

**St. Mary Catholic School**  
**2025 - 2026**  
**School Handbook**

**222 Waterman St.**  
**Sycamore, IL 60178**

**Phone: 815-895-5215**

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**<https://stmarysycamore.com/school>**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## ▪ **INTRODUCTION**

Mission Statement  
Philosophy  
Accreditation  
St. Mary School Personnel

## ▪ **ADMISSIONS**

Priority of Admissions  
Non-Discrimination  
Transfers  
Withdrawal  
Student Records  
Missing Children Records Act and Registration Law  
Student Permanent Records  
Student Temporary Records  
Inspection and Access  
Record of Release  
Custody of Children

## ▪ **ATTENDANCE**

## ▪ **SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

## ▪ **ACADEMICS AND GRADING**

## ▪ **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

## ▪ **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

## ▪ **COMMUNICATIONS WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

## ▪ **STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

## ▪ **EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

## ▪ **ATHLETICS**

## ▪ **PARENT ORGANIZATION**

## ▪ **FUNDRAISING**

## ▪ **TUITION AND FEES**

## **INTRODUCTION**

We, the community of St. Mary's, will provide a variety of experiences and Catholic teaching that promote lifelong spiritual and academic growth. We are committed to proclaiming the Good News of Jesus through academic excellence, Catholic tradition, and service to others.

### **PHILOSOPHY**

The St. Mary School administration and faculty, in cooperation with parents, teach the basic truths, traditions, morals, and values of our Roman Catholic faith while modeling Gospel values and providing opportunities for prayer and worship. We offer a broad-based curriculum, where faith and culture are intertwined in all areas of school life.

We work to foster the development of each child spiritually, academically, emotionally, socially, and physically by building confidence, encouraging self-reliance, teaching responsibility and the desire to learn.

We acknowledge the different learning styles of each student by providing opportunities for observation, exploration, problem solving, cooperation, and application.

We strive to provide our students with the skills necessary to be leaders in the future life of our Church, our country, and our world.

### **ACCREDITATION**

St. Mary School is recognized and fully accredited by the State of Illinois. It operates under the auspices of the Rockford Diocese and conforms to its policies and guidelines. St. Mary School is a member of the National Catholic Educational Association. It is also accredited by the WCEA (Western Catholic Education Association).

# ST. MARY CATHOLIC SCHOOL PERSONNEL

## ADMINISTRATION

Pastor

Father James Linkenheld

Principal

Mrs. Patricia Strang

## HOMEROOM TEACHERS

Preschool 3

Sue Croke

Pre-Kindergarten 4

Sue Croke

Kindergarten

Tammy Agnello

Grade 1

Mary Iwans

Grade 2

Mary Iwans

Grade 3

Meghan Johnson

Grade 4

Meghan Johnson

Middle School ELA

Renee Payne

Middle School Religion

Joseph Hahn

Middle School Math and Science

Michele Brown

## SUPPORT FACULTY

Classroom Aides

Berta Ramirez and Elizabeth Busby

Music

Soo Choi

Physical Education

Joseph Trembl

Spanish

Claudia Garcia

Resource Teacher

## SUPPORT STAFF

Administrative Assistant

Lindsey Hines

School Secretary

Sierra DePalma

School Custodian and Maintenance

BASE Coordinator

Sierra DePalma

Lunch Supervisors

Nicole Noice

Recess Supervisors

Homeroom Teachers and Recess Volunteers

Athletic Director

Parish Business Office

Theresa Robnett

Religious Education

Sarah Larkins

Youth Minister

## COMMITTEES HEADS

Education Commission

Michael Schroeder

PTO

## TELEPHONE DIRECTORY

St. Mary School

815-895-5215

Fax Number

815-991-5024

Parish Office

815-895-3275

Religious Ed. Center

815-895-3726

## School Office Hours

8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

# ADMISSIONS

A child entering St. Mary School for the first time must present a certified birth certificate that will be kept in the student's permanent file. To enter 3-Year-Old Preschool, a child must be three years old by September 1st of that school year. To enter 4-Year-Old Pre-Kindergarten, a child must be four years old by September 1st of that school year. To enter Kindergarten, a child must be five years old by September 1st of that school year.

## PRIORITY FOR ADMISSION

St. Mary School uses the following priorities in allocating spaces for children. Current families will have a priority registration period before available seats are offered to new families:

- Current families of The Church of St. Mary with siblings currently attending the school.
- Current families attending school.
- Parish families without siblings in the school.
- Catholic, non-parishioner with siblings currently attending the school.
- Catholic, non-parishioner without children currently attending the school.
- Non-Catholic without children currently attending the school.

## NON-DISCRIMINATION

St. Mary School welcomes students of any race, religion, color, sex, nationality, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities made available to students at the school, without regard to the student's immigration status in the United States or country of citizenship. Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Rockford shall be compliant with all relevant case law interpreting the Illinois School Code, including Plyler v. Doe.

(NOTE): If an individual believes that he or she is a victim of unlawful discrimination by the school, the individual should report this to the Principal of the School. If the complaint of discrimination is against the principal, the individuals may instead report the matter to the Superintendent of Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Rockford. All complaints of unlawful discrimination will be investigated and treated seriously. The report will be investigated, and the investigation may include a review of the documentation as well as interviewing the alleged victim, potential witnesses, and the alleged accused. Upon completion of the investigation, a determination as to the merits of the allegation of discrimination will be made. The individuals involved will be informed of the results of the investigation.)

## TRANSFERS

Students entering St. Mary School need to present an official certification of grade level, such as report card or transfer slip from the former school. Student records will be requested before a student is officially accepted.

## WITHDRAWAL

Parents must notify the school office if they plan to transfer their child/ren from the school. All financial obligations need to be met. Textbooks, library books, and any school property must be returned.

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

Maintenance of student records in the Diocese of Rockford elementary and high schools shall comply with the Illinois School Code, subject to regulations of the State Board. In accordance with Illinois School Code 10, Student Records Act, Section 2. (d) "School Student Record" means any writing or other recorded information concerning a student and by which a student may be individually identified, maintained by a school or at its direction or by an employee of a school, regardless of how or where the information is stored.

## **MISSING CHILDREN RECORDS ACT AND REGISTRATION LAW**

As a non-public school, St. Mary Catholic School maintains copies of certified county birth certificates for each student enrolled. The school notifies the parents/guardians that such documentation must be submitted upon enrolling the student. Copies of transfer student records must be requested within fourteen days of enrollment; the school sends unofficial records of students transferring to other schools within ten days of the request.

The Illinois Missing Children Act requires schools to notify local authorities when an official copy of the county certified birth certificate is not received by the school within 30 days of enrollment. At 30 days, the school is required to notify the parent/guardian in writing that they have ten days to submit a copy of an official certified county birth certificate. If the parent/guardian fails to comply, the school is required by law to notify the police for a possible missing child investigation. The school flags record requests for any current or former student who has been reported missing by Illinois State Police.

## **STUDENT PERMANENT RECORDS**

Illinois School Code states in part: Such information may include the student's name, birth date, address, grades and grade level, parent names and addresses, attendance records, and such other entries as the State Board may require or authorize. For schools in the Diocese of Rockford, permanent records must include:

- Student name
- Gender
- Birth date
- Address
- Telephone number
- Grades & grade level
- Parents' or legal guardians' names and addresses
- Attendance records
- Health and accident records
- Sacramental records

## **STUDENT TEMPORARY RECORDS**

Temporary records mean all information contained in a student record, but not contained in the permanent record. Such information may include family background information, intelligence test scores, aptitude test scores, psychological and personality test results, teacher evaluations, and other information of clear relevance to the education of the student.

## **INSPECTION AND ACCESS**

A parent or any person specifically designated as a representative by a parent shall have the right to inspect and copy all school student permanent and temporary records of that parent's child.

## **RECORD OF RELEASE**

A record of release of information must be made and kept as a part of the school student record. Such record of release shall be maintained for the life of school student records and shall be available only to the parent and the official records custodian. Each record of release shall include, nature and substance of information released, Name and signature of person releasing information, Name of person requesting information, Copy of consent to such release.

## **CUSTODY OF CHILDREN**

In cases of single families, it is important that the school be notified which parent has custody of the child/ren. A copy of the custody decree in cases of divorce should be filed in the office. Financial matters are ordinarily handled through the custodial parent unless other stipulations are made. When the legal guardian is not the parent, the school needs to have that information on file. All communications regarding school, grades, behavior, etc. go to the custodial parent.

# **ATTENDANCE**

Daily school attendance, as required by the School Code of Illinois, is essential if a student is to make full use of the educational opportunities the school offers. The school offers an academic term of at least **176** days of pupil attendance.

## **ATTENDANCE PHILOSOPHY**

Our attendance policy is based upon the following assumption:

1. In accordance with the requirements of the SCHOOL CODE of Illinois and in recognition of the responsibilities imposed upon parents, it is the policy of Saint Mary School that students shall attend school on a regular basis. Student attendance is not optional: it is a requirement. Saint Mary's educational program is built on the premise that regular attendance requires a cooperative effort by the student, parent(s), or guardian(s), and school personnel. School administration and staff have a duty to rigorously and consistently enforce school regulations dealing with class attendance.
2. While the major responsibility for attendance rests with the students, the school and the parents or guardians are obligated to follow proper procedures to inform the school when their son or daughter is absent and to give the reason for the absence.

## **Valid Cause for Absence**

Saint Mary School's policy states that absences shall be excused for the following reasons: personal illness, death in the immediate family, quarantine, family emergencies, observances of religious holidays, situations beyond the control of the student, other circumstances that cause reasonable concern to the parent/guardian for the student's mental, emotional or physical health or safety of the student.

## **Appointments/Vacations/Club Sports**

In order to maximize academic success, every effort should be made not to miss school for club sports, doctor/dental appointments or for vacation purposes. Vacations and club sports are considered unexcused absences. Occasionally situations may arise which make it necessary for students to be absent for these reasons. Students are responsible for missed work and for communicating with their teachers both prior to, and after the days missed.

## **TARDINESS**

Since tardiness interferes with a student's progress and is a disturbance to the entire class, every effort should be made to be punctual. If a student is not present when the 8:15 a.m. bell rings, he/she must report to the office for a tardy slip before admittance to the classroom. If a legitimate reason for lateness exists, parents should write a note or call the school to inform the school office. Without this communication, the tardiness will be considered unexcused.

### **Student Sign-In/Sign-Out**

1. Students are not allowed to leave the school building during the day without being excused through the Main Office. Parents or Guardians MUST come to the main school office and sign students out. Students waiting to be picked up by a parent will be held in this office. Students returning to school during the day must come to the Main Office and sign in.
2. If school personnel deem it is in the student's best interest to go home, the office will call parents to pick up their child. Parents must then come to the Main Office to sign their child out of school.

### **Excessive Absenteeism**

Saint Mary School considers absenteeism excessive when it significantly interferes with a student's learning reflected in academic performance or social development.

### **Truancy**

Saint Mary School considers a student to be truant when he/she is absent without valid cause for a school day or portion thereof, as defined in Section 26-2a of the Illinois School Code.

### **Chronic Truancy**

Saint Mary School considers a student to be a chronic truant who is absent without valid cause for 5% or more of the 176 attendance days.

### **Identification Procedures for Truant or Chronically Truant Students**

The School's Office Administrator shall prepare a monthly attendance report for the principal. In the event that a student is missing without a valid cause the principal will interview the student, his or her parent or guardian, and any school official or pastoral staff that may have information about the reasons for the student's attendance problems.

### **Supportive Procedures for Truant or Chronically Truant Students**

Saint Mary staff is committed to preventing school failure, chronic truancy and absenteeism through:

1. collecting and reviewing monthly absence data to determine what systems of support and resources are needed to engage chronically absent students and their families to encourage the habit of daily attendance and promote success. The review shall include an analysis of chronic absence data from the school's attendance reporting system (FACTS).
2. email communication when a student has reached five days of absences in a school year,
3. parent conferences when a student has reached 5% (nine days) of absences in a school year,
4. if more than nine days absent, parents or guardians may be required to present medical documentation of physical or emotional conditions causing a student's absence in order for it to be marked
5. student counseling
6. family counseling (Catholic Charities 815-520-3205)
7. referral to community agencies (DeKalb County Community Foundation -dekalbccf.org or 815-748-5383)

8. Saint Mary School will refer chronically truant students, as defined under truancy, to the DeKalb County Regional Office of Education.
9. Withdrawal of the student from the private school or retention may be warranted.

### **MAKING UP WORK FOR ABSENCES**

Work missed due to an absence must be made up. It is the parent's/student's responsibility to contact the teacher regarding this work. Students should not rely on peers to get missed assignments. Allotted time for make-up is as follows:

**1 – 2 days absent** – For each day that a student is absent, the student has the same number of days to turn in his/her work upon returning to school.

**3 or more successive days** – The work must be made up by individually making arrangements with the teacher. Work not made up during the agreed upon schedule will result in receiving no credit for those assignments that were not completed.

### **DOCTOR/DENTAL APPOINTMENTS**

Students excused from school during the school day must be signed out in the school office. Parents are requested to provide advance notice and to pick up the child from the office so as not to disturb the classroom. If the child returns the same day, it is also necessary to sign your student back in.

### **ATTENDANCE AWARDS**

At the end of each school year, St. Mary School is proud to recognize students who have made the outstanding effort to attend school each day. Attendance awards will be presented in two categories:

- **PERFECT ATTENDANCE** is awarded to students who have attended school every minute of every school day. NO EXCEPTIONS!
- **OUTSTANDING ATTENDANCE** will be awarded to students who have attended school every day but may have arrived late or left early. ALL late arrivals or early dismissals must be excused if the student is to be considered for this award. (Excused late arrivals or early dismissals could include, but are not limited to, medical/dental appointments, car accidents, births, funerals, etc. Early dismissal for vacation will not be excused.

### **TRAVEL TO AND FROM SCHOOL**

A written note or a phone call is required for any departure from the student's normal travel arrangements.

## **SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES:**

- **MORNING ARRIVAL**  
Students must not arrive before 8:00 a.m. Bus riders and vehicle riders are to be dropped off in front of the school. Students arriving between 8:00 a.m. and 8:15 a.m. are to enter Door 1 (main entrance) and then proceed to their classrooms. Students who arrive after 8:15 a.m. should report directly to the school office and wait for office staff to give them a pass. Once they have the pass, they may go directly to their classrooms.
- **DISMISSAL PROCEDURE**  
Car riding students must stay with a teacher on duty who will escort them from the school to waiting vehicles. The vehicles are to enter at the Park Avenue entrance just south of the PAC forming two lines just east of the PAC. Vehicles in the right-hand lane will turn right out of the parking lot. Vehicles in the

left-hand lane will turn left out of the parking lot. Pull ahead to the vehicle in front of you. Parents are asked to remain in their vehicles, and a teacher on duty will be responsible for getting the student safely to the vehicle. Students will only be dismissed on St. Mary School property. For the safety of our students and staff, do not park on Waterman Street or any side street to wait for your student. In addition, students are not allowed to be pulled from the car line, with no exception. Benches remaining after bus arrival will be sent to BASE for pick up at door 6 (see BASE).

- **WALKERS**

Walkers exit through the School Main Entrance (Door 1) and will be dismissed after the car riding students leave School property. All walkers, not only students, but anyone accompanying a student, must follow dismissal procedures and remain on the sidewalks.

- **BICYCLES**

Students in 3RD Grade – 8TH Grade are permitted to use a bicycle as a mode of transportation to and from school. Students younger than third grade need to submit a parent's written permission to the office to ride a bicycle to and from school. Bicycles are to be parked and locked in the bike rack behind the Church. The school accepts no responsibility for bicycles. Bicycles are to be walked on school property.

- **PHONES**

Phones are prohibited during the school day. A phone must be turned off and stored in a backpack in a locker during the school day. Also, electronic devices, including Apple Watches or similar watch devices are prohibited from use during the school day so as not to distract students from the learning environment. Many watches have cellular features that perform like a cell phone, which would distract students from learning.

## **BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

Non-edible favors (such as stickers, pencils, etc.) are encouraged as birthday treats.

We have found that passing out party invitations at school can be an unhappy experience for the child who does not receive one. So please, do not send invitations through the school.

## **BUS TRANSPORTATION**

Per State regulations, student transportation shall be provided for students that meet the following guidelines:

1. Reside within the school district boundaries and
2. Live 1.5 miles or more from school.

St. Mary School children who are eligible for bus transportation will follow the guidelines of Sycamore School District #427. Transportation is provided to and from school only. The school district cannot provide transportation for birthday parties, overnight, girl/boy scouts, music lessons, dance lessons, study groups, etc. Also, due to the large number of students who are eligible to be transported to and from school it is no longer possible to allow guests to ride with regular riders on the buses.

**Sycamore School District conducts a bus safety/emergency evacuation drill once each school year.**

## **CALENDAR**

Illinois State School Code requires that school be open for instruction 176 days. Diocesan regulations require that five days be scheduled for teacher institutes. The school calendar is available on our website at <https://stmarysycamore.org/school>.

## **CHILD ABUSE/MANDATED REPORTER**

St. Mary School employees are required by law to report any suspected child abuse victims to the proper authorities. Section 4 of **The Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act** states "Any...school personnel... having reasonable cause to believe a child known to them in their professional capacity may be an abused child or a neglected child shall immediately report or cause a report to be made to the Department of Children and Family Services...."

The school complies with the student records requirements.

1. School personnel are informed that they are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect.
2. All school personnel have signed the mandated reporter statement required by the Department of Children and Family Services acknowledging this obligation.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are privileges afforded to students. At the teacher's discretion, students may be denied participation if they fail to meet academic or behavioral requirements. All students must have an official permission slip signed by their parent/guardian on file to be permitted to participate in a field trip. Any parent wishing to help in their child's classroom for parties, go on field trips, or volunteer in school must fulfill all "Volunteer Requirements" as outlined by the Diocese of Rockford BEFORE active participation.

## **UNIFORM POLICY/DRESS CODE**

The faculty and staff of St. Mary Catholic School have developed a dress code for our students. This policy is based on the philosophy that setting standards for student dress is an extension of the high standards of academic performance and behavior set for students in our Catholic School. It is the responsibility of the student's parents/guardians to ensure that his/her clothing and accessories comply with the Dress Code. All shirts, pants, shorts, skirts, skorts, and sweaters must be purchased through School Uniforms by Tommy Hilfiger. Items can be ordered online at [Global Schoolwear](#).

Girls in Kindergarten to Grade 3 may wear either pants, a jumper or the skort. Girls in Grades 4-8 may wear pants, the skirt or the skort.

Boys and girls may wear shorts from the start of the school year until October 15th and from April 15th until the end of the school year (weather permitting).

School sweaters and crew neck sweatshirts purchased through the school (no hoodies) with the St. Mary logo are acceptable as part of the uniform if they are worn over the Dennis uniform shirt.

Socks: Plain white, black, gray, or navy, ankle-height or above. Leggings: solid color blue, black, gray, or white (without logos, mesh or cut-outs) are permitted.

Shoes: Some type of rubber-soled (athletic) shoe is required because students are expected to outdoor recess most days. Open-toed shoes, toe shoes, boots, sandals, slip-ons, Crocs, etc. are a potential safety hazard and are not suitable for playground activity. Shoes above the ankle are not permitted. Shoes should be unadorned, and in no way distracting to the educational process. Shoes may only contain the colors of blue, white, gray, black, brown or some combination of these colors. No other colors are allowed.

Gym clothes: students should wear their gym clothes to school on gym days.

Gray St. Mary t-shirt, available at the Uniform Exchange, on the Gym Uniform Order Form, or from Sports of All Sorts (SOAS) at <https://stmaryssycamore2022.itemorder.com/>.

Navy blue gym shorts, available at the Uniform Exchange, on the Gym Uniform Order Form, or from Sports of All Sorts (SOAS) at <https://stmaryssycamore2022.itemorder.com/>. Gym shorts are not required if the student is wearing the St. Mary sweatpants. Students are encouraged to wear shorts until October 15th and after April 15th. Boys and girls may wear solid color blue, black, gray or white leggings (no logos, mesh or cut-outs) under their gym shorts. (In case a student forgets to wear athletic shoes on a gym day, it is recommended that each student have a pair of athletic shoes, which remain at school at all times.)

Sweatshirt and sweatpants (navy blue) for cold weather: As of January 1, 2006, if sweatshirts and sweatpants are worn in gym class, they must have the St. Mary logo. Students are not allowed to wear hooded sweatshirts in the school building.

## **GENERAL UNIFORM GUIDELINES**

- Clothing must be clean and in good repair. (No holes)
- While hooded St. Mary's sweatshirts are no longer allowed in the classroom, they may be worn outside for recess.
- Shirts are to be tucked in during school hours. Shirts on dress down days cannot have spaghetti straps or be strapless.
- On days when the student wears boots to school due to inclement weather, he/she must bring athletic shoes to wear indoors.
- Students may wear Scout uniforms in place of the school uniform on meeting days. Scout uniforms must be clean and neat. Builders Club and Student Council members may wear their shirts on meeting days. Students on our sports teams may wear their shirts (with a shirt under sleeveless team uniform tops) on game days.
- Students may wear St. Mary sports uniform tops over their school uniform on game days.
- Each item of clothing should be marked with the student's name. This is especially important for gym clothes, sweaters, and sweatshirts.
- Hair should be natural in color, clean, neatly trimmed, and in no way distracting to the educational process. Hair must be out of a student's eyes. Boy's hair length must be trimmed above the collar, above the ears, and above the eyes. Hair accessories must be the school colors of navy blue, gray, or white. A student's appearance, including dress and hygiene, must not disrupt the educational process or compromise standards of health and safety. The school will not prohibit hairstyles historically associated with race, ethnicity, or hair texture, including, but not limited to, protective hairstyles such as braids, locks and twists. Any student's appearance that disrupts the educational process or compromises health and safety standards must modify their appearance.
- Jewelry should be simple and functional and in no way distracting in the classroom. If earrings are worn, they should only be small post earrings. Please do not let your child wear any jewelry which could get caught on playground equipment or which is of significant sentimental value. For safety reasons, absolutely no jewelry is allowed in gym class.
- Electronic devices, including Apple Watches or similar watch devices, are prohibited from use during the school day so as not to distract students from the learning environment. Many watches have cellular features that perform like a cell phone, which would distract students from learning.
- Only clear nail polish may be worn.
- Make-up, if worn, must be age-appropriate and in no way distracting to the educational process.
- Uniform Violation: When a student is out of uniform the first time during the quarter, the teacher will send one warning in an email to the parent. If there is a second time in the quarter, the student will be sent to the office so the parent can be called to bring the proper item(s).

## **VISITORS**

Open House, Catholic Schools Week and Parent/Teacher Conferences provide a few opportunities for parents to visit the classrooms. Visits outside these times are encouraged but need to be prearranged with the principal.

Anyone entering the school building during school hours must register at the school office. After registering, they will receive a visitor's tag, which is to be worn at all times.

To lessen classroom distractions, a parent waiting for a child is asked to wait by the office and not go to the child's classroom.

A parent bringing in an item such as a book, lunch, money etc., for the child, is to label (identify) the item and leave it in the main office. Office personnel will deliver the item to the student.

## **WRITTEN COMMUNICATION**

Organizations (i.e., YMCA, Scouts, Athletic Groups, etc.) that need to communicate with students in written form **MUST** have all papers to the school office at least 24 hours before distribution.

# **ACADEMICS AND GRADING**

## **SPIRITUAL FORMATION**

- All students plan and attend Mass.
- Students in Grades 4-8 may participate in the Altar Server program.
- A routine of prayer before class in the morning and again before dismissal is followed. Blessings are said before meals.
- All grades (K-8) have age-appropriate service projects throughout the school year.

## **SACRAMENTS**

Reconciliation/First Communion- Grade 2 and Confirmation - Grade 8

## **PRAAYER PARTNERS/BUDDIES**

To foster a sense of family and commitment between the students, each year an older student is paired up with a younger student to serve as their mentor and prayer partner for the school year. This teaches the older children the responsibility of being a mentor while providing the younger children with role models. It helps to foster a feeling of the school as family. Prayer partners usually sit together during the school masses and have other special times during the year.

## **GRADING SYSTEM**

Report cards are distributed quarterly. While there are different report forms used for Preschool through grade eight, the grading procedure is very similar. The diocesan marking system has been assigned average numerical values. Letter grades with the following equivalents are used for grades 4-8.

<b>A+ = 99 - 100%</b>	<b>B+ = 91 - 92.9</b>	<b>C+ = 83 - 84.9</b>	<b>D+ = 75 - 76.9</b>
<b>A = 95 - 98.9</b>	<b>B = 87 - 90.9</b>	<b>C = 79 - 82.9</b>	<b>D = 72 - 74.9</b>
<b>A- = 93 - 94.9</b>	<b>B- = 85 - 86.9</b>	<b>C- = 77 - 78.9</b>	<b>D- = 70 - 71.9</b>

Each report card tells the parent/guardian how his/her child is doing in comparison to what is expected of the child at his/her grade level. Parents should also note the effort grade, which indicates the child's motivational level, and can be the source of praise or constructive review. Based on this information, you can work more closely with the teacher to motivate your child.

### **HONORS RECOGNITION AWARDS**

In a continuing quest for academic excellence and recognition of high achievement, St. Mary School maintains an Honor Roll Program for students in GRADES 5-8. All students receiving a GPA of 3.5 and above will achieve High Honor Roll and all students receiving a GPA from 3.00 - 3.49 will achieve Honor Roll. Honor Roll recognition will be announced quarterly, and students will receive certificates from the principal/pastor.

### **SUBJECTS**

Included in determining Honor Roll status are Religion, Reading, English, Math, Science, Social Studies, and Spelling. "Specials" such as Spanish, PE, and Music count as one combined grade. A student may be disqualified from Honor Roll for needing improvement in any one of the following categories of the Personal and Social Growth section of the report card:

- Respects Peers
- Respects Authority
- Respects Property

### **REPORT CARDS**

Report cards are issued at the end of each trimester. Parents will access report cards on FACTS. Parents may request a hardcopy of their child's report card by contacting our School Office.

### **TESTING**

ARK Testing in reading, mathematics and religion will be given in Grades 2-8.

### **HOMEWORK**

Homework is given to reinforce concepts and skills learned in school. It also helps develop good work habits and encourages independent study. The following schedule serves as a guideline for daily homework.

1<sup>st</sup> Grade - 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade = 30 minutes

4<sup>th</sup> Grade – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade = 45 - 60 minutes

7<sup>th</sup> Grade – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade = 60 - 90 minutes

Should parents notice extremes in homework – "too little or too much" – please contact the teacher. Homework is to be completed on time except for an extraordinary reason (Athletic events and outside activities do not excuse students from homework.).

During an illness, parents are encouraged to pick up work. Students are responsible for knowing assignments and getting work in on time. Assignment notebooks are provided for students in grades 4 through 8.

### **MISSING HOMEWORK POLICY**

#### **4TH GRADE**

All assignments need to be completed for an academic value.

Missing/late assignments will be docked 10%. After 5 school days, it will be imported into the grading system as a zero.

There will be one nightly assignment freebie per quarter.

#### **5TH GRADE**

All assignments need to be completed for an academic value.

Missing/late assignments will be docked 20%. After 5 school days, it will be imported into the grading system as a zero.

There will be one nightly assignment freebie per quarter.

### **6TH GRADE**

All assignments need to be completed for an academic value.

Missing/late assignments will be docked 40%. After 5 school days, it will be imported into the grading system as a zero.

There will be one nightly assignment freebie per quarter.

### **7TH GRADE**

All assignments need to be completed for an academic value.

Missing/late assignments will be docked 60%. After 5 school days, it will be imported into the grading system as a zero.

There will be one nightly assignment freebie per quarter.

### **8TH GRADE**

All assignments need to be completed for an academic value.

Any missing/late assignments will be imported into the grading system as a zero.

There will be one nightly assignment freebie per quarter.

### **ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY**

Participation in extracurricular activities is strongly encouraged. However, each student's priority must be exemplification of Catholic ideals and academic achievement. Therefore, scholastic standing will be monitored and maintained as eligibility requirements for athletics and other activities. Parents and students should be keeping track of grades in FACTS.

For eligibility determination, assignments must be turned in by Wednesday morning. Every Thursday morning, the homeroom teachers will review the grades of student-athletes in religion, reading, mathematics, social studies, science, spelling, and language arts. They will give the names of ineligible students to the principal.

An average below 70% (F) in any one of these areas (religion, reading, mathematics, social studies, science, spelling, and language arts), the athlete will not be allowed to participate in games or practices until the grade is restored to passing.

An average below 75% (D) in any two of these areas will result in an immediate seven day "academic watch," probationary period, in which the student must raise his or her grade to above 75% by the following Wednesday or the student will be suspended from athletics for one week. The student is not permitted to attend or participate in practices or games while he or she is suspended.

The principal will email the parents and the athletic director, and the athletic director will notify the coaches. Ineligibility runs for one week from Friday through the following Thursday (including Thursday night). The student will be eligible on Friday unless the next report indicates that the student is not eligible. Any student who is ineligible will not be allowed to participate in athletic practices or games (including the attendance of games), Student Council dances or any other after school extra-curricular activities until the student is determined to be eligible.

A student who is absent or goes home during the day is not allowed to play or attend a practice or game or attend any other extra-curricular event that day. If the student has a prearranged doctor's appointment, still allowing them to be in school for a majority of the day, she or he will be allowed to participate. A note from the doctor's office may be requested to confirm the appointment.

Students who are ineligible for several weeks may be dropped from a sport or activity. Students may be ineligible for other reasons such as a lack of effort in specials classes or disciplinary issues. The principal has the final decision on disputed eligibility issues.

## **ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS**

Student-athletes must attend school for at least two-thirds (4.25 hours of the school day) to participate or compete in any sport that evening or receive approval from the principal. A student who is absent or goes home during the day is not allowed to play or attend a practice or game or attend any other extra-curricular event that day. If the student has a prearranged doctor's appointment, still allowing them to be in school for the majority of the day, she or he will be allowed to participate. A note from the doctor's office may be requested to confirm the appointment.

Student-athletes must participate in P.E. to participate in athletic practice or games that evening or receive approval from the principal.

# **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

## **HEALTH REQUIREMENTS**

Illinois state law requires all students entering Preschool for the first time, Kindergarten, 6th grade and new students to the State of Illinois are required to have a current physical and be up to date on required immunizations. All forms are due to the school office by the first day of school. St. Mary School has the right, per state regulations, to exclude a child from school after October 15th, until the child presents proof of having a health examination and/or current record of all required immunizations. Health exam must have been completed within one year prior to the school start date.

- Physical exam signed and dated by a doctor.
- Immunizations signed and dated by a healthcare provider.
- Medical history filled out and signed by a parent/guardian.

## **EYE EXAM**

All children entering Kindergarten and any student enrolling for the first time in Illinois are required to have an eye exam. The eye exam requirement does not apply to children enrolling in preschool. Examinations must be performed by a licensed optometrist or medical doctor who performs eye exams. Proof of exams are due to the school office by the first day of school.

The required eye exam must be completed within one year prior to the first day of the school year in which the child enters Kindergarten or the child enters the Illinois school system for the first time. If unable to obtain the required vision exam, students must have a waiver signed by a parent/guardian prior to start of school.

## **DENTAL EXAM**

All children entering Kindergarten, 2nd and 6th grade are required to have an oral health examination. Examinations must be performed by a licensed dentist, and he/she must sign the proof of school dental exam form. Each child is required to present proof of exam by a dentist, or have a waiver signed by a parent/guardian, prior to the first day of school of the current school year. School dental exams must have been completed within the 18 months prior to the first day of school deadline.

## **IMMUNIZATIONS REQUIREMENTS**

### **PRESCHOOL**

- DTP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis) 3 doses by 1 year of age, 1 booster by 2nd birthday.
- IPV (Inactivated Polio) 2 doses by 1 year of age, 1 additional booster by 2nd birthday.

- MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella) 1 dose on or after 1st birthday but prior to 24 months.
- Hib (Haemophilus influenza type b) primary series or 1 dose between 15-59 months.
- HepB (Hepatitis B) series of 3 doses, appropriately spaced.
- Varicella (Chicken Pox) 1 dose on or after 1st birthday (or proof of disease and date documented by doctor).
- Prevnar (Pneumococcal Conjugate) primary series or 1 dose between 15-59 months.

### **KINDERGARTEN – 5<sup>th</sup> GRADE**

- DTP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis) 4 or more doses with the last dose received on or after 4th birthday 28.
- IPV (Inactivated Polio) 3 or more doses of the same type of Polio vaccine with last dose received on or after 4th birthday. If a series is given in combination of polio vaccine types, 4 or more doses are required.
- MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella) 2 doses, 1st dose received on or after 1st birthday and 2nd dose no less than 4 weeks (28 days) later.
- Hib (Haemophilus influenza type b) Not required after 5th birthday.
- Prevnar (Pneumococcal Conjugate) Not required after 5th birthday.
- HepB (Hepatitis B) No requirement.
- Varicella (Chicken Pox) 2 doses, 1st dose received on or after 1st birthday and 2nd dose no less than 4 weeks (28 days) later; or proof of disease and date documented by doctor, KINDERGARTEN and 1ST GRADE Need Two Doses of Varicella.

### **6<sup>th</sup> GRADE – 8<sup>th</sup> GRADE**

- DTP (Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus) 3 or more doses with the last dose received on or after 4th birthday, and 1 dose of Tdap for students at 11 years of age entering 6th grade (can be given as early as age 7).
- IPV (Inactivated Polio) 3 or more doses of the same type of Polio vaccine with the last dose received on or after 4th birthday. If a series is given in combination of polio vaccine types, 4 or more doses.
- MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella) 2 doses, 1st dose received on or after 1st birthday and 2nd dose no less than 4 weeks (28 days) later.
- Hib (Haemophilus influenza type b) Not required after 5th birthday.
- HepB (Hepatitis B) 3 doses at recommended intervals.
- Varicella (Chicken Pox) students entering 6th grade, 2 doses, 1st dose received on or after 1st birthday and 2nd dose no less than 4 weeks (28 days) later; or proof of disease and date documented by doctor.
- MCV4 (Meningococcal conjugate) students entering 6th grade 1 dose, (may receive as early as age 10).

### **STATE OF ILLINOIS MANDATED VISION AND HEARING SCREENINGS: VISION**

Vision screening services shall be provided annually for all preschool children 3 years of age (or older) in any public or private educational program or licensed child-care facility. Vision screening services in public, independent, private, and parochial schools shall be provided annually for all children in grades Kindergarten, 2nd, and 8th, and for teacher referrals and students transferring into schools who have not been previously screened. Vision screening services in public, independent, private, and parochial schools shall be provided annually for all special education children screened by standard screening methods as determined by IDPH training curriculum.

## HEARING

The Illinois Vision and Hearing Test Act requires annual screening for the following children: (1) preschoolers (3-5) years of age) in any group education program, day care center, or nursery school and (2) children in grades K, 1, 2, 3, and special education classes in all public, independent, private, and parochial schools. New students and teacher referrals must be screened also.

<u>Vision</u>	<u>Hearing</u>
Preschool 3	Preschool 3
PreK 4	PreK 4
Kindergarten	1st
2 <sup>nd</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>
8 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>

## ILLNESS

When a child becomes ill, the teacher will send him/her to the school office. If the child needs to be sent home, the secretary will notify the parent/guardian, or the person listed on the emergency form. The secretary will also notify the principal and the teacher that the child is being sent home.

In case of an accident, minor first aid will be administered by school personnel in accordance with the provisions in the emergency health form. It is the responsibility of the parent(s) to contact a doctor or take the child to the hospital.

In the event of serious illness or injury, paramedics will be called immediately, and the parent/guardian will be notified. Parents/guardians are responsible for payment of medical, ambulance, and/or hospital fees.

## PREVENTATIVE DISEASE TRANSMISSION MEASURES

To decrease the likelihood of classroom transmission of diseases, please observe the following rules:

- **Your child should be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school.** He/she should also have been retaining food without discomfort or vomiting for 24 hours in the case of a gastrointestinal virus.
- If your child misses the morning session of classes due to illness, please keep him/her home for the entire day. A few more hours of rest will do them good and make for a fresh start the next day.
- Please notify the school office if your child is diagnosed with a communicable disease such as strep throat, scarlet fever, or chicken pox. These diseases are no longer reportable to the Health Department; however, the school continues to send letters to parents alerting them to these diseases.

## STUDENT ILLNESSES:

As an aid to parents in the evaluation of a child's health before going to school, the following should be considered:

It is advisable to keep your child home when these symptoms occur:

- Diarrhea
- Excessive coughing and sneezing

- Fever of 99.8 or higher taken in the morning, without fever reducing medicine
- Headache or earache
- Inflamed, swollen, reddened or watery eyes
- Nausea or vomiting
- Red or swollen joints
- Contagious skin rashes or open sores
- Unusual skin pallor

### **PEDICULOSIS (HEAD LICE):**

Head Lice is an on-going problem throughout the United States. Head lice come from direct contact with an infected person or indirect contact due to the use of lice-infested clothing, hairbrushes, or combs, etc. Having head lice does not imply a lack of personal cleanliness or poor housekeeping.

Since this condition can be a costly interruption of a child's education, the school requires the following: Any child found with nits (eggs) or lice in his/her hair will be excluded from school until his/her hair has been treated with a medicated shampoo for lice. On return to school, the student will be examined for nits and lice. If all the nits are off the hair, the child will be allowed back into the classroom. If there is an outbreak of head lice in the school, specific information about head lice and the proper treatment will be sent home to the parents.

### **MEDICATION**

No medication will be administered except by the school principal or his/her designee. Such medication will only be administered provided the child's parent or legal guardian submits in advance such documentation as is required by any administrative regulation issued under this policy.

### **MEDICATION AT SCHOOL:**

#### **NO MEDICATION WILL BE GIVEN BY SCHOOL PERSONNEL UNLESS THESE GUIDELINES ARE FOLLOWED.**

- Parent or guardian shall provide the school with Physician's orders/prescriptions detailing the name of the student, the type of disease or illness involved, the name of the drug, dosage, time interval in which the medication is to be taken, the date of the initiation and the date of discontinuance, the desired benefits of the medication, the side effects, and an emergency number where the physician can be reached.
- The student's parent or guardian shall provide to the school administrator a written request authorizing the administration of the prescribed medication at school.
- Medication shall be brought to the school in a container appropriately labeled by the pharmacy or physician. The name of the student and the names of the physician and pharmacy and pharmacy telephone number shall be indicated on the container.
- The school shall provide a locked space for safe storage of the medication.

- The school administrator shall keep a written record of all drug administration. This record shall include the following information: What medication was given, to whom it was given, when it was given (date and time), who administered the medication, the date of initiation of drug therapy in school, if a medication is not administered and why, and the drug discontinuance date. This information shall be placed in the student's health file.

### **OVER THE COUNTER MEDICATION POLICY**

If your child must receive over-the-counter medication such as cough drops, ibuprofen, etc. while at school, please bring the medication to the school office accompanied by the Medication Release Form indicating the dosage and time the medication should be given. All medications will be kept in a locked cabinet in the school office.

### **SUNSCREEN**

A student may possess and use a topical sunscreen product while on school property or at a school-sponsored event or activity without a physician's note or prescription if the product is approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

### **EMERGENCY FORMS**

Parents are required to complete an emergency information form. The form with a parent's signature remains on file in the school office. In case of illness or an emergency, parents are contacted first. If a parent cannot be reached, the person designated by the parent on the emergency form will be contacted. It is imperative that all records be current and accurate. Parents must notify the school office regarding any change of address or phone numbers and these corrections must be edited on SchoolSpeak forms.

### **FIRE DRILLS**

Fire drills are held at numerous times throughout the school year. Every classroom has instructions telling the students what route to take in case of fire. At the sound of the alarm, everyone is to leave the building in a speedy and orderly manner. They should assemble in the designated area with their teacher for roll call. Students should not go to lockers for coats or books. They should re-enter the building in an orderly manner when the all-clear signal is given.

### **TORNADO DRILLS/EARTHQUAKE/LOCK-DOWN DRILLS**

Each teacher has instructions on what to do during a tornado/earthquake/lock-down. To prepare the students, drills are held at least two times each school year. Students are to follow instructions and move quickly and quietly to their designated location. If a tornado warning is in effect during the academic day, students will remain in the building until an all-clear signal is received.

### **BUS DRILLS**

During the school year, all students participate in a training regarding bus riding safety, which includes a systematic way to evacuate a bus in the event of a dangerous situation or crisis. The teachers and students follow all bus protocols as developed by the Sycamore School District.

### **EMERGENCY CLOSING**

Severe weather conditions may make emergency closings necessary. Notification of an emergency closing will be announced via FACTS. Please make sure the office has current home & cell phone numbers on file in FACTS.

## **COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

### **COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SCHOOL AND HOME**

St. Mary School uses FACTS to inform parents/guardians about the activities and events at our school. In addition, FACTS is also a convenient online tool for parents to communicate with teachers, review student progress reports, access attendance records and keep you up to date with classroom assignments. FACTS is a private school platform that allows individuals who have permission the privilege to enter. Parents/guardians will be provided with login information, during the registration process.

In person Parent/Teacher Conferences are scheduled in November. When appropriate, teachers may also schedule conferences at other times or at the request of parents/guardians. To request a conference, a parent may send a note or call the school office.

Informal conferences between parent and teacher are encouraged throughout the year. These may occur via telephone conversations, electronic or hardcopy correspondence, or scheduled meetings. Every effort will be made to accommodate parent/guardian schedules.

### **SCHOOL FACEBOOK PAGE**

St. Mary School has two official Facebook pages. One is a public site where general school information is shared. The other is a private site for families of St. Mary School to share ideas and positive thoughts, comments, questions, and reminders about our school.

### **SCHOOL DIRECTORY**

This is a list of family names, emails, phone numbers. This, of course, is not mandatory. You can include all the above information, some of it, or choose not to share any information.

### **PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK**

The Parent/Student Handbook includes official Diocesan and school policies, procedures, and other school related information. Periodic amendments are distributed to school families to update this handbook as necessary.

### **BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT**

This takes place in August and is a great way to meet people and get supplies and uniforms for the upcoming school year.

### **CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

Open communication between parents, students, teachers, and the principal is essential. Conflicts between students should first be handled between the students. If no resolution occurs, the issue is referred to the following individuals:

1. Classroom Teacher
2. Principal
3. Pastor

School-related conflicts between adult members of the St. Mary School family should first be handled between the adults involved. If no resolution occurs, the issue should be brought to the attention of the principal and/or pastor.

## **STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **STUDENT RIGHTS**

Students have the right to a safe environment on school property and at school activities. Students have the right to respect from peers, teachers, and staff.

### **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

It is the responsibility of each student to:

- To respect authority, obey all teachers, staff, volunteers, and student patrols.
- To respect the rights of classmates and school personnel.
- To know and obey school, church, classroom, cafeteria, and playground rules.
- To work to the best of their potential.
- To be responsible for his/her actions.
- To refrain from using abusive, improper language or gestures, both verbal and written.
- To refrain from hurting others physically or emotionally.
- To practice habits of personal cleanliness.
- To dress per the uniform code.
- To care for school property, books, and supplies, etc.

Consequences to rule infraction may include the following possible remedial actions, which are neither all-inclusive nor listed in any hierarchical order:

- Positive strategies
- Verbal reprimand
- Warning
- Written assignments
- Loss of privileges
- Financial restitution
- Parent Conference
- Removal from class
- Detention
- Principal intervention

Everyday classroom behavior will be under the direction of the homeroom teacher who will guide, correct or discipline as needed.

## **GENERAL BEHAVIOR**

### **LUNCHROOM**

- Follow the fundamental rules of etiquette in the lunchroom and speak in a voice audible only to those immediately seated together.
- Remain seated during lunch.
- Clean the table and pick up and dispose of all trash when your table is called.
- Students must wait for the teacher or lunch supervisor to dismiss them.
- Students are to line up and walk to and from the playground/lunchroom in an orderly way.
- Students will not throw food, nor will students share food.
- Students should stay in the lunch room unless there is an emergency.
- Inside voices will be used in the lunch room.

### **PLAYGROUND**

- Abstain from contact games of any kind.
- Remain in the designated play area.
- Remain on the playground or school premises.
- Line up immediately in an orderly manner in the appointed area when the end of the recess period is announced.
- Students must be seated on the slide at all times. You may not climb up the slide.
- All frisbees/balls should be played on the grass.
- You may not jump rope on the mulch.
- Chalk can only be used on the cement.
- All articles of clothing should stay on your body when outside.
- Leave the trees and plants alone.
- No bricks, rocks, sticks or snowballs..
- Return all playground equipment.
- Students may not leave school property to retrieve playground equipment-ask the adult on duty.  
All frisbees/balls must be played on the grass.

## **SCHOOL WIDE BEHAVIOR**

The administration and faculty of St. Mary School seek to assure a climate in the school which is appropriate for learning, and which assures the safety and welfare of personnel and students. As partners in the education of children, parents/guardians in the local school community are expected to always demonstrate respectful behavior with faculty, administration, support staff, students, and volunteers whether on or off school grounds or at school-related events. If, in the opinion of the principal, that partnership is no longer viable, the school reserves the right to require the parent/guardian to either remove their child(ren) from the school or not accept registration for the next school year. Unacceptable behaviors include but are not limited to, harassment, verbal abuse, assault of or threats to the faculty, administration, staff, students, and volunteers of the school. Parents/Guardians who post defamatory or threatening statements about the school, its staff, or students on social media can be required to remove the offensive material or withdraw their child(ren) from the school.

- At St. Mary School's parents, students, faculty, and administration cooperate in the education process and in the development of well-rounded Christian young people. St. Mary School provides an

atmosphere in which students are expected to experience and practice Christian social principles in their relationships with others.

- Each student will be held accountable for his/her actions.
- Inappropriate behavior that interferes with the educational process will not be tolerated.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.
- Student's lockers, backpacks, and desks are considered school property and the school has the right to examine them and their contents. The school reserves the right to inspect any school property and any items brought into the school at any time.
- Harassment of any kind (verbal, physical, sexual, etc.) which is reported will be thoroughly investigated by the principal and appropriate action will be taken.
- Gum is not allowed at school or on the school grounds.
- Leaving School Grounds or Classroom without teacher permission is prohibited.
- Being disrespectful to teachers or staff will not be tolerated.
- Using profane or offensive language or gestures will not be tolerated.
- Indecent materials brought onto school property is prohibited.
- Violation of Acceptable Internet Use Policy/ Cyber bullying will not be tolerated.
- False activation of fire alarms/ Calling 911 is prohibited.
- Cheating, Plagiarism or Forgery – Infractions may be met with suspension, failing grade for that grading period, and possible expulsion.
- Possessing matches/lighter, cigarettes, or any form of tobacco on school property is prohibited.
- Chemical Abuse – The possession of any illegal substances is prohibited.
- Destruction of Property – Intentional damage to school or personal property is prohibited. Parents will be responsible to repair or replace damaged property.
- Possession of any kind of weapon on school property is prohibited.

**Repeated displays of inappropriate behavior may result in detention and in extreme cases, suspensions, or expulsions. Full information related to the disciplinary action shall be reported to parents.**

#### **DETENTION**

Parents are notified when a student needs to serve a detention. The parent is expected to sign the notice for an afterschool detention and return it to school the next day. The notice lists the reason(s) for the detention, as well as the date and time to serve detention. Transportation home following a detention is to be provided by the parent.

#### **SUSPENSION**

The principal may suspend a student for a term not to exceed three days. Suspensions may be "in school" as well as "out of school". A suspended student may not take part in any school related activity, including participation in sporting practice or events, during the period of suspension. In addition, any student suspended from school will only be readmitted when both the principal and parents have discussed the reason for suspension. The student will be responsible for all class work missed during the suspension; however, no academic credit will be given during the days of suspension.

#### **EXPULSION**

The following violations are extremely serious and may be cause for expulsion, if committed on school property, school buses, or at any school activity.

- Threats, actual assault, or other forms of violence, such as fighting or unnecessary roughness to any other student or adult interference or refusal to comply with school personnel and volunteers in the performance of their assigned duties.

- Conduct which threatens or disrupts the educational process or interferes with the rights of others.
- Damaging or theft of school or private property.
- Swearing/obscenity in oral, visual, or written form.
- Possessing, using, or transmitting any object that, under the circumstances, can reasonably be considered a weapon or deemed unlawful by a minor.
- Any other behavior deemed serious by the principal and pastor.

## **BULLYING POLICY**

Any action, word or behavior which harasses or intimidates or causes physical, emotional, or psychological harm to another student or students is strictly prohibited, whether the action, word, or behavior is based on a person's characteristic(s) or other matter. This prohibited conduct also extends to the use of technology ("Cyber bullying") as a tool to harass or cause harm.

Bullying is prohibited during any school-sponsored education program or activity; while in school, on school property, on school buses or other school vehicles, at designated school bus stops waiting for the school bus, or at school-sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities; or through the transmission of information from a school computer, a school computer network, or other similar electronic device equipment. However, this policy is not limited to conduct that occurs on the premises of the Diocese school or during school hours or school activities.

"Bullying" means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including made in person, in writing or electronically ("cyber bullying"), directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

1. Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property.
2. Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health.
3. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance.
4. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Bullying may take various forms, including without limitation to one or more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. Examples of "cyber bullying" include but are not limited to the use of e-mail, web sites, text messaging, posting or sending of electronic photos or videos & on social media or "Apps" (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, Snap Chat,, etc...) to harass or intimidate. These lists are meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

### Reporting the conduct:

Any School employee who is made aware of conduct which violates this policy, or who receives a report of bullying, shall promptly report this information to the School administrator and, in the administrator's absence, to the administrator's designee, assistant principal, or dean of students. Any parent/guardian who has information that bullying involving a student(s) of the School is occurring shall promptly notify the School of this information.

### Notifying the parents/guardian:

Within 24 hours of the school being made aware of a reported bullying incident, the school administrator shall

notify the parents/guardian of each of the students reportedly involved. The School administrator shall make diligent efforts to notify a parent/guardian using all contact information available to the school or which the school within that 24 hours can reasonably obtain.

**Investigating:**

The School administrator shall investigate the matter, may involve school support personnel or others as deemed appropriate, and will make reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within 10 school days of the date the report is received by the School. However, information may be discovered during the investigation which extends the investigation beyond 10 school days.

Students who violate this policy will generally be subject to the discipline policy of the student's school, but where the nature or extent of the conduct warrants, violators of the policy may be subject to suspension and/or expulsion.

The School administrator or designee will provide to the parents/guardians of the students who are parties in the investigation (parties are the student(s) reported to be the target of the conduct, and the student(s) reported to be committing the conduct) information about the investigation, and an opportunity to meet with the school administrator or designee to discuss the investigation, the investigation findings, and actions taken to address bullying, adhering to privacy rules and laws. To the extent appropriate, the School will identify to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the involved student(s) school or community-based resources, if available, to assist the involved student(s). The School may require the parent/guardian of the involved student(s) to participate in community-based resources for the involved student(s).

**Procedure:**

This policy is to be distributed annually by each Diocesan school principal to the school's students, and their parents/guardian, and school employees, and to new employees when they are hired. If the School has a website accessible to the public, the policy is to be posted there as well. If the School has a student or family handbook, it is to be posted there as well. If the School posts policies, rules, or standards of conduct in the School, it is to be posted there as well.

Effective with the August 11, 2023 revision, this policy will be reviewed every two years

**FAITH'S LAW - CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT FOR SCHOOL EMPLOYEES**

Pursuant to Illinois's Faith's Law requirements, the Diocese of Rockford adopts this Code of Professional Conduct for School Employees. Each of the provisions below is contained in existing policies and rules of the Diocese of Rockford, but are restated as a Code of Conduct for school employees to comply with the law.

**I. Educator Code of Conduct**

Pursuant to recent Illinois law, the Diocese adopts the relevant portions of the Illinois Educator Code of Conduct, as follows, which applies to school employees who are certified or working toward certification or whose certification has been waived:

**Principle 1: Responsibility to Students:** Educators are committed to creating, promoting, and implementing a learning environment that enables all students to achieve their highest academic potential, and to succeed as a responsible member of society. They are committed to embodying standards of professionalism in the learning environment, respecting the inherent dignity and worth of each student by assuring that the learning environment is characterized by respect for each student; maintaining a professional relationship with students at all times; providing a curriculum based on high expectations for students; and fostering in each student the development of attributes that will enhance skills and knowledge necessary to be a contributing member of society.

Principle 2: Responsibility to Self: Educators are committed to establishing high professional standards and striving to meet these standards through their performance. They are committed to assuming responsibility and accountability for their performance and striving to demonstrate proficiency and currency in both content knowledge and professional practice; developing and implementing personal and professional goals with attention to professional standards through a process of self-assessment and professional development; representing their professional credentials and qualifications accurately; and using sound professional judgment.

Principle 3: Responsibility to Colleagues and the Profession: Educators are committed to collaborating with school and Diocesan colleagues and other professionals in the interest of student learning and to meet state educational standards; working together to create a respectful, professional and supportive school climate for educators to maintain their individual professional integrity; seeking out and engaging in activities that contribute to the ongoing development of the profession, encouraging promising candidates to enter the education profession; and supporting the preparation, induction, and mentoring and professional development of educators.

Principle 4: Responsibility to School Parents and Families: Educators are committed to collaborating, striving to build trust, and respecting confidentiality with school parents and families striving to develop and maintain professional relationships with school parents and families; and promoting collaboration and supporting student learning through communication with parents and families.

Principle 5: Responsibility to ISBE: Educators are committed to supporting the Administrative and School Codes as applicable to Catholic schools, state and federal laws and regulations as applicable to Catholic schools, and the Illinois State Board of Education's standards for highly qualified educators as applicable to Catholic schools. They are committed to providing accurate communication to the Illinois State Board of Education concerning all certification matters; maintaining appropriate certification for employment; and complying with the state and federal codes, laws, and regulations, that apply to Catholic schools.

## II. Sexual Misconduct

The Diocese's *Norms for the Prohibition of Sexual Abuse of Minors and Sexual Misconduct with Adults: Education, Prevention, Assistance of Persons making a Report, Investigation and Procedures for Determination of Fitness for Ministry/Employment*, prohibits sexual abuse of minors by its employees, clergy members, and volunteers. Pursuant to Faith's Law, the Diocese has amended its *Norms* to add additional description of acts constituting sexual abuse of a minor:

Sexual misconduct, defined by Faith's Law as any verbal, nonverbal, written, or electronic communication or physical activity directed toward or with a minor for the purpose of establishing a romantic or sexual relationship with the minor, including but limited to a sexual or romantic invitation; dating or soliciting a date; engaging in sexualized or romantic dialog; making sexually suggestive comments that are directed toward or with a minor; self-disclosure or physical exposure of a sexual, romantic, or erotic contact with the minor (Illinois' *Faith's Law*, Public Act, 102-0676, (105 ILCS 5/22-85.5)).

Grooming behavior, defined by Faith's Law and the Illinois Criminal Code as knowingly using a computer online service, internet service, local bulletin board service, or any other device capable of electronic data storage or transmission, or performs an act in person or by conduct through a third party, or uses written communication to seduce, solicit, lure, or entice, or attempt to seduce, solicit, lure, or entice, a child, or another person believed by the person to be a child to commit any sex offense as defined in Section 2 of the Sex Offender Registration Act, to distribute photographs depicting the sex organs of the child, or to otherwise engage in any unlawful sexual conduct with a child or with another child believed by the person to be a child.

## III. Expectations of School Employees

The Diocese restates here in the Diocese's expectations of all its employees including employees who work at parish elementary schools and Diocesan high school in the Diocese of Rockford.

School employees are expected to maintain professional relationships and boundaries, recognizing the age and the developmental levels of the students with whom they interact.

These expectations are set forth in detail in the following:

*Diocese's Code for the Pastoral Use of Technology and Social Media;*  
*Diocese's Code of Pastoral Conduct;* the *Diocese's Guidelines on Youth and Those Working with Youth Employee, Volunteer, and Youth Participant General Guidelines and Boundaries Expectations;*  
*Diocese's Norms for the Prohibition of Sexual Abuse of Minors and Sexual Misconduct with Adults: Education, Prevention, Assistance to Persons making a Report, Investigation, and Procedures for Determination of Fitness for Ministry/Employment;*  
*Illinois DCFS Acknowledgement of Mandated Reporter Form;*

and the following trainings: *Virtus Protecting God's Children* Illinois DCFS's *Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Training for Mandated Reporters;* and State of Illinois' *Prohibition of Sexual Harassment training.*

#### IV. School employees are mandated reporters

The Diocese restates here the Diocese's requirement that its employees, including employees who work at parish elementary schools and Diocesan high schools in the Diocese of Rockford, shall report suspected child abuse and suspected child neglect to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

Pursuant to the Illinois Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, (325 ILCS 5/4), school employees are required to make a report suspected child abuse and suspected child neglect to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services by calling the hotline number at 1-800-25-ABUSE (1-800-252-2873) whenever the employee has reasonable cause to believe that a child known to the employee in the employee's professional or official capacity may be abused or neglected.

This requirement is contained in the following:

*Diocese's Norms for the Prohibition of Sexual Abuse of Minors and Sexual Misconduct with Adults: Education, Prevention, Assistance to Persons making a Report, Investigation, and Procedures for Determination of Fitness for Ministry/Employment;*  
*Illinois DCFS Acknowledgement of Mandated Reporter Status form;*

and the following trainings:

*Virtus Protecting God's Children;*

Illinois DCFS's *Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Training for Mandated Reporters;* and State of Illinois' *Prohibition of Sexual Harassment training.*

#### V. Employee training related to child abuse and educator ethics

The Diocese requires its employees to be trained annually in their obligations as mandated reporters and every three years to be trained in preventing, detecting and responding properly to sexual harassment. The trainings are entitled DCFS's *Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Training for Mandated Reporters;* and the State of Illinois' *Prohibition of Sexual Harassment training.*

Those requirements are set forth in the Diocese's Employee Handbook and in the Diocese's *Safe Environment Requirements for Clergy, Adult/Teen Employees and Volunteers whose role involves direct contact with minors.*

The Diocese will require its employee educators to receive training in educator ethics. When those resources are completed, they will be shared with educators.

## ALLEGATION OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT OF A STUDENT

Faith's Law was enacted in 2021 in Illinois for the purpose of protecting students from sexual misconduct in the school setting. Many of the employer responsibilities created by Faith's Law have been responsibilities recognized in several Diocese policies and in effect for more than 20 years. But Faith's Law added additional requirements, and those are explained below.

This policy supplements Diocese Policy 5161, Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Procedures. This Policy and Policy 5161 are to be read in conjunction with each other. (See below.)

- A. Procedure when school receives an allegation of "sexual misconduct," "sexual abuse" or "grooming"
  1. Report the allegation to DCFS, local police, and the Diocese of Rockford

The Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, also known as the "mandated reporter law" requires that a mandated reporter who has reasonable cause to believe that a child known to him or her in his professional capacity is being or has been sexually abused shall make a report to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services ("DCFS") at its hotline number: 1-800-25-ABUSE. All school employees are mandated reporters.

Faith's Law created a definition of "sexual misconduct." For purposes of mandated reporters adhering to their obligations under the Mandated Reporter law and the Diocese of Rockford policies, sexual misconduct is considered sexual abuse. Faith's law also expanded the existing definition of "grooming." Sexual misconduct and grooming are examples of sexual abuse, and both must be reported to the DCFS hotline. See the definitions at the end of this policy.

A school employee who has reason to believe that a child known to him or her in his or her professional capacity is being or has been groomed, sexually abused, or a victim of sexual misconduct, is required to promptly make a report to the hotline operated by DCFS at 1-800-25-ABUSE.

The Diocese's *Norms for the Prohibition of Sexual Abuse of Minors and Sexual Misconduct with Adults: Education, Prevention, Assistance to Persons making a Report, Investigation, and Procedures for Determination of Fitness for Ministry/Employment* contain additional reporting requirements: the mandated reporter is required to report the matter to local police, and to the Diocese of Rockford by writing to the Diocese of Rockford, Office of Diocesan Intervention, P.O. Box 7044, Rockford, IL 61125; by calling the Diocese's confidential hotline number (815) 293-7540 and leaving your name and phone number or by writing an email to [reportsexualabuse@rockforddiocese.org](mailto:reportsexualabuse@rockforddiocese.org).

2. School shall notify the student who is the alleged victim and the student's parents/guardian when an allegation is received by the school.
  - a. As required by Faith's Law, when a school receives a report, or becomes aware by whatever means of an allegation, that a school employee, school agent, or school contractor has engaged in sexual misconduct with an enrolled student, the school is required to **first** provide written notification to the enrolled student of the allegation using developmentally-appropriate and age-appropriate language, even if the enrolled student was the reporter of the alleged sexual misconduct. The notice must identify available resources for the student within the school and the community in accordance with Article 26A of the Illinois School Code and available counseling services under Section 3-550 of the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Code. The school principal is required to draft and provide that notification.
  - b. Once the enrolled student has been notified, the school principal is required to provide written notification to the enrolled student's parents/guardian that the school has

received or become aware of an allegation that an employee, agent, or contractor of the school, as the case may be, has engaged in sexual misconduct toward the parents/guardian's child.

The notice to the parents'/guardian of the enrolled student must identify the available resources for the student within the school and community in accordance with Article 26A of the Illinois School Code and available counseling services under Section 3-550 of the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Code. Beginning July 1, 2025, the notice to parents/guardian must also include the name and contact information for the domestic and sexual violence and parenting resource coordinator under Section 26A-35 of the School Code.

- c. The school principal is required to ensure that these notifications to the enrolled student and his or her parents/guardian are made within a reasonably appropriate time following the school's receipt of the allegation, unless circumstances prevent or warrant otherwise.
3. School shall notify the enrolled student who is the alleged victim and his or her parents/guardian when formal action has been taken:
  - a. When formal action has been taken by the school relating to the employment of an employee, agent, or contractor of the school accused of sexual misconduct, the school is required to **first** provide written notification to the enrolled student using developmentally-appropriate and age-appropriate language. The notification is to state what action was taken by the school, and identify available resources for the student within the school and community in accordance with Article 26A of the School Code and available counseling services under Section 3-550 of the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Code. Beginning July 1, 2025, the notice must also include the name and contact information for the domestic and sexual violence and parenting resource coordinator under Section 26A-35 of the School Code. The school principal is required to draft and provide that information.
  - b. Once the enrolled student has been notified, the school principal is required to provide written notification to the enrolled student's parents/guardian, informing them of what action is being taken by the school, stating whether a report concerning the alleged sexual misconduct was or will be submitted to the State Superintendent of Education and the applicable Regional Superintendent of Schools pursuant to Section 10-21.9 of the School Code, and identifying available resources for the student within the school and the community in accordance with Article 26A of this Code. Beginning on July 1, 2025, the notice must also include the name and contact information for the domestic and sexual violence and parenting resource coordinator under Section 26A-35 of the School Code.
  - c. The School principal is required to ensure that these notifications to the enrolled student and his or her parents/guardian are made within a reasonably appropriate time following the school's formal actions against the alleged offender. If the student is no longer enrolled at the time formal action is taken, sending written notice to the last known address in the student's file fulfills the notification requirement.
4. Exceptions to Notice Requirements
  - a. None of the notification requirements in paragraph 2 and 3 above is required if a parent/guardian of the enrolled student is the alleged offender of the sexual misconduct.
  - b. Neither of the notifications to the parents/guardian in paragraphs 2.b and 3.b is

required if the enrolled student is at 18 years of age or older, or is emancipated.

5. The identity of the alleged offender of the sexual misconduct  
At no time is the school required to identify the name of the alleged offender in any or the notifications, in paragraphs 2 and 3 above, to the enrolled student and the parents/guardian.

6. Additional Notification Requirements
  - a. If the School has reasonable cause to believe that a license holder (certified teacher or school administrator) has committed an act of sexual misconduct, the School shall notify the Diocese's Superintendent of Schools/Director of the Diocese Catholic Education Office. The Diocese Superintendent in turn is required to report this information to the State Superintendent of Schools, and as part of those reports the Diocese Superintendent is required to identify the name of the alleged offender.
  - b. The above notification requirements under Faith's Law are not a substitute for the mandated reporter obligations under State law, and the requirements pursuant to Diocesan policies that the School contact the DCFS hotline at 1-800-25-ABUSE, and the local police, and the Diocese of Rockford. In these notifications, the School shall identify the name of the alleged offender. See paragraph 1 of this policy.

- B. School is required to Annually provide school parents the ISBE's Resource Guide on Sexual Abuse Beginning with the start of the 2023-2024 school year, each school is required by Faith's Law to annually notify parents in writing of the Illinois State Board of Education's "*Sexual Abuse Response and Prevention Resource Guide*" for parents, students and educators; and must either provide a copy of the *Guide* to parents or make it accessible to parents on the school's website. The ISBE has posted the guide on its website here:

<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Faiths-Law-Guidance-FAQ.pdf#page=15>

- C. Required Training of educators on multiple topics  
Each school is required to provide educators with "training on the physical and mental health needs of students, student safety, educator ethics, professional conduct, and other topics to address the well-being of students and improve the academic and social-emotional outcomes of students."

## Child Abuse and Neglect Policy 5161

### Guidelines for Managing Reporting Alleged Child Abuse

What the Law requires: A mandated reporter who has reasonable cause to believe that a child known to the mandated reporter in his or her professional capacity may be abused or neglected shall immediately make a report to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services

### Definitions

1. Abused Child means a child whose (i) parent, (ii) immediate family member, (iii) person responsible for the child's welfare, (iv) any individual residing in the same home as the child, or (v) a paramour of the child's parent:
  - a. inflicts, causes to be inflicted or allows to be inflicted, upon such child physical injury, by other accidental means, which causes death, disfigurement, impairment of physical or emotional health, or loss or impairment of any bodily function;
  - b. creates a substantial risk of physical injury to such child by other than accidental means which would be likely to cause death, disfigurement, impairment of physical or emotional health, or loss or impairment of any bodily function;

- c. commits or allows to be committed any sex offense against such child, as such sex offenses are defined in the Criminal Code of 1961, as amended, and extending those definitions of sex offenses to include children under 18 years of age;
  - d. commits or allows to be committed an act or acts of torture upon such child;
  - e. inflicts excessive corporal punishment
2. "Neglected Child" means any child whose parent or other person responsible for the child's welfare withholds or denies nourishment or medically indicated treatment including food or care denied solely on the basis of present or anticipated mental or physical impairment as determined by a physician acting alone or in consultation with other physicians or otherwise does not provide the proper or necessary support, education as required by law, or medical or other remedial care recognized under State law as necessary for the child's well-being, or other care necessary for his or her well-being, including adequate food, clothing and shelter; or who is abandoned by his or her parents or other person responsible for the child's welfare. A child shall not be considered neglected or abused for the sole reason that such child's parent or other person responsible for his or her welfare depends upon spiritual means through prayer alone for the treatment or cure of disease or remedial care.

### **INTERNET-ACCESS POLICY AND AUTHORIZATION FOR INTERNET ACCESS**

All use of the Internet shall be consistent with the Diocese and School's goal of promoting educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication. This Internet Access Policy and Authorization does not attempt to state all required or proscribed behavior of users. However, some specific examples are provided. The failure of any user to follow the terms of the Internet Access Policy and Authorization for Internet Access will result in the loss of privileges, disciplinary action (up to and including expulsion or discharge), and/or appropriate legal action. The signature(s) on the Authorization for Internet Access is legally binding and indicates the party who signed has read the terms and conditions carefully and understands their significance.

### **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

1. Acceptance use – Access to the Internet must be for the purpose of education or research and be consistent with the educational objectives of the Diocese and School.
2. Privileges- The use of the Internet is a privilege not a right. Inappropriate use will result in cancellation of those privileges and possible disciplinary actions (up to and including expulsion or discharge) and/or appropriate legal action. The building administrator will determine if a use violation has occurred and may deny, revoke, or suspend access at any time; his or her decision is final. Electronic communications, downloaded material, and/or other information obtained or transmitted via the Internet may be monitored or read by School officials.
3. Unacceptable Use – You are responsible for your actions and activities involving the network. Some examples of unacceptable uses are:
  - a. Using the network for any illegal activity, including violation of copyright or other contracts, or transmitting any material in violation of the any U.S. or State regulations
  - b. Unauthorized downloading of software, regardless of whether it is copy-righted
  - c. Downloading copyrighted material for other than personal use
  - d. Using the network to identify, imply, or infer gang activity
  - e. Wastefully using resources, such as file space
  - f. Invading the privacy of individuals
  - g. Using another user's password or account
  - h. Posting anonymous messages or using pseudonyms or anonymous sign-on.
  - i. Accessing, submitting, posting, publishing, or displaying any defamatory, inaccurate, abusive, obscene performance, sexually oriented, threatening, racially offensive, harassing, illegal material or other

information and/or materials that are inconsistent with the objectives and or teachings of the Diocese and/or School.

## **GANGS AND GANG-RELATED ACTIVITIES**

St. Mary's is a gang-free environment. Gangs, as defined in this Policy, include individuals who associate with each other primarily for criminal, disruptive and/or activities prohibited by law and/or by the school's rules and regulations. Gangs, gang-related activities, and secret societies are not acceptable in a school setting and their presence interferes materially and substantially with the educational process and the maintenance of appropriate discipline and may foster antisocial behaviors, attitudes and practices which may endanger the health, safety, and welfare of all students.

Students are prohibited from participating in any activity related to gang or secret society while on school property or in conjunction with school-related activities. Activities prohibited by this policy include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Soliciting and/or recruiting others for membership.
2. Participating in and/or inciting physical violence.
3. Extorting or soliciting money and/or services, requesting any person to pay for protection or the payment of dues.
4. Coercing, harassing and/or otherwise intimidating, threatening, or causing harm to any person or thing.
5. Wearing, possessing, using, displaying in any manner, distributing, or selling any clothing, jewelry, emblem, badge, symbol, sign, or other item commonly associated with membership in or affiliation with a gang or secret society.
6. Using any verbal or non-verbal communications (gestures, handshakes, etc.) Suggesting or showing membership in or affiliation with a gang or secret society.
7. Engaging or failing to engage in any activity where such is intended to promote or further the interest of any gang or any gang activity or secret society including, but not limited to, distributing literature, drawing, or displaying gang-related symbols on any surface or teaching others to "represent" or act like a member of a gang or secret society.
8. Any other activity which violates any law or policy of the School or the Catholic Diocese of Rockford when such act or activity is taken to further the interest of a gang or secret society.

For the purposes of the Policy, the School may also consider gang or gang-related activities in which a student engages outside the school and/or separate from School-related activities due to the potential repercussions on the school and other students of such conduct.

**Violations of this Policy may result in dismissal from the school.**

### **UPDATE ON INTERNET POLICY EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2021**

#### **INVESTIGATIONS REGARDING STUDENT SOCIAL NETWORKING**

##### **Do NOT Change This Language.**

An elementary school or high school may not request or require a student to provide a password or other related account information in order to gain access to the student's account or profile on a social networking website.

However, an elementary school or high school may investigate and may require a student to cooperate in an investigation, if there is specific information about activity on the student's account on a social networking website that violates a school disciplinary rule or policy. In the course of an investigation, an elementary school or high school may require the student to share the content that is reported in order to make a factual determination.

A student's failure to cooperate in such an investigation may lead to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

Elementary and secondary schools are required under the law to notify its students and parents of this policy, by publishing it in the school's disciplinary rules, policies, or handbook, or communicating it by similar means. Right to Privacy in the School Setting Act (105 ILCS 75/1, et al.)

### **BATTERY AGAINST SCHOOL PERSONNEL**

The school chief administrator shall immediately notify local law enforcement officials of written complaints from school personnel regarding instances of battery committed against school personnel, and the school chief administrator shall notify the Illinois State Police within three days of each incident of battery through the School Incident Reporting System (SIRS) in IWAS.

### **DRUGS AND ALCOHOL**

Students are prohibited from using or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while at school or at any school-related function. Included within the prohibitions set forth in this Policy are the following:

- Use, possession, manufacture, distribution, dispensation or sale of drugs, drug paraphernalia or alcohol on school premises or with respect to school-related activities.
- Storing in a locker, desk, automobile, or other repository on school premises or in connection with any school-related activity any drugs, drug paraphernalia or alcohol.
- Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol on school premises or in connection with any school-related activities.

School grounds are defined as the real property comprising any school, any conveyance owned, leased, or contracted by a school to transport students to or from school or a school related activity, or on a public way within 1,000 feet of a school.

The chief school administrator shall immediately notify a local law enforcement agency of verified incidents involving drugs occurring on school grounds. The chief school administrator shall notify the Illinois State Police of such incidents through the School Incident Reporting System (SIRS) in IWAS.

The school reserves the right to require a student to undergo testing for the use of alcohol and/or drugs when a reasonable suspicion of such use exists. A "reasonable suspicion" of drug and/or alcohol use may be based upon the observation of the student's behavior, information received regarding alleged alcohol or drug use and/or other indicia giving rise to a suspicion of a violation of this Policy. A student's failure to cooperate in testing required by this Policy or other violations of this Policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the school.

### **POSSESSION OF WEAPONS**

It is a violation of the school's policies for a student to possess a weapon on school premises or at any time. School grounds are defined as the real property comprising any school, any conveyance owned, leased, or contracted by a school to transport students to or from school or a school related activity, or on a public way within 1,000 feet of a school. Included within the prohibitions of this Policy are the possession, sale, distribution, manufacture, receipt, seeking the sale or trade or use of any firearm, knife, martial arts device, or other object which, in the school's discretion, may be considered to constitute a weapon. Violations of this Policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the school.

The chief administrator shall immediately notify a local law enforcement agency of firearm incidents on school grounds. If a student is in possession of a firearm, then the local school administrator shall also immediately notify the student's parent or guardian. The chief school administrator shall notify the Illinois State Police of such incidents through the School Incident Reporting System (SIRS) in IWAS.

St. Mary's School reserves the right to establish and enforce reasonable standards of behavior for all students involved in educational and recreational activities – whether during regular school hours, on school premises, in connection with school activities or otherwise. In the event of a violation of those standards, the school reserves the right to invoke appropriate disciplinary steps including, but not limited to, demerits, detentions, suspensions, and expulsion. The level of discipline appropriate for a violation shall be determined on a case-by-case basis in the school's discretion based upon a review of a variety of factors including, but not limited to, the severity of the misconduct, the student's academic and behavioral record and other similar such criteria.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of infractions for which students may be disciplined up to and including expulsion:

1. Violation of the school's policy on gang-related activities
2. Violation of the school's policy on drugs and alcohol
3. Violation of the school's policy on weapons
4. Violation of the school's rules and regulations, or
5. Any other conduct considered by the school to be contrary to the best interests of the school, its faculty, and/or to the school's mission.

## **RIGHT TO CONDUCT INSPECTIONS**

In the interests of the health and safety of the school, its students and faculty and in furtherance of its educational mission, the school reserves the right to conduct inspections of all areas of its property and objects that are brought onto its premises. The school reserves the right to conduct these inspections on its own or to request the assistance of a third party in the inspection process.

This right to conduct inspections includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Lockers (including those that bear a student-provided lock).
- Desks.
- Bags, purses, briefcases, "totes", or other carrying devices brought onto school property.
- Vehicles located on school property.
- Any other equipment, device or property to which the use or access is allowed by the school.
- Any other item or property brought on to the school's premises by a student or others.

## **EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

### **ATHLETICS**

Athletics is an important element of the total educational program that seeks to guide the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and physical development of each student-athlete. It is our desire to provide a Christian environment that instills in student-athletes participation in sportsmanship consistent with Catholic-Christian values. Please see the St. Mary STARS Sports.

### **B.A.S.E. PROGRAM (After School Enrichment)**

B.A.S.E. is a self-sustaining program and provides quality childcare for students who attend St. Mary Catholic School in Sycamore. B.A.S.E. operates daily, after school hours. Our program offers a variety of activities, which are supervised and guided by caring personnel.

The program runs from school dismissal until 5:30 p.m., each day that St. Mary Catholic School is in session.

#### **EXCEPTIONS:**

No B.A.S.E. on the first and last day of the school year.

No B.A.S.E. on School Holidays

No B.A.S.E. when school is dismissed early or closed due to weather or other emergencies.

### **BATTLE OF THE BOOKS**

Battle of the Books is a reading incentive club for students in 3rd thru 5th grades. Students read books and come together as a group, to demonstrate their abilities and to test their knowledge of the books they have read. The student competitions are similar to the TV series Family Feud or Whiz Kids styles of competitions.

### **CHOIR**

St. Mary School Choir meets on Friday mornings before school at 8am at the church to prepare for the Friday School Masses.

### **HANDBELLS**

St. Mary School Handbells meet weekly, before or after school to prepare for concerts.

### **STUDENT COUNCIL**

The student council helps share students' ideas, interests, and concerns with teachers and the school principal. They also help raise funds for school-wide activities, including social events, community projects, helping people in need, and school reform. Our student council meets every other Friday during lunch and is advised by a school faculty member.

## **ATHLETICS**

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### **ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY**

Participation in extracurricular activities is strongly encouraged. However, each student's priority must be exemplification of Catholic ideals and academic achievement. Therefore, scholastic standing will be monitored and maintained as eligibility requirements for athletics and other activities. Parents and students should be keeping track of grades in SchoolSpeak.

For eligibility determination, arrangements must be turned in by Wednesday morning. Every Thursday morning, the homeroom teachers will review the grades of student-athletes in religion, reading, mathematics, social studies, science, spelling, and language arts. They will give the names of ineligible students to the principal.

An average below 70% (F) in any one of these areas (religion, reading, mathematics, social studies, science, spelling, and language arts), the athlete will not be allowed to participate in games or practices until the grade is restored to passing.

An average below 75% (D) in any two of these areas will result in an immediate seven day “academic watch,” probationary period, in which the student must raise his or her grade to above 75% by the following Wednesday or the student will be suspended from athletics for one week. The student is not permitted to attend or participate in practices or games while he or she is suspended.

The principal will email the parents and the athletic director, and the athletic director will notify the coaches. Ineligibility runs for one week from Friday through the following Thursday (including Thursday night). The student will be eligible on Friday unless the next report indicates that the student is not eligible. Any student who is ineligible will not be allowed to participate in athletic practices or games (including the attendance of games), Student Council dances or any other after school extra-curricular activities until the student is determined to be eligible.

A student who is absent or goes home during the day is not allowed to play or attend a practice or game or attend any other extra-curricular event that day. If the student has a prearranged doctor’s appointment, still allowing them to be in school for the majority of the day, she or he will be allowed to participate. A note from the doctor’s office may be requested to confirm the appointment.

Students who are ineligible for several weeks may be dropped from a sport or activity. Students may be ineligible for other reasons such as a lack of effort in specials classes or disciplinary issues. The principal has the final decision on disputed eligibility issues.

### **ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS**

Student-athletes must attend school for at least two-thirds (4.25 hours of the school day to participate or compete in any sport that evening or receive approval from the principal. A student who is absent or goes home during the day is not allowed to play or attend practice or game or attend any other extra-curricular event that day. If the student has a prearranged doctor’s appointment, still allowing them to be in school for the majority of the day, she or he will be allowed to participate. A note from the doctor’s office may be requested to confirm the appointment.

Student-athletes must participate in P.E. to participate in athletic practice or games that evening or receive approval from the principal.

### **THE MANAGEMENT OF CONCUSSION AND HEAD INJURY IN YOUTH SPORTS**

The State of Illinois enacted a law effective July 1, 2011, requiring IHSA member schools to adopt a policy regarding student-athlete concussions and head injuries that is in compliance with the protocols, policies, and by-laws of the IHSA. The school and its coaches shall continue to adhere to the IHSA Protocol for Implementation of NFHS Sports Playing Rule for Concussions and the IHSA Return to Play Policy, as they are now and may hereafter be amended. This Diocesan Policy applies to elementary schools and high schools.

### **CONCUSSION DEFINITION**

A concussion is caused by a blow or motion to the head or body that causes the brain to move rapidly inside the skull. The risk of catastrophic injuries or death is significant when a concussion or head injury is not properly evaluated and managed.

Concussions are a type of brain injury that can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally works. Concussions can occur in any organized or unorganized sport or recreational activity and can

result from a fall or from players colliding with each other, the ground, or with obstacles. Concussions occur with or without loss of consciousness, but the vast majority of concussions occur without loss of consciousness.

### **REMOVAL FROM PRACTICE AND GAME IF SUSPECTED INJURY**

When a student exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion or other head injury, such as a loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems, or when a coach otherwise suspects a student has suffered a concussion or other head injury, the student shall be removed at that time from participation in a practice or game or other competition.

### **NO RETURN TO THE PRACTICE OR GAME WITHOUT PHYSICIAN CLEARANCE**

A student who has been removed from an interscholastic contest for a possible concussion or head injury shall not be permitted to return to that contest unless cleared to do so by a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois or a certified athletic trainer.

If not cleared to return to that contest, a student shall not be permitted to return to play or practice until the student has provided the school with written clearance from a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois or a certified athletic trainer working in conjunction with a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois.

### **APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY**

This policy and the attached appendices are to be made a part of the any agreement, contract, code, or other written instrument the school requires a student and his or her parents or guardian to sign before participating in practice or interscholastic competition. Spiritual Formation Academic Excellence Service to Others 222 Waterman Street · Sycamore, IL 60178 Phone: (815) 895-5215 | Fax: (815) 895-5295 [www.stmarysycamore.org](http://www.stmarysycamore.org)

### **PROCEDURE**

The School shall educate its coaches in recognizing the signs and symptoms of and properly managing head injuries. The School shall distribute to every coach a copy of "A Fact Sheet for Coaches," which can be found at [http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/coaches\\_Engl.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/coaches_Engl.pdf) ; and the CDC Guide for Coaches which can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/CoachGuide-a.pdf>. The School shall distribute to every parent whose student is in a youth sport the Fact Sheet for Athletes, found at [http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/Athletes\\_Fact\\_Sheet-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/Athletes_Fact_Sheet-a.pdf) (English) and [http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/Athletes\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_Spanish-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/Athletes_Fact_Sheet_Spanish-a.pdf) (Spanish); and the Fact Sheet for Parents, found at [http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/Parents\\_Fact\\_Sheet-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/Parents_Fact_Sheet-a.pdf) (English) and [http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/Parents\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_Spanish-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/Parents_Fact_Sheet_Spanish-a.pdf) (Spanish); and the attached 2-page Concussion Information and Release Form which must be signed and returned to the School by the parents or guardian and the student.

Every locker room in the School shall display the two posters found at [http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/Signs\\_Symptoms\\_Poster-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/Signs_Symptoms_Poster-a.pdf) and [http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/Concussion\\_A-Must\\_Read\\_for\\_Young\\_Athletes-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/Concussion_A-Must_Read_for_Young_Athletes-a.pdf)

### **WATCH A CDC VIDEO ON CONCUSSIONS**

Keeping Quiet Can Keep You Out of the Game (2:00 minutes)  
Read more about Tracy's Story [PDF 187KB]

Keeping Quiet Can Keep You Out of the Game...A Mother's Story (2:00 minutes)

Brandon's Story (News segment from PBS News Hour with Jim Lehrer, which originally aired on January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2000.)

### **CONCUSSION INFORMATION AND RELEASE FORM**

A concussion is a brain injury, and all brain injuries are serious. They are caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head, or by a blow to another part of the body with the force transmitted to the head. They can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally works. Even though most concussions are mild, **all concussions are potentially serious and may result in complications including prolonged brain damage and death if not recognized and managed properly.** In other words, even a "ding" or a bump on the head can be serious. You can't see a concussion and most sports concussions occur without loss of consciousness. Signs and symptoms of concussion may show up right after the injury or can take hours or days to fully appear. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms or signs of concussion yourself, seek medical attention right away.

### **SYMPTOMS MAY INCLUDE ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING:**

- Headaches
- "Pressure in head"
- Nausea or vomiting
- Neck pain
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Blurred, double, or fuzzy vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling sluggish or slowed down
- Feeling foggy or groggy
- Drowsiness
- Change in sleep patterns
- Amnesia
- "Don't feel right"
- Fatigue or low energy
- Sadness
- Nervousness or anxiety
- Irritability
- More emotional
- Confusion
- Concentration or memory problems (forgetting game plays)
- Repeating the same question/comment

### **WHAT CAN HAPPEN IF MY CHILD KEEPS ON PLAYING WITH A CONCUSSION OR RETURNS TOO SOON?**

Athletes with the signs and symptoms of concussion should be removed from play immediately. Continuing to play with the signs and symptoms of a concussion leaves the young athlete especially vulnerable to greater injury. There is an increased risk of significant damage from a concussion for a period after that concussion occurs, particularly if the athlete suffers another concussion before completely recovering from the first one. This can lead to prolonged recovery, or even to severe brain swelling (second impact syndrome) with devastating and even fatal consequences. It is well known that adolescent or teenage athletes will often fail to report symptoms of injuries. Concussions are no different. As a result, education of administrators, coaches, parents, and students is the key to student-athlete's safety.

### **IF YOU THINK YOUR CHILD HAS SUFFERED A CONCUSSION**

Any athlete even suspected of suffering a concussion should be removed from the game or practice immediately. No athlete may return to activity after an apparent head injury or concussion, regardless of how mild it seems or how quickly symptoms clear, without medical clearance. Close observation of the athlete should continue for several hours. IHSA Policy requires athletes to provide their school with written clearance from either a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches or a certified athletic trainer working in conjunction with a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches prior to returning to play or practice following a concussion or after being removed from an interscholastic contest due to a possible head injury or concussion and not cleared to return to that same contest. In accordance with state law, all IHSA member schools are required to follow this policy.

You should also inform your child’s coach if you think that your child may have a concussion. Remember, it is better to miss one game than miss the whole season. And when in doubt, the athlete sits out.

For current and up-to-date information on concussions you can go to:

<http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/youth.html>

Student-athlete

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student-athlete

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Legal Guardian

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Legal Guardian

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Adapted from the CDC and the 3rd International Conference on Concussion in Sport

## PARENT ORGANIZATIONS

### PTO – PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION

The PTO is composed of St. Mary School’s parents and educators. The PTO promotes and encourages communication among parents, teachers, administration, and the community. The PTO sponsors and organizes school events, which deepen our community spirit and enhances our children’s educational experiences at St. Mary School. All parents are members and are encouraged to attend the monthly meetings.

### ST. MARY SPORTS BOOSTERS

The St. Mary Sports Boosters is organized to support all St. Mary School Programs through financial and volunteer support. The Sports Booster’s will foster good sportsmanship by the athletes, coaches, parents and fans.

## FUNDRAISING

All families are expected to contribute their time and talent to fundraising projects, such as SCRIP, annual school fundraiser, Christmas Greens sale, etc., which directly benefit the school. Fundraisers help defray many expenses not met by Tuition fees and the Parish subsidy.

St. Mary School receives the most of its financing from student tuition and fees. The purpose of this policy is to insure the financial viability and longevity of St. Mary School through a plan of systematic payment and collection of tuition and fees. Tuition is either paid in full by a designated date prior to the start of the academic year or paid through a monthly payment system. The tuition procedure will in no way affect our approach to families that are in genuine need and

require special payment plans. We continue to try to provide Catholic education to every child who desires a faith-based education.

## **ST. MARY CATHOLIC SCHOOL TUITION INFORMATION FOR 2025-2026**

### **REGISTERED PARISHIONERS:**

One Child: \$4,795

Two Children: \$8,590

Three Children: \$11,885

4+ Children: \$14,385

Chromebook (Grades 5, 6, 7 and 8): \$325 per student, a one time fee.

### **NON-PARISHIONERS:**

One Child: \$7,000

Two Children: \$13,000

Three Children: \$18,500

4+ Children: \$23,000

Chromebook (Grades 5, 6,7 and 8): \$325 per student, a one time fee

### **NON-PARISHIONERS OR THOSE WHO WISH TO PAY FULL TUITION:**

\$6,450 per child

### **ST. MARY PRESCHOOL TUITION FOR 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR**

Please refer to our website for current rates at <https://stmarysycamore.org/school>.

### **PRESCHOOL AFTERNOON ENRICHMENT TUITION FOR 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR**

Please refer to our website for current rates at <https://stmarysycamore.org/school>.

- Our Afternoon Enrichment program is available for our Preschoolers. Students attend their morning class time from 8:30am – 11:30am, eat lunch at school, and take part in enrichment activities from 11:30 am – 2:55 pm.

### **FEES FOR 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR**

#### **PER FAMILY**

Enrollment in FACTS (Tuition Management) \$55.00

#### **PER STUDENT**

Registration for Pre-School: \$150.00 (non-refundable), before 2/8.

Registration for Kindergarten through 8th Grade: \$200.00 (non-refundable), before 2/8.

### **FOR FINANCIAL AID**

Go to <https://factsmgt.com/financial-management/grant-and-aid-assessment/>. Fill out the financial aid application and upload your financial documents. FACTS will generate a report that the pastor and principal will review. They will make a determination as to what aid will be given. There is a budgetary amount of funds available for tuition relief each school year.

FACTS Website – <https://factsmgt.com/parent-resources/grant-and-aid/>

## Confidentiality & Non-Disclosure Policy

As a Catholic Christian institution committed to fostering a respectful and unified community, we require all parents to uphold the confidentiality of school communications. This policy is designed to protect the integrity of our educational environment, maintain trust among families, and ensure that sensitive information is handled appropriately.

### 1. Scope of Confidentiality

This policy applies to all internal school communications, including but not limited to:

- Emails, newsletters, and announcements issued by the school administration to parents and students
- Meeting discussions, including parent-teacher conferences, home-school associations, disciplinary actions, and board meetings
- Internal policies, procedures, and strategic plans that are not publicly available
- Communications regarding other students, staff, or school operations that is disclosed to school parents under a reasonable expectation of confidentiality

### 2. Parental Acknowledgement & Agreement

By enrolling their child at a Diocesan school, parents/guardians agree to the following confidentiality terms:

- Not to disclose, publish, distribute, or share school communications with unauthorized individuals, social media platforms, media outlets, or other external parties without prior written authorization from school administration
- To address concerns, disagreements, or disputes internally by following the appropriate school channels rather than sharing information externally via public forums, (i.e. on publicly available social media policies).
- To refrain from using confidential information to misrepresent the school, its policies, or its community members

### 3. Consequences of Violation

Failure to adhere to this Confidentiality & Non-Disclosure Policy may result in disciplinary actions, including but not limited to:

- First Violation: Written warning and a meeting with school leadership
- Second Violation: Suspension of certain privileges (e.g., access to school events, volunteer opportunities, or participation in parent groups).
- Third Violation: Possible withdrawal recommendation for the student from the school, subject to administrative review by the Diocesan Superintendent in consultation with the school's governing body.
- All disciplinary decisions will comply with applicable diocesan policies and procedures.

### 4. Exceptions and Reporting

This policy does not prohibit parents from:

- Reporting concerns to legal authorities in cases of suspected abuse, neglect, or other unlawful activities
- Seeking legal counsel regarding legitimate grievances, provided that other confidentiality obligations are upheld.

### 5. Acknowledgment Form

Each parent is required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement upon enrollment, acknowledging their understanding and acceptance of this policy. Failure to sign may result in denial or revocation of enrollment. We appreciate your commitment to upholding the values of our school community respecting these confidentiality guidelines. For any questions regarding this policy, please contact the principal of your respective school.

## Confidentiality & Non-Disclosure Acknowledgement and Agreement Form

### Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read, understood, and agree to abide by the *Confidentiality & Non-Disclosure Policy* of Saint Mary School, a Diocesan Catholic institution. I understand that this policy is intended to promote a respectful and unified school community, consistent with Catholic values and the mission of the Diocese.

I understand and agree that:

1. I will not share, post, or disclose confidential school communications - including emails, meeting discussions, internal policies, and personal information about students or staff - without prior written authorization from school administration.
2. I will address school-related concerns or disputes through designated internal channels and I will refrain from using social media or other public platforms to disseminate confidential or potentially damaging information.
3. I will not use confidential school information to misrepresent, disparage, or harm the school, its employees, students, or community members.
4. I understand that violations of this policy may result in disciplinary consequences, up to and including restrictions on my participation in school activities and, in serious cases, a recommendation for the withdrawal of my child(ren), subject to Diocesan review.
5. I retain the right to report suspected unlawful conduct to appropriate legal authorities and to consult legal counsel, consistent with applicable law and this policy.

I understand that this agreement is a condition of enrollment and ongoing participation in the school community.

Student Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Grade(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name (Printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School Administrator's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Received by School: \_\_\_\_\_