pass at all times while on campus. Parents/guardians are welcome to visit the classrooms but should do so only after making an appointment with the teacher. We ask that parents do NOT visit campus during school-wide activities (such as Field Day) unless an explicit invitation is given by the principal and/or the classroom teacher.

In our ongoing effort to provide a safe environment for our children please be advised that any parent/guardian of a child enrolled at one of our schools who is listed on a sex offender registry is required to sign an agreement restricting that individual's access to our campus. A list of those sex offenders, known to the school, whose child is enrolled, may be reviewed at the school office during normal school hours.

To encourage personal responsibility and independence and to minimize disruptions during the school day, parents are asked to NOT bring items to the school after 8am that were forgotten by the student and accidentally left at home (books, homework, lunchboxes, etc.).

## VOLUNTEERS

Parents/guardians are encouraged to volunteer their services to the school as a means of being involved in the educational process. Opportunities for service include homeroom parents, Special Lunch helpers, library assistants, field trip chaperones, and other areas of service as the need arises. To comply with Diocesan policy, all volunteers are required to complete a Safe Environment Training Session ("[Virtus](#)") and submit to Diocesan background screening as part of Saint Mary's Safe Environment Program. This program adheres to the mandates of the Diocesan Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.

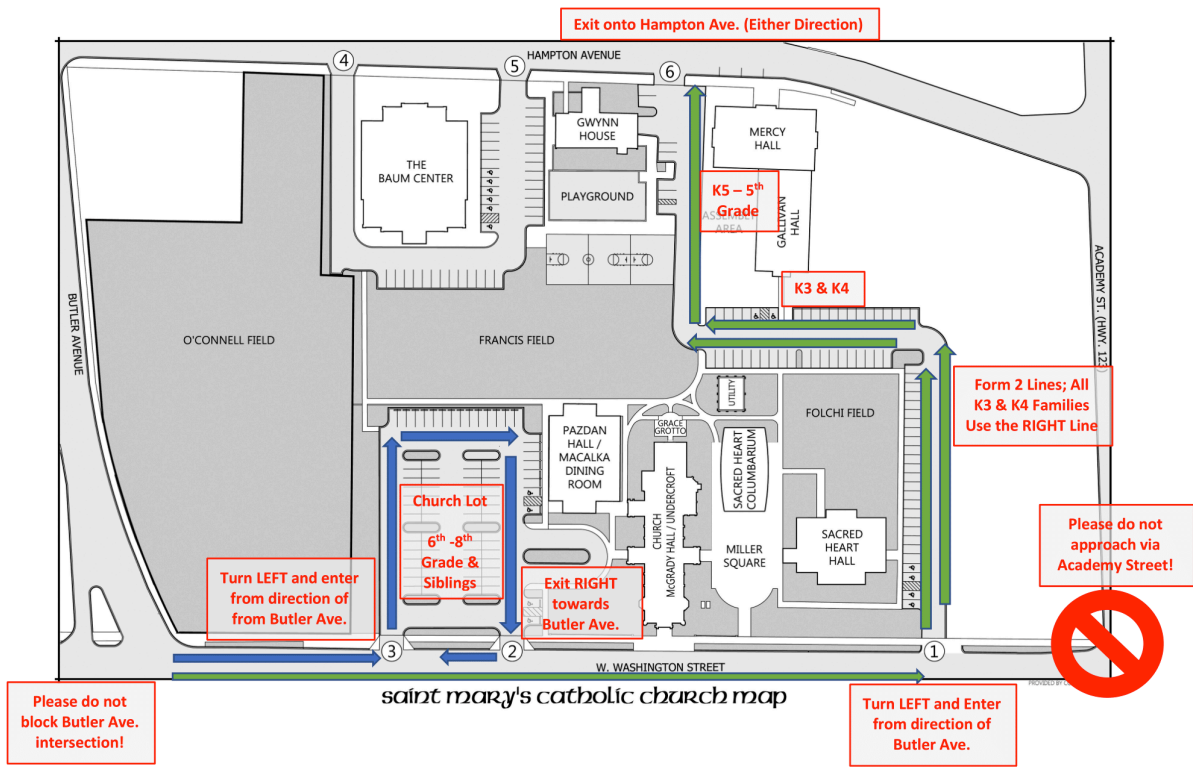
By volunteering, parents acknowledge that they must serve as role models for any students in their presence or under their supervision, and at all times must be mindful of the expectations, policies, and procedures for Saint Mary's School. Parents, guardians, or family members whose personal lives or publicly shared personal values do not align with the mission of the school or the moral values of the Catholic Church may be forbidden from volunteering at the pastor's discretion.

**Parents volunteering to drive students for a field trip are reminded that NO ADDITIONAL STOPS may be made while transporting students from the school to the field trip location and back again.**

## WATER BOTTLES

Students are permitted to bring sturdy, reusable water bottles to school and keep them in their cubbies, lockers, or any other location designated by the teacher. Students should NOT have water bottles at their desks or inside a classroom without explicit permission from the teacher. Students should not have any fluid in their water bottles other than water (no soda, Gatorade, etc.). Parents are encouraged to pick out water bottles that are easy for their child to open/close, but sturdy enough to avoid breakage or spillage if knocked over. Please ensure a tight seal around the lid and any straw/opening. Students with excessive spills may lose the privilege of having a water bottle at school.

# SAINT MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL STUDENT DISMISSAL PROCEDURE



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  - Insurance
  - Library
  - Literature and Arts Policy
  - Lockers
  - Lost and Found
  - Lunch
  - Media
  - Nap Time (K3/K4)
  - Parent-Teacher Organization
  - Parking Policy
  - Personal Property
  - Photography
  - Potty/Toilet Training (K3/K4/K5)
  - Prayer
  - Quitting (Clubs & Athletics)
  - Reunification Site
  - Right to Amend
  - School Advisory Board
  - School Functions
  - School Store
  - School Yearbook Photos
  - Telephone
  - Traffic Plan
  - Tuition and Fees
  - Vacations
  - Visitors
  - Volunteer
  - Water Bottles