

***St. Mary Catholic School***

***2022-23 Parent/Student Handbook***

***St. Mary School Mission Statement***

***The mission of St. Mary Catholic School is to create and encourage an environment of academic and spiritual excellence where children can grow in the knowledge of God and are formed to become the Catholic Leaders and Missionary Disciples our world needs.***

***1152 Seminole Drive***

***Rockledge, FL 32955***

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***321-636-4208***

# Home of the Cougars

***Dear Parents and Students,***

 ***Welcome to St. Mary Catholic School! We are happy to have you as members of our school family. As always, we are committed to providing an excellent curriculum and education along with guiding each student to find his/her talents and gifts and to learn to treat others with dignity and respect. Pope Francis has commissioned Catholic Educators to be Missionary Disciples. The Mission of St. Mary Catholic School is to form hearts, minds, bodies, and souls to be a gift of love for humanity.***

***As we begin this new school year, let us commit to working with one another as we journey together. We are all role models for the children at St. Mary School, and we strive to maintain high standards in the classroom. As partners in educating your children, we also ask that you help us by supporting our faculty, staff and administration as well as the guidelines and policies outlined in the new parent/student handbook.***

***We look forward to spending this year with you and your children. May God bless us all as we embark on another successful school year at St. Mary Catholic School.***

***Sincerely,***

***Sandy Basinger, Principal***

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## RIGHT TO AMEND HANDBOOK

Because it is impossible to foresee all problems and/or issues which arise, this clause empowers the faculty and administration of St. Mary School to take disciplinary action against any behavior which violates the spirit and philosophy of St. Mary School, even though it is not specified in this handbook. Additionally, the school administration reserves the right to amend the handbook for a just cause.

## OUR COMMITMENT TO PARENTS

As Catholic school educators, we believe children are influenced by home, community, and a society in which attitudes toward Christian values are often challenged. You parents, the source from whom children and youth derive their values, entrust your children to the Catholic school to instruct, complement and intensify the education and formation begun in the home. We at St. Mary are called to assist you parents in fulfilling your obligation for the Christian formation and education of your child; therefore, we will commit to the following:

1. Respect parents’ fundamental human right to know, to understand and to contribute to decisions that affect the education of their child by
	1. assuring parents of a commitment of ongoing education as a professional educator
	2. keeping parents apprised of the curriculum and method of instruction
2. Develop educational programs and activities to enhance family life as well as home/school relationship.
3. Respect any confidential information, which parents share.
4. Report to parents their child’s progress regularly as needed, in a spirit of charity, with professional accuracy and honesty.

## DIOCESAN SCHOOLS MISSION STATEMENT

Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Orlando proclaim the Gospel message within an academic environment of excellence that challenges students to be creative and critical thinkers who integrate faith, moral leadership, and compassionate service in order to create a more just and humane world.

**ST. MARY CATHOLIC SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of St. Mary Catholic School is to create and encourage an environment of academic and spiritual excellence where children can grow in the knowledge of God and are formed to become the Catholic Leaders and Missionary Disciples our world needs.

## PHILOSOPHY AND BELIEFS STATEMENT

1. We believe that each child is a unique creation of God, imbued with his Spirit.
2. We believe that Catholic schools in partnership with the parents exist to share the Good News of God’s love.
3. We believe that Christian formation is at the heart of Catholic education and that students need to experience faith-based traditions as part of their educational experience.
4. We believe that student learning is a priority and that each child has the ability to learn and the responsibility to discover and develop the gifts and talents with which they are blessed.
5. We believe that students learn in different ways and that teachers should offer, to the extent possible, a variety of paths to learning.
6. We believe that students should be provided with a well-balanced curriculum, challenging each student to reach their fullest potential in order to meet the global challenges of the world.
7. We believe that students need to be active participants in their own learning and to take responsibility for the knowledge acquired.
8. We believe that students should have a safe and comfortable environment that promotes learning.
9. We believe that the use of varied teaching methods and technologies will stimulate learning, encourage critical thinking skills and allow for a challenging learning setting.
10. We believe that we need to assist each other to be persons of prayer, to be peacemakers, and to be just in word and action.

## PARENTS AS PARTNERS

As partners in the educational process at St. Mary School, we ask parents to set rules, times and limits so that your child:

* Gets to bed early on school nights
* Arrives at school on time and is picked up on time at the end of the day
* Is dressed according to the school dress code
* Completes assignments on time
* Has lunch and a nutritional snack every day
* Pays for any damage to school books or school property due to carelessness or neglect on the part of the student

We also ask that parents be responsible for the following:

* Meet financial obligations to the school
* Inform the school of any special situation (such as a medical need) regarding the student’s wellbeing, safety, and health
* Complete and return to school any requested information promptly
* Read school notes and newsletters (e-news)
* Support the religious and educational goals of the school
* Support and cooperate with the discipline policy and other policies of the school
* Treat teachers with respect and courtesy in discussing student issues
* Actively participate in school activities, such as parent-teacher conferences
* Notify the school when the child will be absent or tardy
* Notify the school office of any changes of address or important phone numbers

## PARENT ORGANIZATIONS

### PTO (Parent and Teacher Organization)

All parents are members of the PTO which meets several times per year

. Meetings are held to give updates on the school and to disseminate important information to parents. Every family is encouraged to be represented at the meetings.

### HOME AND SCHOOL ADVISORY BOARD

The Home and School Board is an organization whose role is to advise and support the administration in the work of the school. The Board meets monthly regarding current issues concerning St. Mary School. The Finance Committee meets when needed to review the budget.

## ACCREDITATION AND AWARDS

St. Mary School, having completed a detailed self-study, was first accredited by the Florida Catholic Conference in 1972. All Diocesan elementary schools are required to meet the necessary requirements for accreditation, and schools renew accreditation every seven years. This accreditation of all Catholic elementary schools maintains high quality education in the Catholic School System. St. Mary was reaccredited in 2004, 2012 and 2019. In 2002, St. Mary received the National Catholic Education Association Innovations in Technology Award. In 2004, St. Mary Catholic School was selected as a United States Department of Education Blue Ribbon School of Excellence.

## ACADEMIC INFORMATION

### CURRICULUM

The curriculum followed at St. Mary is that recommended by the Diocesan Office of Schools and the State of Florida guidelines. St. Mary Catholic School offers students opportunities for growth in the following major subjects:

**Religion -** Catholic doctrine and tradition, Bible study, Social Justice, preparation for the reception of the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation. K-8 students will attend mass on Wednesdays unless a Holy Day falls on another day. Students will then attend mass on the Holy Day. PreK students will attend mass with buddies on occasion. Students in Grades 5 and 8 will be given the ACRE (Assessment of Catechesis of Religious Education) Test in February.

**Language Arts -** Reading, Writing, English grammar and usage, Spelling, Vocabulary, Composition, and Appreciation of Literature

**Mathematics -** Mathematics skills at appropriate grade levels, including Geometry skills, Pre-Algebra, and Algebra I. Students in Grade 8 who are in advanced math qualify for a high school credit in Algebra I.

**Physical Education -** Physical fitness programs appropriate for each grade.

**Spanish – Grades K-8** Vocabulary, common expressions, grammar, conversation, and culture. Students in Grade 8 who have successfully completed the year may qualify for a high school credit in Spanish I.

**Social Studies -** History, Geography, Economics, Florida History, and Current Events.

**Science -** General Sciences, Laboratory Experiences, Science Research.

**Fine Arts -** Music, Art, Performing Arts

**Florida Virtual School -** Students in grades 7 and 8 who have demonstrated advanced skills and are capable of independent learning may take advanced courses through the Florida Virtual School with the approval of the principal.

### REPORT CARDS

Report cards are issued after each twelve-week grading period. Students in grades 1-8 receive report cards every twelve weeks or three times each year. Students in grades Pre-Kindergarten and

Kindergarten receive developmental report cards twice a year, once in January and again at the end of the school year. Report cards will not be given to parents before the assigned date. Parents are encouraged to confer with teachers by appointment whenever the need arises. Communication between parents and teachers is essential for the success of the child.

### GRADING SCALE

The following grading scale is used in grades 3-8:

1. = 90 – 100 1= Satisfactory
2. = 89—80 2 = Needs Improvement
3. = 79—70 3= Unsatisfactory
4. = 69 – 60

F = 59 or below

## ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty shall be defined as any cooperative, collaborative, or solitary attempt to represent the work of another person as one’s own. Examples include, but are not limited to, copying homework, sharing information on test questions (both in and out of class), plagiarizing, direct copying from the Internet, or otherwise misappropriating the intellectual property of others. Academic dishonesty is a serious offense and may result in disciplinary action, including suspension.

## ACADEMIC PROBATION

A student whose academic performance and/or work and study habits indicates serious deficiencies may be placed on academic probation. Specific conditions of the academic probation will be determined by the administration in collaboration with the faculty involved and the parents.

## ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

All students are required to comply with state and local laws regarding use of illegal drugs and alcoholic beverages. Any students found using, possessing or aiding in distribution of drugs or alcoholic beverages on campus or at school-sponsored events is subject to severe disciplinary action, including dismissal.

## ALTAR SERVERS

Interested Catholic boys and girls in grades four through eight may serve mass at school and on weekends. Altar server training is conducted through the parish office for interested students.

## ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

The school office is open daily during school hours. All parents, volunteers, visitors, and contractors must check in through the Raptor System in the school office and get a name tag and lanyard to enter the school grounds for any reason. Each person must provide a photo ID to be admitted.

If a parent needs to drop off an item to a student during the school day, he/she should bring it to the school office. At no time should parents or visitors go directly to a classroom during class time. Students may not use the school office phone or a cell phone to call home for missed homework or to make arrangements to go home with another student after school. The school office is for emergencies only, and a student may use the office phone with a note from a teacher.

Parents should put the student’s name in all school items including uniforms. Any unclaimed items will be donated to the Used Uniform Store at the end of each month.

###  OFFICE RECORDS

Parents and guardians are requested to notify the school office in writing if there are changes in address, cell, business or home phone numbers, or e-mail addresses. SMS Cougar News is sent out through the SMS News each week, so it is important to keep e-mail addresses up-to-date.

### SCHOOL/OFFICE HOURS

The School Office is open daily from 7am-3:30pm. The school gates and teacher classrooms in grades 1-8 are open at 7:30am. PreK and Kindergarten classrooms are open at 7:40am. **The first bell rings at 7:50am** and all students should be in the classroom at this time. Students will then gather around the flag pole for the Pledge of Allegiance, a patriotic song, and the school prayer. **The Tardy Bell will ring at** **7:55am**. Students who arrive on school grounds after 7:55am will be required to go directly to Pledge and then check in the office and receive a tardy slip before he/she will be permitted to go to the classroom. PreK and Kindergarten students will dismiss at 2:45, and students in grades 1-8 will dismiss at 3:00pm.

When parents/volunteers are permitted to go to classrooms at the beginning of the year, students in grades PreK through 1 grade may be escorted to the classroom door by a parent/guardian. After the first two weeks of class, students should be allowed to walk to their classroom, unpack their backpacks, and get ready for class on their own. This practice allows the student to become self-sufficient, self-confident, and independent. The rules about unpacking backpacks also applies to older siblings.

###  TRANSFER/WITHDRAWAL OF STUDENTS

St. Mary School Office and the child’s teacher must be notified in advance of a pending withdrawal of a student. This will enable the school records and accounts to be brought up to date so that the student can be given his/her report card at the time of withdrawal, and a copy of the permanent record can be sent to the new school upon written request. If a student is withdrawn from St. Mary School, there should be no expectation of readmission. Records will not be forwarded if financial obligations to the school are outstanding.

## ADMISSIONS INFORMATION

St. Mary School admits “students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. We do not discriminate on the basis of educational policies, loan programs and athletic and other school administered programs.” (Diocese of Orlando, Policy No. 652.1)

###  AGE CRITERIA

A child may enroll for the **Prek3 program** if he/she will be 3 years old on or before September 1 of the current school year.

A child may enroll for the **VPK/Prek4 program** if he/she will be 4 years old on or before September 1 of the current school year.

A child may enroll for the **Kindergarten** program if he/she will be 5 years old on or before September 1 of the current school year.

A child may enter the **1st grade** if he/she is 6 years old on or before September 1 of the current school year and has successfully completed Kindergarten in a public or non-public school from which the school board accepts transfer of academic credit.

###  DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Documentation for admission includes the following:

* Health Records, including immunization records and proof of health examination
* Birth Certificate (original)
* Baptismal Certificate (Catholic applicants only)
* Report Cards
* Standardized Test Results
* Record of IEP, Service Plan or 504 Plan, if applicable

###  HEALTH RECORDS/IMMUNIZATIONS

All students must be in compliance with Brevard County Health Department regulations before they can enter the school. A health certificate, which includes an immunization certificate for the prevention of communicable diseases as required by the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services must be presented and verified before the child is admitted to class. Every child entering St. Mary School for the first time must present to the school office a certification of immunization or a medical exemption. Parents are urged to proceed immediately to complete the immunization of their children so that their children will not be denied entrance to school.

Religious Exemptions for Immunizations are no longer accepted by Diocese of Orlando Catholic Schools. St. Mary School will only accept a Medical Exemption for Immunizations from families who elect not to have their child(ren) immunized.

**Florida Statute 121.021 requires that all children entering public or private school in Florida for the first time must be immunized for diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, poliomyelitis, rubella, and rubeola (measles), except as provided in Section 2 of the law.**

### Florida Compulsory Immunization Law also requires that all students entering seventh grade to have been immunized for Hepatitis B, measles, and have received a tetanus-diphtheria booster in the last five years. These immunizations may be obtained at a doctor’s office or at the County Health

Department. Certification forms are available through the County Health Department and must be signed by a doctor or authorized County Health Department official.

## ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

**Arrival and Dismissal are very important times.** Punctuality is an essential life skill for the workplace, and it is a skill learned early in life. All students are expected to be in their seats and ready to begin the school day promptly at 7:50am after the first bell rings. (See Attendance and subsection on Tardiness for consequences)

When classes end at 3:00 p.m. students are to go directly to the car line, walk home or to After School Care unless parents have been notified of an extracurricular school activity. Those students staying for after school activities may not leave the school grounds. Students who are not picked up when car line has ended must go to After School Care. Students must be supervised at all times when they are on the school grounds, and After School Care is the only place that supervision is provided after hours. For their safety, children will not be permitted to wait for late rides anywhere else.

**Students may not leave the school grounds at any time without written permission from parent or guardian AND approval of Principal.**

###  MORNING DROP-OFF

Parents of PreK and Kindergarten students may park in the north parking lot between the Early Childhood Center and the Pastoral Center. Parents of students in Grades 1-8 will drop off students in the car line. Car line begins at the entrance to the church parking lot off of the street next to the Rockledge Plaza. No one can enter the car line in the morning from the north parking lot. Under no circumstances should drivers leave their cars unattended in the car line.

**Children riding in cars are to be dropped off and picked up in the back parking lot only.** **There is a speed limit of 5 mph. Please drive with extreme caution at all times. No student should be dropped off or picked up in the front parking area off Seminole Drive unless permission has been given to the parent. All spaces in front of the school are reserved for handicapped parking, teacher and staff parking only. Please do not park, try to drop off, or pick up children in the front parking lot. This is for the safety of your children.**

AFTERNOON PICK-UP

Parents of PreK and Kindergarten students may pick up their children in the north parking lot. Parents of students in grades 1-8 will pick up students in the car line that starts at the church entrance. Parents must stay in their cars until they pull around to the pick up area along the southern edge of the parking lot. Parents must not wave children over to their cars before they get to the pick-up area. Safety of the children is primary.

###  EARLY DEPARTURE

When a child departs school early due to an appointment or illness, the parent must come to the front office and sign the child out. Adults will be asked for identification in order to check students out through the Raptor System. Only adults who have been authorized to pick up children will be permitted to sign a student out.

###  CHANGES IN PICK-UP PLANS

Please notify the front office by phone or in writing if there are changes to a child’s pick-up plans. The front office will notify the child’s teacher.

## ATHLETICS

Athletic teams exist at St. Mary School to serve the following purposes:

1. To further one’s spiritual and physical development through athletics
2. To foster good sportsmanship
3. To further skills in a particular athletic area
4. To practice cooperation and teamwork
5. To compete at appropriately challenging levels

St. Mary is a member of Catholic Youth Sports and, as such, abides by their by-laws. While all students are eligible according to league rules, middle school teams are currently comprised of .6th, 7th, and 8th graders since they have developmentally reached appropriate skill levels. Elementary school students will be able to compete on instructional leagues as assigned by CYS and Brevard County Athletic Directors. Selection of teams is conducted by coaches on an open try-out basis.

### ELIGIBLILITY (includes Athletics, Choir, and Drama)

Students must maintain an overall average of 70C, must not have any F’s in any subject, and maintain a 1 or 2 in Interpersonal Skills (Behavior) to be eligible to participate in any extracurricular program. Students who fail to meet these requirements will not be permitted to participate in the activity until adequate progress has been determined. The administration reserves the right to waive this rule if a student with learning disabilities is working up to his/her potential but still not maintaining a C average or in other exceptional circumstances as determined by the administration.

###  STUDENT ABSENCE ON GAME DAY

Students who are absent from school on a game day may not play in the scheduled game that day unless permission is given by the principal for special circumstances.

## ATTENDANCE

1. **Policy**
	1. Attendance in school is a major predictor of student academic success. Students must attend school punctually and regularly, and conform to the attendance policies of the school, the Diocese of Orlando, and the laws of the State of Florida~~.~~
	2. It is the shared responsibility of the school and the home to assist students in developing desirable habits of punctuality and attendance.
	3. Schools shall maintain accurate attendance records for all students and follow the Diocesan Record Retention Policy for archival purposes. No paper attendance registers are required if electronic attendance is taken.
	4. The Diocese of Orlando requires all schools to develop a calendar which represents 181 instructional days per school year and meets or exceeds Florida Statue A-1, 09512. See Links and Supporting Documents.
2. **Procedures/Guidelines**
	1. All absences must be recorded through an automated student attendance recordkeeping system approved by the Diocese of Orlando. For students in grades K–8, attendance must taken at the start of the day. For students in grades 9-12, attendance should be taken by instructional period. Students in K-12 are considered absent when more than 50% of the school day is missed.
	2. A student is considered absent when he/she is either not in the school building or fully present in a virtual setting. Whether or not the absence is excused or unexcused is determined by administration.
	3. Attendance expectations are for all students and must be clearly delineated in the school’s handbook to include:
		1. It is the parent’s/guardian’s responsibility to contact the school if their child will be absent and to state the reason for the absence. The principal is authorized to require satisfactory explanation from the legal/custodial parent or guardian for the absence of a pupil for all or any part of the school day. The explanation must be obtained in writing and retained as documentation. Failure to provide this will result in an automatic, unexcused absence. A physician’s note is needed when the student:
			1. Has been absent for three or more consecutive days;
			2. Has had surgery;
			3. Is returning to school after a hospitalization;
			4. Has been under a doctor’s care for a significant illness; or
			5. Is returning to school after being excluded because of a communicable disease.
		2. Policy and Procedures for defining and tracking excused or unexcused absences must be stated in the school’s handbook:
			1. Excused absences include the following:
				1. Illness or injury to the student;
				2. Serious illness or death in the student’s family;
				3. Scheduled medical appointment;
				4. Required court appearance or supervised visitation;
				5. Having or being suspected of having a communicable disease or infestation including but not limited to head lice, ringworm, impetigo, and scabies;
				6. Approved school-sponsored events, school athletic events, retreats;
				7. College site visit; or
				8. Special event, excused at the principal’s discretion with permission from the principal in writing five days prior to the scheduled event, including pre-arranged event of educational value.
			2. Unexcused absences include but are not limited to the following:
				1. Vacations or pleasure trips;
				2. Suspension from school;
				3. Truancy; or
				4. Other avoidable absences not included on the “Excused Absence” list above.
		3. Process for communication of attendance concerns with parent(s) or guardian(s).
		4. Plan corrective action to address attendance concerns to include prevention and intervention strategies, and written plan for academic remediation.
		5. Students are required to complete missed assignments and/or class work.
		6. Conditions for notification to appropriate office and/or agency for habitual non-attendance.
	4. For long-term or extensive absences due to medical conditions, parents should enroll student in the applicable county public school district for home instruction or make an arrangement with the school administrator for continued academic progress.
	5. Should there be a need to quarantine individual students or groups of students as *required* by the local departments of health and in accordance with Diocesan protocols, asymptomatic students are expected to participate in the school’s established academic continuity process which could include, but is not limited to digital instruction, recorded instruction, online meetings, and learning packets. Additionally, students must comply with the aforementioned **II. B** of this Attendance Policy.
	6. Students whose absences exceed 5 unexcused absences within a calendar month or 10 unexcused absences within a 90-calendar day period shall be referred to the principal for a conference to be held with the student, his or her parent(s) or legal guardian(s), and the school administration. ***Principals must document this meeting to include date, time, attendees, and the corrective action plan decided upon to improve the student’s attendance and academic performance. It must be clearly communicated that continued excessive absences may result in retention, the loss of scholarship and/or withdrawal from the school. Attendance is reported quarterly to the School Choice Office***.
	7. The teacher must verify attendance records at the end of the year. These records must be retained as dictated by the Records Retention Policy.

###  MAKE UP WORK WHEN ABSENT

 The school calendar provides for extended weekends throughout the school year. Parents are encouraged to schedule trips or family outings during these times so as to eliminate the need to interrupt a child’s learning process. Missed assignments are the student’s responsibility.

Students who are absent due to illness have one day for each day of absence to make up missed assignments, quizzes, or tests. For example, a student who was absent three days would be given three school days to complete the missed work.

A student who needs hospitalization or who, because of illness, is obliged to remain at home for an indefinite time should have this marked in his/her record. Arrangements should be made through any appropriate means for providing instruction, review, examinations, and so on. Credit can be given for courses completed and passed.

**THE FRONT OFFICE AND HOMEROOM TEACHER NEED TO BE NOTIFIED OF CHANGES**

Please send a written note, email, text message or phone call regarding the following:

* Permission to leave school early
* Incomplete work or homework not done (give to teacher)
* Permission to walk or ride a bike to or from school
* Permission to go home with another student who is not in his/her normal carpool
* Not wearing proper uniform

### TARDINESS (See ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION – School Office/Hours)

A child is considered tardy if not present in the classroom when the second morning bell rings at 7:55am.

Tardiness interferes with the student’s academic progress, morning work routines, disrupts the teacher and the class, makes unnecessary work for the school office staff, and sets a negative tone for the student’s day. Tardiness also affects the student’s attitude toward the importance of school and can instill an attitude of “the rules do not apply to me.” In young children, it sometimes creates feelings of discomfort and embarrassment, as they walk into class late, under the eyes of their peers. It is also contrary to school policy and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or, in extreme cases, dismissal. Consequences for excessive tardiness may include the student serving a lunch detention until he/she can get to school on time.

 **B**

## BEHAVIOR POLICY

**The Five Basic Rules that every child is expected to follow:**

1. Be prepared for every class
2. Follow directions and procedures throughout the school
3. Respect others and their property
4. Wear the school uniform properly and with pride
5. Be on task in the classroom

Students who attend St. Mary School are expected to reflect in their behavior the belief in each person’s God-given dignity and the Gospel values upon which St. Mary’s School philosophy is based. **Students and parents acknowledge acceptance of the school’s philosophy, expectations, rules and policies by virtue of their registration in St. Mary School.** Good conduct is expected and required whether a student is in the classroom, the church, the library, the school grounds, the athletic field, on a field trip, or representing St. Mary School in any way. As a Christian community of learners, St. Mary School offers students guidance and discipline to help them recognize their responsibility to the community.

 As a part of that policy St. Mary School has implemented a discipline program that not only addresses negative behaviors but also rewards positive ones.

 In grades 6-8, students are rewarded for positive behaviors through classroom and school wide celebrations. Students in grades K-5 receive Cougar Paw awards each week for good behavior. Each K-5 classroom has two Cougar Paw winners each week who are called to the front office during morning announcements. Students choose a prize from the prize box OR can select a NUT day pass.

 Any behavior that is disruptive to the community or that interferes with the orderly educational process at St. Mary School will result in disciplinary action according to the following policies:

###  ELEMENTARY GRADES (PREK – 5) CONDUCT POLICY

 The goal of the conduct policy at the elementary level is to use positive feedback and acknowledgement when students follow the school rules and corrective feedback and consequences when students do not follow the rules. Classroom teachers will establish classroom behavior polices.

###  MIDDLE GRADES (6-8) CONDUCT POLICY

Certain rules and regulations have been made with the hope of leading each individual toward developing a greater sense of self-discipline and toward maintaining an atmosphere in which it is possible for all students to learn. The principal is the first recourse in all disciplinary situations and may weigh any disciplinary rule for just cause at his/her discretion.

1. A teacher or staff member has the right and responsibility to correct any child.
2. Courtesy and respect shall be shown for all adults and students.
3. Students will respect all property, including school property and property of other people.
4. Students may not bring dangerous items such as guns, knives, matches, or lighters on school premises.
5. Students may not leave the school premises from the time of their arrival until the time of dismissal unless they are checked out by an approved adult.

### DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Disciplinary action is administered not only for the purpose of benefiting students who have failed in their duty but also for the good of the other members of the St. Mary School community. For serious rules infractions, the discipline procedures will not be followed; instead, the school administration will deal with the situation and contact the parent.

Approved disciplinary consequences include the following: disciplinary referral, detention, parent/student/teacher conference, behavioral contract, suspension, loss of privileges or probation, and expulsion. The consequences are not necessarily required to be dispensed in sequence but according to the seriousness or frequency of the offense these offenses may result in one of the following forms of discipline.

**Suspension** – A student is dismissed from the school for a stated period due to a serious offense or an accumulation of repeated disruptive offenses. The decision to suspend a student is made by the administration. Parents are called, the reason for the suspension is given, and parents are asked to pick up their child from the school office. Parents may be asked to set up an appointment for a conference at a later time to discuss the requirements for the student’s return to and continued enrollment in St. Mary School.

In school suspension (ISS) may also be assigned. Parents will be notified and the student will spend the day completing assignments away from the classroom under supervision. Any student serving an out of school or in school suspension will not be permitted to participate in any extracurricular school activities on the day(s) of the suspension.

**Loss of Privileges and Probation** – In aggravated cases of discipline, (such as blatant disrespect, insubordination, destruction of property), the student may lose privileges such as (but not limited to) use of the Technology Center, Media Center, or participation in athletic events. In severe cases, the student is put under formal notice of probation. A serious infraction by a student on probation can result in expulsion.

**Expulsion** – Any behavior which is in direct opposition to the Gospel values expressed in the philosophy, mission and goals of St. Mary School and which is seriously detrimental to the school community may result in expulsion. The decision to expel is made by the administration. Suspension and conference may be the steps taken prior to the decision to expel, except for offenses such as the possession of illegal drugs, alcohol, or weapons, or physical violence which can lead to immediate expulsion.

**Types of Behavior Not Accepted at St. Mary School**:

1. possession or use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco or weapons\*
2. stealing
3. possession of items which could harm themselves or others, such as knives, matches, etc.
4. use of bad, abusive or disrespectful language, or any behavior degrading to human dignity
5. disrespect toward a teacher, an aide, office personnel, a bus driver (on a field trip), a visitor, a volunteer or a fellow student
6. defiance or argumentativeness
7. destruction of property
8. fighting
9. disrupting regular school routine
10. leaving school grounds
11. throwing rocks or any harmful objects
12. gum chewing at any time on the school grounds
13. cheating or helping others to cheat
14. premature boy/girl relationships or public displays of affection
15. bringing novelty items to school without the teacher’s permission (This would include but is not limited to: hand held computer games, toys, sports cards, CDs, radios, CD players, etc.)
16. running or bike riding in the breezeways. Skateboards are forbidden.
17. excessive or extreme use of make-up; dyed hair, or a hairstyle that is a distraction to the learning process in the opinion of the administration

**\*Note** – Any student who brings illegal drugs, alcohol or weapons on school grounds at any time or any student who possesses or uses drugs, alcohol, or weapons at any time is liable to immediate expulsion.

### Off Campus Conduct

The administration of St. Mary School reserves the right to discipline its students for off-campus behavior that is not in line with the behavior expectations of its students during the course of the school day.

## BIRTHDAYS

## Birthday parties are not permitted; however, students may bring treats to share with the class on his or her birthday. Parents should contact the teacher and make prior arrangements when bringing treats for the class. For outside birthday parties, invitations may be distributed at the school under the following conditions:

* the whole class is invited
* a female student invites all the girls in the class
* a male student invites all the boys in the class

## BULLYING

Continual harassment of any student by another is never an acceptable behavior at St. Mary School. Harassment would be defined as any repeated, disrespectful behavior towards another which seriously interferes with that person’s ability to function in his/her daily environment. Behavior that occurs once and is corrected and not repeated does not constitute harassment.

Bullying is defined as a person willfully and repeatedly exercising power or control over another with hostile or malicious intent. Bullying can be physical, verbal (oral), written, electronically transmitted, psychological (emotional abuse), through attacks on the property of another, or a combination of any of these. Some examples of bullying are:

1. **Physical –** hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing, pulling, taking and/or damaging personal belongings, extorting money, blocking or impeding student movement, unwelcome physical contact, hazing
2. **Verbal –** taunting, malicious teasing, insulting, name calling, making threats
3. **Emotional/Psychological –** spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships, coercion, blackmailing, or engaging in social exclusion/shunning, extortion, terrorizing or intimidating
4. **Cyberbullying –** the use of information and communication technologies such as e-mail, cell phone text messages, instant messaging, defamatory personal websites, and other social media to support repeated, deliberate, and hostile behavior by and individual or a group, that intends to threaten or harm another person or which substantially disrupts or interferes with the operation of a school or an individual student’s ability to receive an education
5. **Sexual –** sexual harassment and abuse involving physical contact, sexting, unwanted touching, inappropriate social networking

Bullying of one student by another is not acceptable. A person is being bullied when he/she is **repeatedly** hurt, intimidated, or frightened by another. Since prevention is always the best course of action, students are taught skills that will help them to deal more effectively with peer conflicts. **During classroom discussions, students are taught to use the following steps when dealing with a student who attempts to bully them:**

* 1. Tell him/her in a loud, clear voice that you do not like the behavior and you want them to stop. (This usually stops the behavior)
	2. If the behavior continues tell him/her again to stop. Immediately report the behavior to the teacher or adult supervisor.
	3. If the behavior persists, tell your teacher immediately

**Teachers and assistants will follow these steps when notified of bullying behavior:**

* 1. Each reported incident of bullying will be documented with the date, time, and description of the incident.
	2. If a second incident occurs with the same offender, the offender will be sent to the office and parents will be notified.
	3. Administration reserves the right to take additional disciplinary action that is deemed appropriate, including expulsion.

For the safety of all, students who witness bullying behavior are told, and expected to report, any such behavior to their teacher. These steps help a child feel more self-confident and in control of the situation. Refusal to follow the above steps and retaliation by use of physical violence will not be tolerated. Students who continually harass others in any way or exhibit serious bullying behavior will receive disciplinary action in accordance with the severity of their offense. This could include suspension.

Retaliation against any person who reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint, or participates in an investigation or inquiry concerning allegations of aggressive behavior of any kind is prohibited and will not be tolerated. Making intentionally false reports about aggressive behavior for the purpose of getting another person in trouble is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Retaliation and making false reports may result in disciplinary action, including suspension.

**C**

## CARE OF PROPERTY, BOOKS AND MATERIALS

Each student is held responsible for his/her desk, his/her set of rented textbooks, library books, and any other equipment provided for the student’s use. Parents will be required to compensate the school for deliberate damage to school or parish property done by children. Report cards and other records will not be given to students who have not returned all books and materials.

## CATHOLIC IDENTITY

All students, including those of other faith communities, must participate in the entire religious education program of the school which includes attending school masses.

## CELL PHONE/ELECTRONIC DEVICE USE

**In order to have a Cell Phone and/or Electronic Reading Device during school hours, students and parents must sign the Cell Phone Policy and/or Electronic Reader Policy and have it on file in the classroom.**

**Cell Phones:** Students are permitted to bring cell phones to school for use after school. Cell phones MUST be kept in the child’s backpack, in a designated area in the classroom, or in the school office. Cell phones need to be turned off so they do not ring during class, or they will be confiscated. If a child needs to use the phone in an emergency situation they may use the phone in the school office

 **Electronic Readers:** St. Mary School also has an electronic policy for students who bring a Kindle or any other device that will be used for reading only. The student is not allowed to activate the Internet or use the device to play video games, check e-mail, etc. **If a parent wants a child to use a Kindleor other device for reading purposes only, then they need to sign the permission policy that is available in the front office.**

**Apple Watches:** Students must not use Apple watches during the school day to text, email, watch videos or do anything that distracts the student from paying attention at school. Please have your child leave those devices at home if they cannot refrain from using them in a way that is not permitted at school.

## CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Parents are required to notify the school office at once of a change of address, telephone number, extension, beeper number, parent’s employer, or emergency number. This vital information is needed for the student’s welfare in the case of emergency.

## CHAPERONES (Also see Field Trips)

At various times during the school year parents may be asked to assist as chaperones or drivers on field trips. In order to be a chaperone, parents must already have a cleared fingerprint and background check on file in the office. In order to be a driver on a field trip, parents must show a copy of their insurance policy showing coverage that includes at least $100,000 and $300,000 minimum coverage for Bodily Injury liability and a minimum of $50,000 Property Damage liability. Drivers must also clear a background check on their license before being allowed to drive. Clearance is good for 3 months. Chaperones must be 21 years of age or older.

**CHEATING (See Academic Dishonesty)**

## CHILD CUSTODY

 Before accepting a student for admission, school personnel must verify that the person enrolling the child is the legal parent/guardian. Access to the child, student records, and other confidential information shall be granted to parents and legal guardians unless otherwise stated in legal court documents. It is required that the custodial parent provide the principal with an official updated copy of the custody order. In the absence of a court order, the school will provide the non-custodial parent the opportunity, upon request, for a parent-teacher conference. Likewise, the school will share pertinent information with the noncustodial parent in a timely manner.

## CHILD WELFARE

Florida State Law requires schools to report any suspected cases of possible child endangerment to the proper authorities and to cooperate fully with any and all authorities in any investigation. St. Mary School cooperates fully with all agencies that are entrusted with ensuring the safety and well-being of children.

## CLINIC

The School Clinic is not staffed by a nurse but is staffed full-time by the employees in the front office. Basic First Aid is administered in case of an accident. Children who become sick will be allowed to rest in the clinic until picked up by a parent, if necessary.

### MEDICATION AND POLICY ON SICKNESS

Children who have any of the following conditions are not permitted to be in school until the condition is no longer present:

### 1. Fever (students should be fever-free without using fever-free medication for 24 hours before returning to school)

1. Vomiting
2. Highly communicable infections such as conjunctivitis (pink eye), chicken pox, strep, staph, head lice, mononucleosis, etc.
3. Any condition requiring extraordinary medical care (anything beyond the simple supervision of taking oral medication)
4. Any condition that would severely disrupt the educational process

Parents of any student who needs medication must fill out the medication form in the school office, and must inform the office of any ongoing medical conditions that could require emergency care. St.

Mary School follows the Diocesan Policy on distribution of medication, which is Florida School Law, State Statute #232.46 1.b. 1&2:

* 1. “For each prescribed medication, the student’s parent or guardian shall provide to the school principal a written statement which shall grant to the principal or his/her designee permission to assist in the administration of such medication and which shall explain the necessity for such medication to be provided during the school day, including any occasion when the student is away from school property on official school business. The school principal or his/her designee shall assist the student in the administration of such medication.”
	2. “Each prescribed medication to be administered by school personnel shall be received and stored in its original container. When the medication is not in use, it shall be stored in its original container in a secure fashion under lock and key in a location designated by the principal”. This law applies to prescription medication and over the counter medication, such as Tylenol, aspirin, cold medication, cough drops, etc. By law, medication brought to school must come in its original bottle, with a signed permission form from parent (and doctor if prescription), and should have the child’s name and dosage taped to it. Permission forms are available in the office. It is advisable to take one with you when taking the child to the doctor.

## CONCERNS, QUESTIONS AND COMPLAINTS PROTOCOL

There are times when parents, students, and teachers may have questions or concerns regarding a situation that arises during the school day. If the situation occurs in the classroom with a student, the teacher needs to notify the parent of the situation. If a parent has a concern about a student, then the parent should contact the teacher first to try to resolve the issue. If the parent has concerns and feels that the situation is not resolved, then the parent should contact the principal who will make every effort to resolve the issue with the help of the teacher.

## CONDUCT OF PARENTS AND GUARDIANS (See Parent Code in Addendum)

The Diocese of Orlando recognizes that parents/guardians are the primary educators of their children. Parents and guardians are expected to demonstrate respectful behavior at all times with faculty, administration, support staff, students, volunteers, and other parents whether on or off school grounds or at school-sponsored events.

**Unacceptable behaviors include, but are not limited to, harassment, verbal abuse, assault, or threats to the faculty, administration, support staff, students, volunteers, or other parents. This includes inappropriate use of social media to post negative comments about the school, faculty, other school parents, students or the parish staff. Please see Parent Code of Conduct for more information.**

Ordinarily a student is not to be deprived of a Catholic school education on grounds relating to the actions/attitudes of parents or guardians; however, if the behavior seriously interferes with teaching, learning, and a positive school environment, the administrator may:

1. Inform parents that the right of the parent/guardian to be present on school grounds is temporarily or permanently suspended.
2. Require withdrawal of the children temporarily or permanently from the school.

## CONFERENCES

At St. Mary School we recognize the importance of parents and teachers working together. At various times during the school year it may become necessary for parents or the teacher to schedule a conference. Recognizing that the teacher is most knowledgeable in the day to day classroom activities, the procedure for conferences should be as follows:

* Step 1: Parents meet with the teacher to discuss classroom difficulties or behaviors.

Conferences can be arranged by calling the school office or contacting the teacher directly. Teachers may also request conferences with parents by contacting the parent through home phone or e-mail.

* Step 2: If after discussion with the classroom teacher differences cannot be resolved, then the parents may request a conference with a member of the school administration.

When appropriate, the student will be asked to join any conference. The conference may take the form of a round-table meeting of all involved in the student’s education (for example, there may be more than one teacher). A conference may be called to alert parents to behavioral difficulties their child is having which are interfering with the child’s education and/or the education of others. Required actions on the part of all parties will be clearly stated.

 Teachers have been advised that they should avoid holding impromptu conferences with parents in settings outside the school classroom. Concerns involving students are too important to be addressed casually and outside the appropriate atmosphere. Therefore, we ask our parents to respect the need for professionalism that we require of our teachers.

**D**

**DETENTION**

Detentions will be assigned to students according to the Behavior Policy of the school.

## DROPPED OFF ITEMS

If there is a need to get an item to a student during the school day, kindly mark the item with the student’s name and the teacher’s name and deliver it to the school office. Students will be called to the office as soon as possible to pick up missing items that are dropped off.

**E**

## E-MAIL AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

E-mail addresses for faculty and staff of St. Mary School is the first initial/last name@stmarys-school.org For example, Bob Miller’s school email would be bmiller@stmarys-school.org

All users of e-mail correspondence are reminded of the limitations of e-mail, such as the fact that one cannot adequately convey “tone of voice” or “body language” and other indicators of compassion or concern when using e-mail. Therefore, we all should assume the best of each other when using e-mail.

Engagement in e-mail, texting, or online sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or any other site may result in disciplinary actions if the content written by the student includes defamatory comments regarding the school, the faculty, other students or the parish.

## EMERGENCY CLOSINGS DUE TO WEATHER

Announcements regarding school cancellations are made via the local TV news channels and radio stations. In disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, or other severe weather disturbances, St. Mary School will abide by the emergency weather/school closings of Brevard County Schools. If school should be closed in the course of the day, parents will be contacted to pick up their children immediately. Teachers will assist and supervise students during the evacuation process. St. Mary School may re-open earlier than public schools because some public schools are used as emergency shelters and cannot reopen. When it is determined that students can safely return to school, parents will be notified that we will reopen.

## EMERGENCY DRILLS

###  FIRE DRILLS

State law requires that fire drills be held monthly. The Diocese of Orlando also requires that lockout drills and lockdown drills also be held periodically.

## EXTENDED CARE

For the convenience of parents, and the safety and security of all the students, after school care is available at St. Mary School on each day that school is in session.

 **After School Care is available on school days until 6:00 p.m.** Aftercare is an extension of the school day, and all students in Aftercare must abide by the same rules and regulations that they would during the school day. Aftercare is also available on early dismissal days and during teacher in-service days when staff is available. Responsible persons are in charge of children in After School Care, under the direction of the Principal. Closing time is always 6:00 p.m. Parents who pick up their children after 6:00 p.m. will be charged an additional $20.00 per hour the first time this occurs. If a child is not picked up by closing time a second time the parent will be asked to find other arrangements for after school care.

Students not picked up within 15 minutes of dismissal are required to check in to After School Care for their safety. It is the only location where supervision will be provided for children awaiting rides. The school recognizes that there may be extenuating circumstances that prevent the parent from being on time; therefore, there will be a 10 minute grace period allowance before parent will be charged for Aftercare. Parents who are late picking up their child after the grace period will be responsible for fees incurred. Parents must go to the Aftercare Room to sign the student out of Aftercare.

**F**

## FIELD TRIPS

At various times during the school year, students are taken on field trips. Field Trips are a privilege, not a right. Students can be denied participation if they fail to meet behavioral or academic requirements as determined by classroom teachers or school administration.

Field trips are generally designed to correlate with classroom studies and to achieve curriculum goals. All grades do not always have the same number of field trips. Field trips are permissible for all grades when advanced planning, location, and the experience ensure a successful learning experience. The official Diocesan Standard Permission form (with insurance information) and the Authorization for Medical Treatment form are required before a child will be permitted to attend a field trip activity. Verbal permission cannot be accepted. A telephone call will not be accepted in lieu of the proper field trip permission form. Permission slips are due in no later than twenty-four hours prior to the field trip.

Any parent/guardian who wishes to chaperone on a field trip must be fingerprinted and have Safe Environment Clearance. Chaperones are required to stay with the class until the students have returned to the school. Parents who wish to stay over at any field trip location will not be able to chaperone. Because parents are responsible for the children in the class under their care, siblings are not allowed on field trips.

## FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

###  TUITION AND FEES

Families are given tuition categories and a list of fees that are due at the time of registration. Families must meet the requirements written on the tuition and fees form in order to receive a Catholic discount. Discounts are given at the discretion of the church and school and are based on the financial ability of the school. **REGISTRATION FEES ARE NON-REFUNDABLE.**

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Families who are requesting financial assistance must fill out the FACTS Tuition Grant application that can be found on the St. Mary website under FACTS.

**Tuition Payment Options:**

**Payment Options:** *(Please read carefully as our payment options have changed.)*

* Pay in full by July 1st , or
* Pay ½ annual tuition by July 1st and the remainder by November 1st, or
* Enroll in the FACTS Tuition Management Service. Payments begin in July of each year.  The registration fee for students is due upon registration 
* All registration Fees are NON-REFUNDABLE.
* There will be a returned check fee (issued by the bank) for all checks made payable to St. Mary School that do not clear the bank.
* Families that have two checks returned for insufficient funds during the year will no longer be allowed to write checks to the school. Payments will be needed in cash or money order.

### FACTS Tuition Management Service Overview

* Pay tuition over 10, 11 or 12 months via automatic deduction.
* Enroll online from [www.stmarys-school.org an](http://www.stmarys-school.org/)d bring your enrollment form to the school office
* If a family wishes to delay payments they must contact the front office for approval.

### Withdrawal Policy

* Families must notify the school in writing if a student is withdrawn from the school.
* The school will not forward records or report cards for any student who withdraws with an outstanding balance. This includes fees on FACTS that were not completely paid due to the withdrawal (registration, books, technology fee).
* Any tuition refunds will be made after withdrawal. If a student attends for any part of the month then the tuition for the entire month will be paid.
* Students must also have returned any textbooks, library books, athletic uniforms or other materials before records will be transferred.

## FINGERPRINTING

Each person who comes in contact with children must have been fingerprinted, have completed a background check, and successfully passed the Safe Environment Training online. This policy applies to all faculty, staff, and other personnel as well as volunteers. Parents who wish to volunteer should contact the school office for information on procedures to follow for fingerprinting. There is a cost for the processing of fingerprints that will be incurred by the person being fingerprinted . Fingerprint records are valid for five years.

**H**

## HOMEWORK

It is the policy of St. Mary’s School to give homework Monday-Friday. Sometimes students will be asked to do work over the weekend, especially if work given during the week has not been completed. The type and length of homework assignments vary from teacher to teacher. The following guidelines suggest the approximate time an average evening of homework might require of a typical student:

 Grades K-2 10-30 minutes

 Grades 3-5 20-40 minutes

 Grades 6-8 60-90 minutes

Parents should know the homework habits of their children and provide them with a reasonable, comfortable and suitable place in which to work. Since each student has different capabilities and interests, it would be difficult to denote the specific amount of time to be spent on an assignment. If a problem arises and a child cannot complete homework due to some unforeseen circumstance, then the parent needs to write a note to the teacher to explain the difficulty.

If a child is absent, parents may contact the school office early in the school day and request homework assignments. The school secretary will request that the student’s teacher submit all homework assignments to the office before the end of the school day. Parents may pick up the homework in the school office between 2:30 and 3:00 p.m. or can request that another child in the family be given the homework.

## HOME AND SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

St. Mary School understands the importance of good communication between home and school. All parents with an e-mail address will receive the SMS Cougar News newsletter and other information electronically. If a parent does not have access to an e-mail account, a hard copy of all materials may be requested and will be put into the family envelope. All parents should take time each week to review the material that comes home in the Friday Family envelope and what is sent electronically.

## HONOR ROLL

Students in grades 4-8 are eligible for the Honor Roll. There are two levels to the Honor Roll which consists of First Honors and Second Honors. The following criteria must be met in order for a student to be placed on the Honor Roll:

**First Honors**

1. A cumulative grade point average of 94% or above in all academic subject areas.
2. Students may not have any grade lower than an 80% in any academic subject and must have an S in any subject that does not require a letter grade.
3. Students must have a 1 or 2 in Interpersonal Skills (Behavior) with no detentions.

**Second Honors**

1. A cumulative average of 90 – 93%
2. Students may not have any grade lower than an 80% in any academic subject and must have an S in any subject that does not require a letter grade.
3. Students must have a 1 or 2 in Interpersonal Skills (Behavior) with no detentions

Eighth grade students who are on the First Honors honor roll for all three trimesters of a school year will be eligible for the Overall Excellence Award at the end of the school year. Eighth grade students who are on First or Second Honors for all three trimesters will receive an Honor cord to wear at graduation and will be deemed an Honor Graduate. All students in grades 4-8 who are on the First or Second Honor roll for all three trimesters of a school year may be eligible for an Honor Roll award.

**I**

## INSURANCE

In compliance with Diocesan regulations, St. Mary offers a Student Accident Insurance Program that is supplemental secondary insurance. Registration fee includes the cost of this supplemental insurance.

**L**

## LIBRARY

St. Mary School Library has been made available to students through the generosity of dedicated parents. Students are instructed in locating books and in using multi-media resources for research. Books may be checked out on a regular basis. Parents are asked to see that the children take proper care of these books and return them when due. There is a daily fine for overdue books. Students who have overdue books will not be allowed to check out books until the overdue book has been returned and the fine paid. If a book is lost or destroyed, parents are responsible for payments in full so the book can be replaced. Outstanding library fines and/or lost or missing library books must be returned or paid before the end of the school year before report cards can be issued.

## LOST AND FOUND

Children should report loss of property to the school office so that efforts may be made to trace the missing articles**. Names should be clearly marked on articles of clothing so they can be easily returned if lost or mislaid**. Items found should be brought to the office.

## LUNCH PROGRAM

Students may choose to bring their lunch each day. Students need to bring water or another drink with their lunches from home. Any parent who brings a lunch for a child during the school day must bring the lunch to the main office. The office staff will call the student to the office to pick up the lunch.

 Due to lack of space in the cafeteria area, parent visitation with students during lunch is not permitted.

Students are expected to use the same manners required in the classroom during lunch. Courtesy towards other students and cooperation with lunch monitors are in order at all times.

**M**

## MASS

All students will attend school Mass each Wednesday morning. All students in grades K-8 attend the liturgy weekly. Students in grades PreK3 and PreK4 attend occasionally. Parents are always welcome to attend these celebrations and are welcome to sit behind the school classroom section. Due to our Safety and Security policies, students must sit with their classes during mass and are not permitted to leave the class and sit with parents or others. During the week in which a Holy Day occurs, we will attend Mass on the Holy Day and not attend Mass on Wednesday.

**N**

## NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY

The National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) is sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School

Principals and was established to recognize outstanding middle school students. NJHS is open to all 6th, 7th and 8th grade students after the 1st Trimester grades have been published. . Members of NJHS participate in service projects that benefit their school and community.

NJHS candidates are nominated by faculty and administration and must meet and maintain the following criteria:

* Must exhibit high standards of scholarship, leadership, citizenship, service, and character.
* Maintain an overall average of 90% or higher in all academic subjects with no individual subject average lower than an 80%. Students must achieve honor roll status each trimester.
* Students must have a 1 or 2 in Interpersonal Skills (Behavior) with no detentions. They must be models of propriety at all times and adhere to all aspects of St. Mary’s School standards of conduct, as published in the handbook.
* Students who fail to meet these standards will receive a warning the first time, the second time they will be placed on probation, and the third time they will lose their membership in NJHS.

## NOVELTIES AND TOYS

Students are not permitted to bring electronic games, toys, trading cards, pets, skateboards, hand held computer games, or the most popular toy fad gadget, etc. to school except for a particular educational purpose and with the teacher’s expressed permission. School authorities reserve the right to confiscate such articles when brought to school without permission. The school is not responsible for the loss of these items if they are brought to school.

## NUT DAYS

At various times during the school year students may be awarded a NUT day (No Uniform Today) pass. NUT days are a privilege, not a student right. These may be school wide or given to individual students as rewards and may not be used on mass days. The following guidelines apply to St. Mary School students whenever they are out of uniform.

**ON NUT DAYS, THE FOLLOWING ATTIRE ARE NOT PERMITTED:**

\*any shoes other than athletic shoes – no flip-flop sandals, open back shoes, tennis shoes that convert to roller skates, cloth-like shoes, slippers, boots, etc.

* yoga pants or any tight fitting leggings, etc.

\*tank tops

\*T-shirts or other clothing with inappropriate writing

\*running shorts

\*pajama pants

\*make-up or nail polish

\*short shorts or skirts

\*baggy pants pulled down around the hips (boys)

\*any low cut jeans, skirts, and shorts or ripped jeans

\*low cut or excessively tight shirts

\*shirts that are too short and expose the stomach area

* sweat pants except for St. Mary uniform sweat pants

\*Undergarments should not be visible

## Good Rule: If you think you shouldn’t wear it, you shouldn’t. Parents will be called to bring a change of clothes. If parent is not available to bring a change of clothes, student will be given clothes from the Used Uniform

**Store.**

**P**

## PARENT-TEACHER COOPERATION

The parent and teacher have the same common interest and concern: the good of the child. Both are working toward the same goal- - the complete education of the child.

Parents cannot delegate to the school all responsibility for educating the children. They work together with the teacher to achieve a happy balance between the idea of personal responsibility and respect for authority.

The school will succeed in establishing a sense of respect and responsibility when it is supported in the home. The following are some key ways in which parents may help to knit more closely the bond between home and school:

1. By avoiding adverse criticism of a teacher or any indication of a hostile attitude toward school or teacher in the presence of the child.
2. By adhering to the rules of professional etiquette in dealing with problems that may arise. If a problem arises, the parent should get the facts by contacting the teacher directly. Only if the interview with the teacher does not yield a solution should they make an appointment with the principal.

## PARTIES AT SCHOOL

The school only advocates a classroom party at Christmas. Generally, classroom parties are discouraged unless they are part of school activities, such as cultural celebrations. Any such parties must be carefully planned in advance and approved by the principal. Birthdays may be celebrated in a small way, such as a classroom treat.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

Each year, the school arranges to have a professional photographer take individual pictures of the entire student body. These pictures are available to parents for purchase on a voluntary basis. Class group pictures, club and team photos are taken also and made available for purchase.

As part of our public relations effort, we routinely photograph faculty, staff, parents, and students involved in school-related activities. Pictures for the school yearbook, for school publications, as well as pictures of events, awards, and projects are taken year round. These may be sent to the newspapers, local or Diocesan.

Should you desire that your child NOT be photographed, please indicate your preference on the Photo/Video Release form that is included in the registration packet. **If a parent does not sign the form, the school will assume that the parent gives permission for the child to be photographed.**

## PERMANENT RECORDS

St. Mary School adheres to the Buckley Amendment (Family Education Rights and Privacy) regarding access to student records. The Florida Cumulative Guidance Records are used in all our Diocesan schools. Cumulative record cards contain information concerning each child, including grades, test results, absences, and special interest notes. Report card information is treated as strictly confidential. When the child transfers to another school, he/she is given his/her report card. The cumulative record is sent only when requested by the school to which the child has transferred. No records will be sent to transferring schools of students whose financial commitment is in arrears.

## PLAYGROUND

School playgrounds are private, not public, areas and are only to be used during school hours when supervised by a faculty or staff member of St. Mary School. The school accepts no responsibility for children who are on the playground before or after school without school supervision. Please respect the school’s policy and do not let your children play on the playground before or after school, even with parent supervision.

## PROMOTION POLICY AND RETENTION POLICY

Advancement to the next grade level at St. Mary School is based on a student’s daily performance, test results, recommendations of teachers, and the student’s ability to complete work successfully on grade level. Promotion to the next grade depends on successful completion of all subject areas. The administration may recommend the repetition of a grade or tutoring as requirements for promotion when, after conferences with teachers and parents, it is believed that such action will better prepare the student academically or emotionally for the next grade. A student whose academic performance indicates serious deficiencies may be placed on academic probation. The administration reserves the right to make the final decision.

**R**

## RELEASE OF STUDENTS

Parents may not pick children up for appointments directly from the playground, church, or classroom. Parents/guardians must go to the front office to check out the student. Teachers will only release a student after being instructed by the office to do so.

If students remain after school for supervised activities or detention, parents are asked to note carefully the time the activity ends and have students picked up on time. If a student is not picked up on time, he/she may be sent to the Aftercare room where supervised care is available until 6:00 p.m. for all students. The school cannot be responsible for students remaining on school grounds indefinitely.

## RADON INSPECTION

St. Mary School is in compliance with the requirement of Chapter 10 D-91, Florida Administrative Code, regarding Radon testing. Testing was first done in 1989 and every five years after that. Radon does not present a problem at St. Mary School.

## RELEASE OF STUDENT TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

St. Mary School will comply with authorized local law enforcement and child protection agencies when they request protective custody of a student. The school will follow the direction of the law enforcement agency in regard to notifying the parent/guardian when a child is taken into protective custody. The police and/or DCF agent is not required to wait for the arrival of the parent/guardian and may leave immediately with the child, if necessary.

## REGISTRATION

All families must register each school year including currently enrolled students. Registration takes place each year beginning in February/March and is open to all families currently enrolled and then for new families. Parents are made aware of dates and rates yearly. All fees for the year must be current before students can register for the next school year. In addition, all health and immunization forms must be complete before registration is finalized. Students new to St. Mary School will be on 90-Day Probation. Please see current registration packet for additional specific information.

**S**

## SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

The sacramental life of the children of the Catholic tradition is an important component of the religion program at St. Mary School. Preparations for two sacraments, Reconciliation and Eucharist, form the core of our efforts in Grade 2. In accordance with the diocesan guidelines, candidates for First Eucharist will receive the sacrament of Reconciliation prior to First Eucharist. Students in Grade 8 will prepare during the year to receive the sacrament of Confirmation.

Parents are required to be active partners in the preparation of their children for these sacraments. The sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist are only conferred to students baptized in the Roman Catholic tradition. Additional information should be obtained from the Parish Formation Director.

## SCHOOL PROPERTY

The parent of a child who carelessly destroys or damages any furniture, equipment, buildings, or anyone’s personal property will be obligated to pay the full amount of repairs and labor or replacement. No writing in rented textbooks is permitted. The student will pay a fine or replacement for damaged or lost texts or library books before any final reports, transcripts, or diplomas are presented.

## SEARCH OF STUDENTS AND THEIR PROPERTY

The Diocese of Orlando affirms that, consistent with the Diocesan Mission Statement, each student has a special responsibility for the conduct of students and for ensuring the right of teachers to teach and students to learn in a safe and caring Christian environment. Given the Diocese’s dedication to create and maintain a safe environment, students will not have any expectation of privacy with respect to any and all property brought on school grounds or to school events.

The search of a student’s person or any item carried by a student is permissible when there is any suspicion that the student may be carrying contraband. If a child is suspected of having contraband, the student’s backpack, purse, cubby, desk, etc. will be searched, and the student may be asked to turn the pockets of their skirt or pants inside out. Contraband is defined as any weapon, dangerous object, illegal drug, drug paraphernalia or other item prohibited by law or by school policy. All property of the school, including student desks and cubbies, as well as contents, may be opened, searched or inspected at any time without notice or without probable cause. School personnel have an unrestricted right to search this property as well as any containers, book bags, purses, electronic devices, notebooks, cell phones, or articles of clothing that are left unattended on the school grounds.

Searches may be conducted by authorized school personnel, police, or other appropriate officials with the approval of the principal, including random searches. St. Mary School will follow all federal, state, and local laws in respect to any student involvement in illegal activities and will cooperate with all law enforcement personnel. The administration does not need to notify parents prior to the questioning of a student by law enforcement; however, the administration may ask to notify the parents/guardians if permissible.

## TERRA NOVA STANDARDIZED TEST

The Terra Nova Standardized Test will be administered to grades 2-8 in the spring of the year. Make every effort to have children attend school during the entire testing period. Doctor and dental appointments should not be made during this week. When children are ill, we do not expect them to take the tests, and we trust parents to make the right decision with regard to their child’s physical condition for testing. There is a limited period of time in which to make up any testing that is missed because a student was absent.

## STANDARDIZED TESTING IN THE DIOCESE OF ORLANDO

All schools in the Diocese of Orlando are required to administer standardized testing as an integral part of the total instructional program. This testing, however, is *not* “high-stakes” – the results are not used to determine teacher efficacy, nor are they used solely to determine a child’s promotion or retention. Test results/scores are simply one measure of the total composite of a child’s individual academic progress; thus, the information is used to assist teachers in meeting the specific and targeted learning expectations for a child’s appropriate developmental level. This information is critical in helping our teachers provide the best educational opportunities for our students.

Given the number of benefits derived from the standardized testing, the Diocese of Orlando does not allow a parent or a student the choice of “opt-out” of testing. Students who are absent for any reason, including medical absences, during the school’s designated testing window will be rescheduled for testing upon his/her return to school at the discretion of the school’s administration. Students will not be exempted from taking standardized tests.

Accommodations or modifications will be offered as required to meet the qualified child’s learning needs. This means accommodations or modifications are allowed *only* when specifically indicated through testing via a professional evaluation completed as part of the IDEA Child Find process by the public school District, or through a private psychological-educational evaluation approved by the Office of Catholic Schools.

In addition, Catholic schools in the Diocese of Orlando do not write 504 Student Disability plans. Accommodations or modifications are offered at the sole discretion of the school staff and must be based on an evaluation of the documentation provided and other factors deemed relevant by the school staff.

## STORM DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

In the case of thunder storms and lightning, students will not be dismissed from the classrooms until the danger has passed. The school reserves the right to hold up the car line until the storms pass and it is safe for children to walk to their cars.

## STUDENT ACTIVITIES (dependent on participation and volunteer coaches)

Middle School Boys and Girls Basketball , Flag Football, Volleyball, and Soccer teams

Altar Servers

National Junior Honor Society (6, 7, and 8)

Science Research

Craft Club and Lego Club

Various Clubs and other activities sponsored by teachers each year

Elementary Choir

## TELEPHONE/Cell Phone Policy

Students may not use the telephone except for unforeseen reasons of major importance and must submit a note from a teacher before being allowed to use the phone. Forgotten homework, athletic equipment, etc. do not constitute an emergency. Arrangements for after school visits with friends should be made at home. Students may not use cell phones to call parents.

 We would ask that parents please refrain from calling the school and asking to speak to their child unless there is an emergency. The office staff will relay important messages to students from their parents.

Students who bring a cell phone to school must sign a Cell Phone Policy form along with their parents. Cell phones must be off and in a designated place in the classroom during the school day.

## TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks are provided by the school, and families are charged a textbook fee to cover consumable books. Textbook fees must be paid by all families by August 1st. Any student who has not paid the textbook fee (unless the fees are on FACTS) will not receive textbooks. Textbooks will be distributed on the first day of school. All textbooks are the property of St. Mary School and students are expected to use care when using them. Students may not write in, deface, tear or damage textbooks in any way. Should textbooks be lost or vandalized, the student who was issued the textbook is responsible for paying to replace it.

**U (see Uniform Policy Addendum)**

**V**

**VIRTUAL LEARNING**

 At this time, the Florida regular and direct contact requirements and the Diocesan attendance requirements are in effect.  There is no longer an emergency order in place allowing a virtual learning option. All schools must comply with Florida Statute 1002.421(1)(i) which states that all schools must

maintain a physical location in the state at which each student has regular and direct contact with teachers. In situations where there a student has extreme medical needs, principals will consult with the diocese and handle each medical need on a case by case basis.

## VISITORS

All visitors, including parents, should first come to the school office and sign in. Visitors are not permitted to go directly to classrooms. Students will be called to the office for necessary messages or early pick-up from school. A student will not be released from the classroom until the teacher is notified by the office to do so. Students may not bring visitors to school with the intent of visiting classes without teacher’s and principal’s permission in advance. Visitors are asked not to appear on the school grounds in any apparel not in keeping with the dignity and decorum of the school.

## VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

St. Mary School owes much to the generosity of parents, and without the support of parent volunteers, we would not be able to provide the opportunities for our students that we do now. There are many opportunities to volunteer in different ways: supervising the playground each day at lunchtime, being a homeroom parent, chaperoning at parties, field trips and other events, coaching or helping with our various sports teams and events, helping with drama productions, and working for the success of our fundraisers throughout the year. . No matter what your situation is, we have a volunteer opportunity that will help you earn your Volunteer hours!

Each family registered at St. Mary School is asked to accumulate 20 volunteer hours during each school year. All volunteers must be fingerprinted before participating in any activity. (Please see policy on fingerprinting) Volunteers must be able to give their full attention to the students they are with at all times. For this reason, volunteers may not bring small children with them when serving in a volunteer capacity.

## Addendum

## UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS FOR BOYS AND GIRLS GRADES PREK - 8

The school uniform is compulsory. Parents and students are responsible for compliance with uniform requirements. The problem of children who are out of uniform must be solved by the parents. The rules are intended to be followed consistently by all students in each grade level in order to maintain a fair policy for all students.

St. Mary School, in its attempt to educate the whole person, establishes a uniform policy for the following reasons:

1. To instill good grooming habits neatness and a business-like appearance.
2. To help establish and maintain a proper academic tone within the school community
3. To reduce superficial competitiveness in dress among students and to support the dignity of the individual based on character, not appearance.
4. To provide financial relief to parents.

**All students are required to wear the approved uniform. Uniforms must be purchased at Sir Walter Uniform, 500 S. Plumosa St., Merritt Island, Florida, or at the St. Mary Used Uniform Shop located on the school grounds.**

Uniforms should be clean with buttons intact. Parents should make sure that all uniform wear fits and is not worn or faded. Shirttails should be tucked in while students are on campus. Violation of the school uniform policy is part of our discipline program.

### GROOMING/HAIR POLICY

We encourage students to take pride in a neat, becoming, business-like appearance. A well-groomed student begins the day with a sense of well-being and good self-image. Please observe the following guidelines when it comes to grooming:

**ALL STUDENTS:**

* Hair should be neatly groomed and combed away from the face so as not to cover the face. No hair dying, including (but not limited to) chunking, tips, streaking, etc.
* No shaved or intentionally bald heads
* No designs are to be shaved into hair or eyebrows
* No extreme styles, including (but not limited to) skater cuts, spiked hair, or tails
* **BOYS:**  Natural hair length must not extend more than halfway over the ears (earlobes must be visible), must not extend below the eyebrows, and must not extend below the top of the collar of a properly worn and buttoned uniform shirt
* Sideburns are not permitted
* Male students should be clean shaven every day
* For very curly hair, the length must not exceed two inches from the scalp
* **GIRLS:**  Conservative hair clips are allowed for the purpose of keeping hair out of the face; excessive ribbons, bandanas, etc., are not permitted

Any student whose hair is in violation of this policy will be required to return his/her hair to a more natural state. The school administration reserves the right to ask parents to keep a student home until the correction has been made. We ask parents for their full cooperation in this matter.

### JEWELRY

* Jewelry should be minimal, discreet and should not distract from the uniform.
* Jewelry should be limited to one watch, one ring, one bracelet and simple pendants on a narrow gold or silver chain.
* Students may not wear oversized necklaces, dangling or oversized earrings, or large hoop earrings (larger than the size of a quarter).
* Necklaces must be worn inside the shirt.
* Boys are not permitted to wear earrings.
* Visible tattoos are prohibited (unless in accordance with the child’s religious tradition, i.e., Hindu)
* Students may not wear nose rings, studs in nose, multiple/excessive piercings in the ears, gages

###  MAKEUP/NAIL POLISH

* No excessive makeup – this includes foundations, powder, eyeliner, eye shadow, mascara, and

lip stick

* Fingernail polish is not permitted; however, small nail tips are permitted.
* No artificial fingernails or designs on nails are permitted

## UNIFORM GUIDELINES

###  Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten

* St. Mary navy shorts and St. Mary shirts in white, yellow, or blue
* Black or white athletic shoes with a minimum of trim
* Velcro shoes are allowed at this grade level
* Socks may be black or white and tops of socks are visible above the shoe
* In cold weather, students in these grades may wear the St. Mary sweatshirt and sweatpants

### Girls--Grades 1-5

* JUMPERS – St. Mary plaid with embroidered St. Mary emblem
* SKORTS – St. Mary plaid
* Jumpers and skorts should be of an appropriate length. The skirt length will reach from the waist to a point just above the knees that is no more than 2 inches above the top of the kneecap
* WHITE COLLARED PULLOVER KNIT SHIRT with St. Mary silk screen emblem
* BLACK or WHITE LEATHER OR LEATHER-LIKE ATHLETIC SHOES **(minimal)**
* **Gray, blue, brown, or silver shoes are not uniform shoes. Checkered, striped or other patterned fad shoes should not be worn.**
* Shoelaces must match the color of the shoe**.**
* WHITE or black CREW SOCKS
* Socks must be clearly visible above thetop of the shoe
* Navy Blue sweatshirt, sweater, jacket and/or sweatpants with St. Mary logo for cold weather
* Tights are permitted for girls on cold days and should be solid white, navy blue or black (to be worn under the jumper or skort only).

### Girls--Grades 6-8

* SKIRTS or SKORTS– St. Mary plaid or khaki Walking shorts – Khaki or Navy Blue
* Skirts, skorts, or shorts should be of an appropriate length. The skirt length will reach from the waist to a point just above the knees that is no more than 2 inches above the top of the kneecap.
* WHITE or ROYAL BLUE COLLARED PULLOVER KNIT SHIRT with St. Mary silk screen emblem
* BLACK or WHITE ATHLETIC SHOES **(minimal trim)**
* Shoelaces must match the color of the schoe.
* **Gray, blue, brown, or silver shoes are not uniform shoes Checkered, striped or other patterned fad shoes should not be worn..**

####   White or black crew or ankle socks (socks must be clearly visible above the top of the shoe)

* Tights/leggings are permitted for girls on cold days and should be solid navy blue or black (to be worn under the skirt or skort only).
* Navy Blue sweatshirt, sweater, or jacket with St. Mary logo for cold weather
* **Optional: Navy Blue St. Mary sweatpants for cold weather**

### Boys --Grades 1-5

* DRESS NAVY SHORTS OR DRESS NAVY PANTS (must not be oversized and hang below the waist or below the knee)
* WHITE COLLARED PULLOVER KNIT SHIRT with St. Mary’s silk screen emblem  BLACK or BROWN BELT **– No belts with designs (like skater belts)**
* BLACK or WHITE ATHLETIC SHOES (**minimal trim)**
* **Gray, blue, brown, or silver shoes are not uniform shoes. Checkered, striped or other patterned fad shoes should not be worn.**
* Shoelaces musst match the color of the shoe**.**
* High top shoes are permitted but must follow color and trim guideline
* High tops can be worn this year IF the socks can be seen at least an inch above the shoe top. If the socks cannot be seen an inch above the shoe top, then the student will not be allowed to wear the high tops.
* WHITE or BLACK CREW OR ANKLE SOCKS **(socks must be clearly visible above the top of the shoe, including high top shoes)**
* Navy Blue sweatshirt or jacket with St. Mary logo for cold weather
* **Optional: Navy Blue St. Mary sweatpants for cold weather**

### Boys—Grades 6-8

* DRESS NAVY OR KHAKI SHORTS OR DRESS NAVY OR KHAKI PANTS ( must not be oversized and hang below the waist or below the knee)
* WHITE or ROYAL BLUE COLLARED PULLOVER KNIT SHIRT with St. Mary silk screen emblem
* BLACK or BROWN BELT **– No belts with designs (like skater belts)**
* BLACK or WHITE ATHLETIC SHOES (**minimal trim)**
* **Gray, silver, blue, or brown shoes are not acceptable, and students will be asked to purchase another pair of shoes if they do not comply with the dress code guideline. Checkered, striped or other patterned fad shoes should not be worn. s.**
* High top shoes are permitted but must follow color and trim guideline
* High tops can be worn this year IF the socks can be seen at least an inch above the shoe top. If the socks cannot be seen an inch above the shoe top, then the student will not be allowed to wear the high tops.
* Shoes must be properly tied with laces showing
* Shoelaces must match the color of the shoe
* WHITE OR BLACK CREW OR ANKLE SOCKS **(socks must be clearly visible above the top of the shoe, including high top shoes)**
* Navy Blue sweatshirt or jacket with St. Mary’s logo for cold weather
* **Optional: Navy Blue St. Mary sweatpants for cold weather**

### OUTER GARMENTS FOR COLD WEATHER When cold weather occurs, only St. Mary School sweatshirts, sweaters, or jackets are permitted as outer wear. Students may not wear any other coat or jacket unless approved by administration. Please purchase one sweatshirt or jacket so that your child has the appropriate outerwear when the weather gets cold.

### PE UNIFORM

**Girls-Grades 1-5**

* NAVY P.E. SHORTS with St. Mary emblem
* **Girls and Boys-Grades 6-8**
* NAVY P.E. SHORTS with St. Mary emblem
* PE T-shirts with St. Mary emblem

**The administration reserves the right to make decisions about grooming and uniform issues that may not be addressed in the handbook.**

#

***“Search Me, O God, and Know My Heart”***

***-Psalm 139***

This **Code of Conduct** applies to all parents, guardians, caregivers, volunteers, and visitors who interact with our schools and Catholic Education in the Diocese of Orlando. It also applies to all parents, guardians, caregivers, volunteers, and visitors who are present at school and school sponsored activities, meetings, and/or functions within and outside of school hours. As parents, guardians, caregivers, volunteers, and visitors, there is an expectation of support for the Vision and Mission of Catholic Education in the Diocese of Orlando.

**Code of Conduct for**

**Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Orlando**

It is the expectation of the school that all parents/guardians/caregivers/volunteers and visitors always model acceptable behavior within the school setting, at school sponsored activities or in any social or professional media involving the school and/or Diocese. “It is incumbent upon parents to cooperate closely with the school teachers to whom they entrust their children to be educated; and in fulfilling their duty, teachers are to collaborate closely with parents who are to be willingly heard and for whom associations or meetings are to be inaugurated and held in great esteem” (*The Code of Canon Law*, Canon 796, Para. 2).

This Code is designed to guide all stakeholders in their dealings with staff, other parents, students, and the wider school community. The Code stands beside but does not exclude or replace the rights and obligations of individuals under common law while recognizing the rights of the Diocese of Orlando as a Catholic religious entity and the religious nature of Catholic schools.

**Mission Statement:**

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Orlando proclaim the Gospel message within an academic environment of excellence that challenges students to be creative and critical thinkers who integrate faith, moral leadership and compassionate service in order to create a more just and humane world.

**Rights of a Parent, Guardian, Caregiver, Volunteer, and Visitor:**

* To be treated with respect and courtesy by staff, students and other parents
* To be listened to, and clearly communicated with by the school in a timely manner, regarding your child/ren’s education and development
* To have confidentiality over sensitive issues respected by faculty/staff

**Responsibilities of a Parent, Guardian, Caregiver, Volunteer, and Visitor:**

* Value and advocate for your school and its reputation. Be mindful of the hurt and damage social media may cause to faculty/staff members, other parents, and students.
* Respect the rights of faculty/staff members and other individuals
* Respect the reputation of teachers and be mindful of communications especially social media; e.g. tone of emails
* Follow the correct procedures to resolve a grievance or conflict, as outlined in the school’s handbook
* Parents must follow the instructions and directions of the teacher. A parent may remind students of the rules but at no time issue consequences and should refer the student to the teacher if the behavior continues
* As valued members of the school community attend and participate appropriately in school liturgies, extracurricular or special events including athletics, concerts, academic and cultural events

**As a Parent, Guardian, Caregiver, Volunteer, and/or Visitor, we ask that you:**

* Cooperate with school/campus security protocols when on school grounds in order to support the overall safety and security of all children in our care o *Please note that each school in the Diocese of Orlando has a “Raptor” comprehensive visitor checkin/check-out system located at the front reception desk to prevent school access to unauthorized persons. Using a valid driver’s license, “Raptor” runs all visitors against the National and State Sex Offender Registry each time he/she visits the campus. ALL visitors and volunteers must wear their name*

*badges/lanyards in plain sight art all times while on school grounds or at school-related events*

* Support in words and actions the philosophy of Catholic Education
* Under no circumstances approach/contact another student to address, discuss or reprimand them because of actions towards your own child/ren. These issues should be addressed by school administration. This includes the use of digital/social media to address or air grievances.

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* Respect teachers’ preparation and assigned supervisory time before, during, and after school Make an appointment for long discussions at a mutually convenient time. If you wish to speak to a teacher, please do not expect a meeting unless pre-arranged
* Protect our children and do not discuss any grievances or perceived failings in front of any student regarding the school
* Respect the decisions made by the administration and faculty, even if you disagree with them
* Listen to your child/ren, but remember that a different version of the event may be interpreted by others
* Understand the importance of a healthy parent/teacher/child relationship and communicate any concerns to your school in a constructive and appropriate manner
* Observe the school’s policies, as outlined on the school webpage and/or the school’s handbook and endeavor to support them in the home
* Cooperate where your child’s behavior has overstepped accepted school standards, as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct, and follow specified protocol for communication with faculty/staff members
* Value the school community and its reputation especially when engaging with social media  Do not smoke or use offensive language on school premises

**Addressing concerns regarding situations involving your student(s):**

Our Catholic schools want to work in partnership with our families. If anyone has a **current complaint, criticism,** or **concern,** it is expected the following steps be followed in the first instance:

1. Speak to the appropriate school person involved (e.g. class teacher) first and try to resolve the concern with mutual respect and clear communication. Where/if possible make an appointment with the relevant person. Follow the chain of command.
2. If for some reason this is not possible, then make an appointment to see an administrator, or other designated leadership personnel.
3. The Administrator (or designee) should attempt to mediate and find resolution in the presence of both parties.
4. If, having followed Steps 1-3 with no satisfaction, the parents must contact the pastor. Only after steps 1-4 have accured with no resolution, then you may contact the Office of Catholic Schools using information on the website of the Diocese of Orlando - Office of Catholic for further facilitation [(https://www.orlandodiocese.org/ministries-offices/schools/)](https://www.orlandodiocese.org/ministries-offices/schools/).
5. Understand that parents, caregivers, guardians, etc. will not receive disciplinary or conflict resolution details that involve children other than their own. This is in accordance to Florida Statute.

**It is important to note that criticism regarding a faculty/staff member will only be heard if it is related to their professional conduct.**

***Breaches and/or the inability to respect the Diocese of Orlando – Office of Catholic Schools Code of Conduct for Parents, Guardians, Caregivers, Volunteers, and Visitors, or exasperating complaints, may result in exclusion of a parent, guardian, caregiver, volunteer, and/or visitor from a school, and/or possible termination of enrollment of their child/ren.***

If your complaint relates to Sexual Abuse by a faculty/staff member towards a child in both an historical or current matter, you should, contact the statewide toll free abuse and neglect registry at 1-800-96ABUSE ( 1-800-962-2873) and/or law enforcement. The Diocese of Orlando also offers the esrvice of a Victim Assistance Coordinator. The number is 407-246-7179.

Parents, Guardians, and/or Caregivers, when signing off on accepting the school’s policies in the Enrollment Application Form, and by the act of accepting enrollment at a Diocese of Orlando Catholic School, are accepting of this Code of Conduct in its entirety.

*Excerpts of this policy have been used by permission of the Diocese of St.Petersburg, FL.*

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**Safe Environment Letter to Parents**

Dear Parents:

 Over the years, the Diocese of Orlando and the Office of Schools have taken steps to ensure the safety of your children. We continually review the measures we have in place to protect your children, and we oftentimes ask for your support in implementing new measures and procedures designed to make our schools a safe haven for your children.

 To this end, we hope you will share the following with your children to help us ensure that wrongful conduct does not occur in our schools. The intent of this letter is not to alarm you, but rather to help all of us understand the limits of proper conduct we expect in our schools. While we hope never to have these problems in our schools, we want it clearly understood that the Diocese does not condone or authorize its employees, volunteers, coaches, or students to engage in any of the following activities:

* Threatening or causing personal harm or injury

* Threatening or causing damage to school or Diocesan property

* Providing medical advice

* Conducting physical examinations of or providing shots to students (other than school-sponsored or sanctioned exams for scoliosis, vision, hearing, athletic fitness, diabetic treatments, or other medical treatments, all of which require written permission from a parent or guardian)

* Administering drugs, including any over the counter medication, in the absence of express written permission from a parent or guardian per Diocesan policy

* Providing massages or other physical therapy

* Taking blood samples or performing any other medical procedure

* Examining the genitalia of any student, for any reason

* Touching an individual inappropriately

* Smoking, or encouraging smoking, on school property

* Asking a student to undress or observing a student while he or she is changing clothes at school or a sporting event, other than necessary supervision in a locker or approved changing area

* Denigrating or abusing any child, volunteer, or employee

 We also ask you, as parents, to help us identify these and any other inappropriate activities that take place in our schools. Please report them immediately to the Principal or the Office of Schools. Similarly, if your child observes or experiences these or similar activities, he or she should feel comfortable telling you, the Principal, or the Office of Schools. Our experience and that of experts, particularly in the area of school violence, is that tell-tale signs (e.g., severe mood changes, emotional outbursts or irrational conduct, fascination with guns or incidents of violence, indirect and direct threats) usually exist before the actual violent act occurs. Early intervention, therefore, is the key to avoiding a tragic situation. We cannot possibly identify all the improper conduct that might occur, but we ask you as parents to use your common sense and report anything that you believe is inappropriate. Your cooperation in enforcing these guidelines is greatly appreciated.

 Working together, we can continue to provide your children a caring, loving environment, and the best Catholic education. Please call me if you have any questions or concerns about this letter.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

 ***Sandra Basinger, Principal***