

ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL WEST, TEXAS



Mission Statement

St. Mary's Catholic School seeks God's will as we love, encourage and educate all students in the Catholic faith, helping them to reach their highest potential in spirit, mind, body and service.

STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK 2026 - 2027

St. Mary's Catholic School

Student-Parent Handbook

2026-2027

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St. Mary's Catholic School seeks God's will as we love, encourage and educate all students in the Catholic faith, helping them to reach their highest potential in spirit, mind, body and service.

Vision

Inspired by our Catholic tradition, St. Mary's Catholic School will provide the highest quality programming possible to educate students in spirit, mind, body, and service while helping them become the next generation of Catholic leaders to live the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Philosophy

We believe that St. Mary's Catholic School is a mission of the Catholic Church called to create an environment where we love, encourage, and educate all students. We strive to prepare our students to reach their highest potential spiritually, academically, physically and socially. St. Mary's Catholic School ultimately seeks to create a balance between spirit, mind and body with opportunities for service that will enable each student to know, love and serve God.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword to Parents.....	3
Parents as Partners Agreement.....	3
Mission Statements.....	4
Philosophy.....	5
Goals & Objectives.....	5
Ethics & Integrity in Ministry (EIM).....	6
Hierarchy of Responsibility.....	7
Responsibility of the Diocesan Education Board & Individual School Policies.....	7
Staff Qualifications.....	7
Policies & Procedures.....	7
Organizational Chart.....	8
Nondiscrimination Statement.....	8
Asbestos Management Plan Notification.....	9
General School Organizations/School Related Organizations.....	9
Family Educational Rights.....	9
Student Directory.....	10
Admissions Policy.....	10
Assistance to Individual Students.....	11
Class Assignments of Students.....	12
Procedure for Contacting Staff Members.....	12
School Operating Hours.....	12
Drop Off/Dismissal Procedure.....	13
After School Care.....	13
Tardiness.....	14
Absence Procedure.....	14
Permission to Leave School Early.....	15
Communicable Diseases.....	15
Immunizations.....	15-16
Injury or Illness at School.....	17

Health Screening.....	18
Fire/Disaster Drills.....	18
Office Records.....	18
Curriculum by Grade.....	18-21
Honor Roll, Testing, Promotion & Retention & Homework.....	21-22
Field Trips.....	22-23
Student Conduct.....	23
Social Media, Cyberbullying & Bullying.....	24
Detention, Suspension, Probation & Expulsion.....	24-26
School Property.....	26
Search & Seizure.....	26-27
Student Dress Code.....	27-29
Suspected Student Abuse by a Staff Member.....	30
Medication.....	30
Tuition & Fees.....	30-32
Cafeteria Requirements.....	32-33
Student Activities.....	33
10 Day Rule.....	33
Practice.....	34
National Junior Honor Society.....	34
Cheerleader Selection/Participation.....	34
Telephone Use.....	35
Inclement Weather Procedure.....	35
Resolution of Disputes & Conflicts.....	35
Mass Schedule and Related Church Activities.....	35
Technology and Internet Acceptable Use Policy.....	35-37
Student/Parent Handbook Agreement.....	38-39

FOREWORD TO PARENTS

This Student-Parent Handbook is designed to provide you with the information you need to understand the rules and regulations that govern St. Mary's Catholic School. The handbook is intended to be in harmony with the Texas Catholic Conference Education Department, Diocese of Austin Education Board, Pastoral Policies, and St. Mary's Board of Trustee policies. Changes in policy that affect this handbook will be communicated to students and parents. Policy changes during the year supersede the provisions found in this handbook. It is the parents' responsibility to read and abide by the policies contained in this handbook. Interpretation or areas of concern should and are encouraged to be brought before the principal.

PARENTS AS PARTNERS AGREEMENT

We, the faculty and staff of St. Mary's School, welcome you and your family to our school community. You will find that each of us is firmly committed to the formation of a school community, which will provide a strong academic education within the framework of Catholic beliefs, values and traditions.

Since belonging to our school community demands the commitment and dedication of the staff to the philosophy and goals of the school, it is likewise necessary for each parent to accept the philosophy and goals and to support the efforts of the staff and administration to implement and achieve them.

The Catholic Church and St. Mary's Catholic School recognize parents as the primary educators of their children, the education of students at our school is a partnership between parents and the school. If, in the opinion of the administration, the partnership is irretrievably broken, the school reserves the right to require the parent to require the parent to withdraw his or her child. This is a very decision that is not made lightly.

Similarly, it is necessary for you, the primary educators of your children, to understand fully your part in the formation of the school community. We ask you, therefore, to read the Student and Parent Handbook in its entirety, the following Agreement, and provide your signature at the end to signify that you have read both. This signed form should be returned to the school office by the end of the first week of school.

AGREEMENT

1. We understand that the Catholic school is under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Austin. We accept, therefore, that:
 - A. The pastor of the Church is the ex-officio chief administrative officer of the school, who, with the principal and staff, carries out the policies of the Diocesan Office of Education and, on points not covered by Diocesan policy, determines policies, in collaboration with the Local School Board, appropriate to the needs of the school, and;
 - B. The principal is responsible for the immediate direction and supervision of the school program.
2. We understand that certain responsibilities require our continuous support if the school is to achieve its goals. We agree, therefore:
 - A. To worship with our child, to actively participate in sacramental preparation programs, to make an effort to expand our own knowledge and the practice of our faith in order to help religion be an integral part of our children's lives rather than merely a subject that is taught during one segment of the day;
 - B. To encourage our children to learn by providing an environment suitable for home study;
 - C. To abide by the decision of the principal regarding suitable grade placement and advancement or retention of our children;
 - D. To abide by all school and Diocesan regulations and policies;
 - E. To complete and return all forms and records necessary to comply with school, Diocesan or state regulations.
 - F. To follow all attendance guidelines and ensure that our child is in regular attendance at school.

3. We understand that tuition covers a very small part of the total cost of educating our children.
We agree, therefore:
 - A. To support our school through regular tuition payments;
 - B. To assist in making up the deficit by assuming a share of the duties for fund-raising and other support activities sponsored by the school;
 - C. To abide by the decision of the Pastor, Board of Trustees, or principal should circumstances require us to request such help.

MISSION STATEMENT OF TEXAS CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

The ministry of Catholic education in general is the fulfillment of the educational mission of the Catholic Church and has as its primary goal the continuous formation of the Christian person.

As a pastoral instrument of the Church, the strength of the Catholic school is its ability to respond to the needs of the whole person, the Church in a time of transition and the world with a global perspective for a peaceful and sustainable future.

The Catholic school is a unique environment in which students can experience the presence of the Holy Spirit. Its focus is on the individual person's spiritual, moral, intellectual, social, cultural, and physical development. In the Catholic school, students and teachers are drawn to proclaim the Gospel message, to unite in worship, to respond to the needs of the community through fellowship and social justice, and to serve all people through the sharing of their spiritual gifts and temporal goods.

Intellectually, students are challenged to work to the best of their abilities. In a world of diversity and absolutes, students need to be free to appreciate and understand the living organism called Earth, the peoples and cultures that inhabit it, and to develop global perspectives by which to form their lives and consciences. Students are provided opportunities to develop basic academic and physical skills, pursue knowledge, and critically study and analyze the world in which they live.

The effective Catholic school must call its students to the conviction that people are more important than material gain, that justice is more important than success, that love is more important than esteem, and that collaboration unites while competition divides. The truly successful Catholic school student is not necessarily one who is successful in every endeavor, but one who accepts Christian responsibility for fulfillment of personal potential and shares these gifts with others.

MISSION STATEMENT OF THE DIOCESE OF AUSTIN

We, the Diocese of Austin, the Catholic Church of Central Texas through the Word and Eucharist, prayer, formation and education, social ministries and advocacy, embrace diverse cultures throughout the diocese so that together, as the Catholic Church, we may continue the mission of Christ in the world today.

MISSION STATEMENT OF ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL

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Vision of St. Mary's Catholic School

Inspired by our Catholic tradition, St. Mary's Catholic School will provide the highest quality programming possible to educate students in spirit, mind, body, and service while helping them become the next generation of Catholic leaders to live the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Philosophy

We believe that St. Mary's Catholic School is a mission of the Catholic Church called to create an environment where we love, encourage, and educate all students. We strive to prepare our students to reach their highest potential spiritually, academically, physically and socially. St. Mary's Catholic School ultimately seeks to create a balance between spirit, mind and body with opportunities for service that will enable each student to know, love and serve God.

The Goals of St. Mary's Catholic School

Spiritual Goal

Spiritually we teach the importance of a personal relationship with God. Although we emphasize our Catholic faith, we are respectful of the faith development of non-Catholics in our school community.

Academic Goal

Academically we challenge each child to strive for personal excellence in all academic endeavors.

Physical Goal

Physically we encourage the students to treat their bodies as God's temple through physical fitness and education.

Social Goal

Socially we prepare individuals to strive for personal growth through social awareness, responsibility, and service to God, each other and society. We hold our students and staff accountable to maintain a high moral standard of respect for self and others.

The Objectives of St. Mary's Catholic School

Spiritual

Administrators, faculty and parents work together to uphold and build the Catholic faith through formal training and informal communication to develop each child's personal relationship with God. Fellowship with sister parishes in the Diocese will also facilitate the students' role in the church family.

Faculty and staff charged with religious instruction will be certified and receive training to better meet the needs of the Catholic community in today's society. Traditional and contemporary approaches to a faith-based education will be provided.

Academic

All students will receive instruction in a structured, caring, Catholic environment as they are introduced to and acquire skills in the educational concepts necessary to become productive members of the community. The curriculum, set forth by the Diocese of Austin, will be supported by administrators, faculty and staff who meet or exceed these requirements. Methods of instruction and lesson plans must incorporate the Diocese of Austin curriculum standards and measurable results through testing to ensure students understand and retain required concepts.

When necessary, St. Mary's Catholic School will partner with parents to ensure each student has access to additional support he or she needs in order to reach their personal best.

Physical

All students will be encouraged to respect and honor their bodies through a variety of sports programs, physical activity and education.

Under the direction of the school administration, athletics is open to students in grades 4th through 8th who meet the

academic requirements. All students will participate in supervised physical education activities. Mindful of our role as members of the community, the spirit of teamwork is paramount, as well as developing a healthy attitude towards physical fitness and health.

Social

All students will be given opportunities to experience the impact of their efforts as an individual and a member of the school and church family to affect positive change in their community.

Service-oriented projects that vary in scope, size and duration, under the supervision of St. Mary's Catholic School, will engage students, parents and faculty to incorporate all that has been learned spiritually, academically and physically so that students may give of themselves as Christ has called us to do.

ETHICS AND INTEGRITY IN MINISTRY: PROTECTING GOD'S CHILDREN

NOTE: The complete "Policies on Ethics and Integrity in Ministry, Diocese of Austin" is available for viewing. A copy is maintained in the school and church offices.

The Diocese of Austin Catholic schools are committed to provide a safe, positive, learning and working environment for staff and students. Sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and misconduct in violation of the Ethics and Integrity in Ministry Policy are not tolerated.

"Our diocesan policies, **Ethics and Integrity in Ministry**, are rooted in the Catholic understanding that each individual must be respected and honored. Jesus had a deep, abiding respect for each human being and would not harm or mislead anyone in his/her personal or spiritual life. We must attempt to likewise. Our policies cover four areas of possible harm: immoral conduct, exploitation, harassment and abuse. Statistics show that, while clergy sexual misconduct receives the most media attention, about half of all abuse perpetrated in parishes is done so by volunteers."

Ethics and Integrity in Ministry: "Anyone – volunteers, paid staff, religious or clergy – involved in a ministry with minors (those under the age of 18) or vulnerable adults (those who are uniquely vulnerable to abuse because of physical or mental disabilities) is required to:

1. Submit a Parish Volunteer Application (see website austindiocese.org)
2. Agree to a criminal background check
3. Attend an EIM workshop

As of July 1, 2003, anyone who serves in ministry to minors or vulnerable adults must have completed a criminal records check and attended an Ethics and Integrity in Ministry workshop. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops intends to audit all dioceses in the country to learn of our efforts to comply with the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. It is mandatory that people who serve in the following ways meet the policy requirements: clergy (priests and deacons); women and men in consecrated life; seminarians and deacon candidates; directors of religious education and catechists; youth ministry employees and volunteers; nursery employees and volunteers; school administrators, teacher, and classroom volunteers (also applies to activities outside the classroom when sponsored by the school or church); maintenance and food service providers in schools' parishes; leaders and volunteers of Catholic Scout (boy and girl troops); children's choir directors and children's liturgy coordinators and trainers; anyone (including parents and adults) in host families involved in overnight events); anyone transporting minors in vehicles; anyone involved in a one-on-one or home-based ministry with minors; Eucharistic ministers who visit people outside of the church (hospitals, nursing home, private homes, etc.); anyone serving in a program for minors or vulnerable adults that is hosted on church or school property.

When an allegation is made regarding sexual abuse, procedures for reporting the complaint will follow the procedures outlined by the *Policies on Ethics and Integrity in Ministry Catholic Diocese of Austin, 4th Edition: August, 2008*.

To obtain more information or ask questions, contact the Church or school offices.

St. Mary's Catholic School requires that ALL volunteers (this includes chaperones on school field trips) be EIM compliant prior to volunteering.

HIERARCHY OF RESPONSIBILITY

(Diocesan Education Board, May 1999)

The Bishop of the Diocese holds the primary responsibility for all Catholic educational programs within the Diocese. As the chief teacher of the Diocese, the Bishop is responsible for providing the basis of Catholic education for the people of the Diocese. The Superintendent of Schools operates as the representative of the Bishop. With regard to all educational matters, the following persons and organizations are subject to the **Diocesan Handbook of School Policies** (copy is available in the principal's office): Diocesan Education Board, Office of the Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Pastor, local school board, principal, teacher, professional staff member, parent, pupil, volunteer, other personnel.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE DIOCESAN EDUCATION BOARD AND INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL POLICIES

(Diocesan Education Board, May, 1999)

The Diocesan Education Board is an Advisory Board responsible for formulating Diocesan policies for the Catholic School ministry of the Diocese. This Board and the Superintendent are responsible to the Bishop of the Diocese. The policies are subject to unilateral modification by the Superintendent. The policy of the Diocese takes priority over local school policy. An amended or revised policy of the Diocese replaces former Diocesan policy and takes priority over local school policy. The adopted date on each policy is the effective date, unless expressly stated to the contrary in the policy or in the records of adoption of the policy. No school may establish a policy that conflicts or is inconsistent with Diocesan policy. The Local School Board and/or the Pastor approve all local school policies. During business hours, each local school shall allow individuals, who request to do so, an opportunity to read school policies. The policies shall be kept current.

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

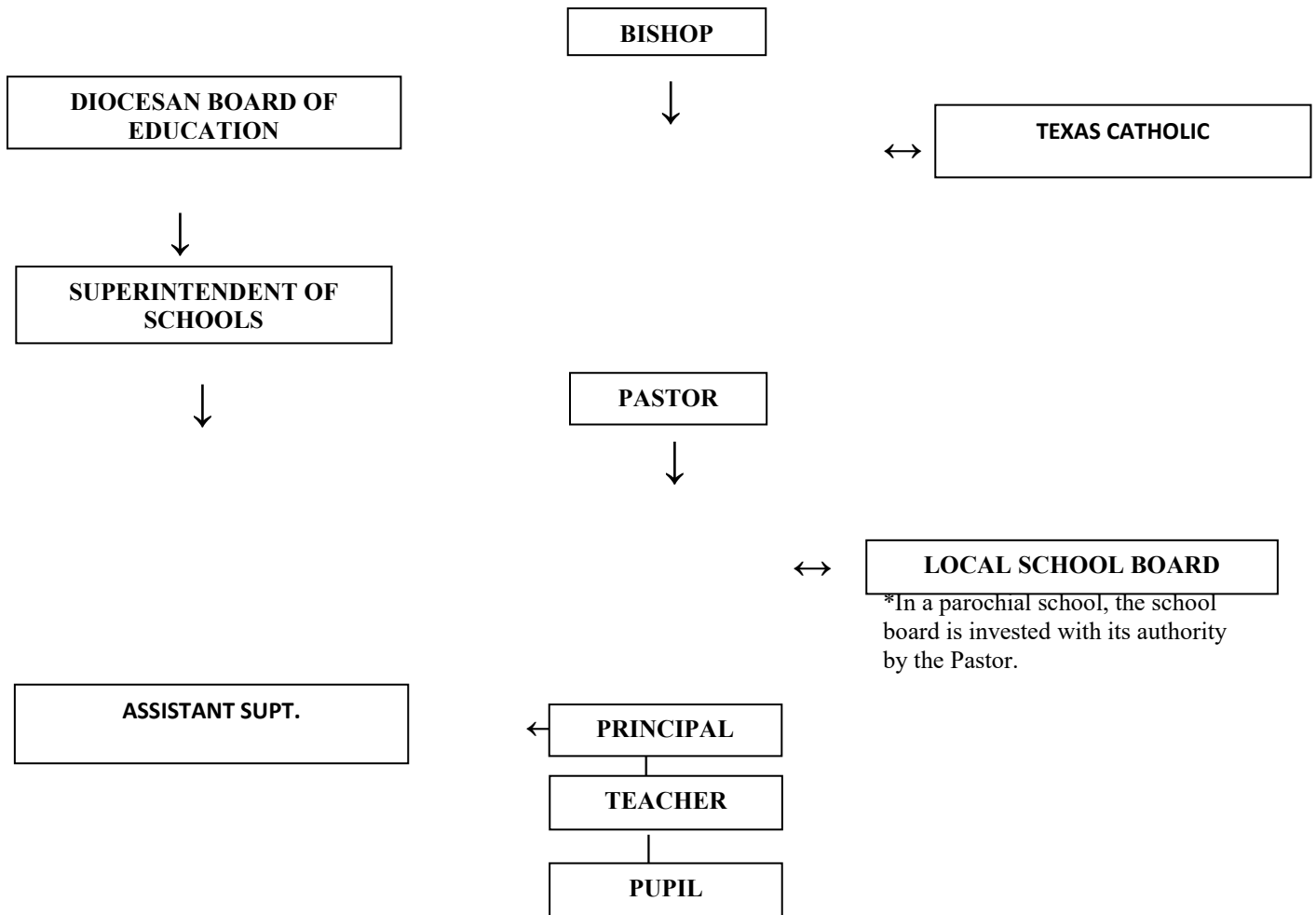
Every professional teacher (requiring a degree) and the principal currently assigned to St. Mary's School have bachelor degrees or master degrees in the assignment that she/he is assigned as mandated by the Texas Catholic Education Conference (essentially the same as prescribed by the Texas Education Agency). Every instructor, not requiring a degree, and including teacher aides, have the necessary academic preparation and certification required by the Texas Catholic Education Conference and the Diocese of Austin. If any parent or individuals in the community want additional information and/or clarification, they should contact the principal as soon as possible.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

This handbook is designed for parents, students and staff for the purpose of providing important information regarding the policies and procedures mandated by the Texas Catholic Conference and the Diocese of Austin. These policies and procedures, which include St. Mary's, are intended to assure the best possible learning environment for each student as well as insure an effective overall operation of the school. This handbook should not be considered "all inclusive." Contact the school regarding any item or concern covered or not covered in the handbook.

At the time of registration, each family receives notice of the posting of this handbook on the school website (www.stmaryswest.com) and assumes a commitment to read the entire contents prior to the opening of school and promises to abide by the contents.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART (Diocesan Education Board, May 1999)



NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

St. Mary's Catholic School, West, Texas is in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Public Law 88-352), the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (Public Law 94-135), and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Public Law 93-112). This is an equal opportunity program. No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination. If you believe you have been discriminated against, you may lodge a complaint against the management staff of this agency and/or write immediately to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 or (202) 720-6382 (TTY). More information may be obtained through the school or parish office.

The school admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, program, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school and the school does not discriminate on the basis of color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship, and loan programs and athletic and other school administered programs.”

ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLAN NOTIFICATION

This notification is in accordance with Section 763.93 of the Asbestos-In-School Identification and Notification Rule (40 CFR Part 763) of the availability of the Asbestos Management Plan. A copy of the inspections and assessments of asbestos-containing materials and the complete Management Plan is available at the St. Mary's Catholic School office. The plan will be maintained continually and notification of the availability of the plan will be issued at the first of each school year via the Student-Parent Handbook.

GENERAL SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

There are two classifications of schools within the Diocese of Austin – parish and diocesan. St. Mary's is a **parish school** directly under the supervision of the pastor of the Church of the Assumption. A **diocesan** school is directly under the supervision of the Office of the Bishop.

The principal of a parish school is directly responsible, first of all, to the pastor and then the Superintendent of Schools of the Diocese of Austin. The principal of a **diocesan** school is directly responsible, first of all, to the Office of the Bishop and then the Superintendent of Schools of the Diocese of Austin.

“Each Local School in the Diocese should have a Local School Board, which is an Advisory Board. The purpose of the Local School Board is to assist the pastor and principal in an advisory capacity.” (Diocesan Education Board, May 1999)

The school is composed of three departments: Primary, Intermediate and Middle. Though separate, each works together forming a continuity and sequence in skills and methods. Primary comprises – 4K (Pre-Kindergarten), 5K (Kindergarten), Grades 1 – 2; Intermediate comprises – grades 3 – 5; and Middle comprises grades – grades 6 – 8.

SCHOOL RELATED ORGANIZATIONS AND PROGRAMS: DIOCESAN REGULATIONS

A diocesan education board policy mandates that “all organizations, programs and clubs, operating within a Local School must operate within the policies of the Local School. They must first be approved by the Principal and are under the auspices of the Principal. Any fund raising and dispersion of funds are under the authority of the Principal. Examples of such organizations, programs and clubs are Parent organizations, athletic programs, booster clubs, band, photography, and drama.”

(Diocese of Austin, Diocesan Education Board, Adopted: 4/89; Revised: 5/91; Revised: 4/97; Revised 5/10)

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS

It is the principal's responsibility to enact reasonable safeguards for the privacy of a student's record in whatever process is used to collect, maintain, or secure data. Unless required by law or a court order, no information from pupils' records may be released to non-educational agencies without the consent of the parents. These agencies include police and parole officers, personnel officers, and employment agencies. Representatives from the Department of Human Services and Child Protective Services have legal access to student records and communication rights with any student during school time concerning matters of jurisdiction. The representative(s) must be cleared by the principal prior to the enactment of this jurisdiction. Parent clearance is **not** required.

Parents/legal guardians have the right to the inspect school records concerning their children. They have the right to inspect school records dealing with their children, including cumulative cards, test data cards, and health cards. A non –custodial parent may have the right to inspect the student's school record and health history, unless a court order presented to the school states otherwise. This does not imply any other rights. The school may withhold a student's academic records until all tuition, fees, and/or fines due to the school are paid.

Grandparents or other relatives do not have any other rights to student information or consultations with faculty or school personnel unless the grandparent or other relative is the legal guardian.

Parents that are divorced or never been married are asked to file copies of custody agreements with the school office to ensure accurate release of students and student information.

Listed below are items considered as “directory information” that may in whole or part be made public. The following are considered directory information:

- Student’s name, address and home telephone listing
- Date and place of birth
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of athletic team members
- Dates of attendance
- Degrees and awards received
- The public or private school most recently attended by the student (Home schooling is also included)

Directory information may be disclosed to all school officials. Directory assistance cannot be disclosed to private or profit-making entities unless otherwise directed by the parent/legal guardian.

Directory information may be released to requesting private schools, public schools, colleges, universities, and military recruiting officials.

STUDENT DIRECTORY

Within the first week of the school year, an electronic Student Directory listing students’ and parents’ names, addresses, home telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses is made available. The Student Directory should be used to acquaint parents with the names of their children(s) classmates and parents. These directories should not be **used** or **sold** for other purposes.

ADMISSIONS POLICY

St. Mary’s School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin or sex in administration of educational policies, admission policies, and other school administered programs.

Admittance is subject to the capacity of the school or the capacity of any individual grade or grades. St. Mary’s may also deny enrollment to a student requiring special services that the school is not capable of providing. The school has authorization from the Diocese to determine its ability to meet the individual child’s special needs in light of the following considerations:

- Diagnostic information
- Receptivity of the school community
- Financial impact on the school - special equipment, staff development, support personnel, specialized personnel, instructional materials, facilities.
- Access to trained personnel (local or Diocesan).
- The extent to which the student requires modification of the educational program (grades, curriculum, testing, assignment, teaching strategies, etc.).
- Parental cooperation
- Realistic goals that can be agreed upon between parents and school in regard to duration of service.

Other areas to be considered are impact on finances, impact on school personnel, and duration of need for special services and goals of the school.

The principal shall decide whether to accept the child, to deny acceptance, or conditionally to accept the child. If the child is conditionally accepted, the Parent/Guardian must sign the Conditional Acceptance Form. The school shall

monitor and periodically review the progress of the student and shall provide a progress report to the parent/guardian. At the end of the time period specified in the Conditional Acceptance Form, the principal shall then determine whether enrollment shall be continued or termination shall be required.

Students entering for the first time must present the following documents upon enrollment: baptismal certificate, current immunization record, birth certificate, grade reports and standardized test information from previous school.

Students entering from accredited schools shall be placed in as comparable a course as is available at the school. Students will be placed according to past performance, standardized test scores and teacher recommendation. "Catholic schools reserve the right of the principal to withdraw a student when such is in the best interests of the local school and/or the student." (Diocesan Education Board, May 1999)

A student who leaves a local school in the Diocese under unfavorable terms, or who is requested to leave, will not be re-admitted to that local school or another local school in the Diocese without the receiving principal consulting with the superintendent. The superintendent or principal may require that admittance or re-admittance be conditional. The principal will stipulate the terms in written form. The parent/guardian shall execute the Conditional Acceptance Form. At the end of the specified time, the principal may request a conference with the parent/guardian and render a decision on whether the student's enrollment will continue or be terminated.

Age requirements:

4-K - 4 years of age on or before September 1 of the current academic year

Kindergarten - 5 years of age on or before September 1 of the current academic year

First grade - 6 years of age on or before September 1 of the current academic year.

Age must be verified by an official birth certificate.

ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS

St. Mary's Catholic School may choose to make reasonable accommodations to assist individual students. The need for accommodations must be documented by formal psychoeducational assessments that can be obtained through the local public school at no charge or from a private agency at the expense of the parent/legal guardian.

Accommodations are defined as adaptations which will provide access to participate, an opportunity to demonstrate mastery, and increase the likelihood of success without fundamentally altering or lowering standards or expectations in either the instructional or assessment phases of a course of study. They reduce the impact that a student's special need has on taking in, learning or expressing knowledge.

Modifications are defined as curriculum alterations in the complexity of material that changes what the child is expected to learn and on which to be evaluated. The need for modifications must be documented by formal psychoeducational assessments that can be obtained through the local public school at no charge or from a private agency at the expense of the parent/legal guardian.

Principals and teachers of Catholic schools do not write or accept an individualized education program (I.E.P.) as public schools are mandated to do. Catholic schools that have the personnel and other resources may choose to write an intervention plan for a student's accommodations and/or modifications. They shall present the superintendent with a written plan that specifies the school's process and procedures. Communication with parents/legal guardians on the student's progress is of utmost importance. The teacher will alert the parent/legal guardian of any student having difficulty achieving a passing grade.

Teachers may assist individual students beyond the normal hours of the school day. Parents/legal guardians may be directed to special classes or assistance in instruction held outside the school campus.

CLASS ASSIGNMENT OF STUDENTS

Class placement of students will be made by the principal of the school. The following criteria is used to determine placement: (1) what is best for the student, as much as possible; (2) maintain a balance in numbers to the extent possible; (3) provide, as much as possible, a balance in gender. (4) Regulations from the Texas Catholic Conference Education Department and the Diocese of Austin. Parents are requested not to arbitrarily request a certain teacher. If a parent feels that it is in the “best interest of the child” for him/her to be assigned to a particular teacher, the parent must arrange a meeting with the principal in a timely manner and present a legitimate reason for requesting such an assignment. What a parent has “heard” about a teacher, past assignment of another child or children, whom the child might be with in a class that is objectionable, etc. are not legitimate reasons. After a timely meeting with the principal, he/she will determine what is best for the child, as much as possible, and make the decision. The decision of the principal shall be final.

APPOINTMENTS: PROCEDURE FOR CONTACTING STAFF MEMBERS

1. The principal, when on campus, will be available for the needs of parents and others in the community. However, when at all possible, an appointment should be made by calling the school office.
2. Other members of the staff remain on campus until 3:45, Monday through Friday when dismissal is at the usual time. Appointments made in advance are advisable, and it is best to make contact directly with the teacher during her/his planning period (this period will be announced right after the school year begins or can be obtained by calling the school office). Unless there is an emergency or approval by the teacher, contact by parents or others will not be allowed during the teacher’s instructional assignment. **Note: Every staff member has an e-mail address (firstname.lastname@stmaryswest.com) that she/he frequently monitors. You are encouraged to communicate with the individual using this method. Notify the principal if you are not receiving replies in a timely manner. Also, check the school’s web page often for important information.**
3. When necessary, teachers will request conferences with parents.
4. It is strongly advised that parents have periodic contact with teachers regarding student progress.
5. Any parent or others visiting or conducting business in the school, including contact with student, **must check with the office prior to this activity.** This ensures the safety of the student and helps in avoiding unnecessary classroom interruptions and alerts office personnel that the individual is on campus should contact become necessary.

SCHOOL OPERATING HOURS

- **7:15 A.M.** - Building open and supervision responsibility begins. Students arriving between 7:15 and 7:50 should report to the cafeteria.
- **7:50 A.M.** - Students should be in or going to their first designated class.
- **8:00 A.M.** - School day begins
- **8:00 A.M.** - Prayers/Announcements (students are considered tardy after **8:00 A.M.**).
- **3:30 P.M.** - Dismissal

The school office is open all day on school days from 7:30 A.M.-3:45 P.M.

Lunches are served from approximately 11:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.

The school does not accept responsibility for supervision until 7:15 A.M., unless directed by a staff member; or after 3:40 P.M., except when a staff member requests that a student remain after this time, and the student is then under the supervision and the responsibility of that staff member. Supervision/jurisdiction is in force for any school related activity on or off campus and/or scheduled before or after the above time structures. Students who are found on campus after 3:45 without adult supervision will be sent St. Mary’s After School Program and the parents will be billed for the expense.

DROP OFF / DISMISSAL PROCEDURE

Drop Off in Morning

1. Students should be dropped off under the connective awning between the church and the office building. Parents dropping off children without exiting the car themselves, should enter the grounds from the entrance gate on Marable Street, pull safely to the awning, drop off the children, and then exit the school grounds past the church on to Harrison Street.

2. Parents who choose to park their vehicle and escort their children inside are asked to please park in a painted parking space. Vehicles should never be left running while unattended by a driver while on campus.

Pick Up in Afternoon

1. Parents will inform the school office at the beginning of each year how their child will typically be picked up from school. The office will send home a form with the following options:

- 1) Car Pool Line
- 2) Walk Home
- 3) After School Care (Grades PK-5)
- 4) JH Study Hall (Grades 6-8)

Car Pool Line: Students should be picked up under the connective awning between the church and the office building. Each parent will be given a card identifying the children they are picking up from school that will be placed in the window of the car.

Walk Home: Students will be walked to the corner of the school property and then released to walk home.

After School Care (Grades PK-5): Students will be picked up from their classrooms and walked to After School Care.

JH Study Hall (Grades 6-8): Students will be picked up from their classrooms and walked to JH Study Hall. JH study hall will be provided at no charge to parents of students in grades 6-8.

2. Students should be picked up under the connective awning between the church and the office building. Parents picking up children without exiting the car themselves, should enter the grounds from the entrance gate on Marable Street, pull safely to the awning, form a line, pick up the children, and then exit the school grounds past the church on to Harrison Street.

3. Parents who choose to park their vehicle to enter the building for pick up are asked to please park in a painted parking space. Vehicles should never be left running while unattended by a driver while on campus.

Note: All students, unless so directed, should be gone from the school by 3:45 P.M. Any parent or other adult who knows he/she will be late picking up a student should call the school. After 3:45, the younger children should be picked up from the office. Students who are found on campus after 3:45 without adult supervision will be sent St. Mary's After School Program at the parents' expense.

AFTER SCHOOL CARE

After school care is available for SMCS students in grades Pre-K through 8 from 3:30-6:00 P.M. After school care requires enrollment and weekly fees. In the event of an emergency late pick-up in which you need your child to attend After School Care, a student may attend for a drop-in fee of \$10 per day/per child.

TARDINESS

It is extremely important that students arrive at school well in advance of the starting time. It is the responsibility of the **parents** to make sure that the student is punctual. Students arriving late, no matter how long or short the duration, must report to the office for admittance to class. Teachers have been instructed not to allow a student into class who is tardy without first securing and returning a “tardy” slip from the office. The office will decide if the reason for being tardy should be accepted as excused or unexcused.

The school day begins promptly at 8:00 A.M.

Students are considered tardy after 8:00A.M. Two or more tardies within a nine-week grading period may constitute a basis for a parent conference or other action being taken at the principal’s discretion. Being tardy between class periods will be dealt with in the same manner as being tardy after 8:00 A.M.

ABSENCES: PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING AND RETURNING TO SCHOOL AND REQUESTING HOMEWORK

There are 170 days of instruction at St. Mary’s Catholic School. The education state law requires students must be in attendance 90% of the school year. Promotion or credit may be jeopardized if a student misses more than 17.0 school days (10% of the school year).

When a student is to be absent, a parent should contact the school before 8:15 A.M. The school needs to know the reason for the absence and when she/he is likely to return. On the first day a student returns from an absence(s), she/he **must first report to the office with a parent or a note of explanation from the parent as to the reason for the absence and any additional information that the school would need to provide for the welfare of the student. This is mandatory for the student to receive an “excused” absence. Telephone calls are not accepted because the school needs to be able to file this information. Failure to receive such note or notes within three (3) days of the absence and/or do not satisfy the conditions necessary for excused absences (see below) will result in “unexcused” status.**

It is advisable to contact the school during the day when the parent is aware the student will not be in attendance the following day(s). The student is required to make up any missed work. It is the **student’s responsibility** to pursue and complete missed homework assignments. Homework for an absent student may usually be secured from the office at 3:30 P.M. on the day of the absence, provided it is requested no later than 10:00 A.M. on the same day. Students have the same number of school days to make up work as the number of days absent. Students serving a suspension are not allowed to make up work missed during the suspension. This also includes tests. An absence is either “excused” or “unexcused”, according to Texas Catholic Conference Education Department policy, which is as follows:

1. **Excused** absences will only be granted for sickness, death in the immediate family, quarantine, weather or road conditions making travel dangerous or any other unusual cause acceptable to the principal. All other absences are **unexcused**. Excused absences will allow the student the right to make up missed work. Students with unexcused absence will not be allowed to make up school work for credit.
2. The school may withhold credit for a class(es), require summer school at the expense of the parent, or not permit progression to the next grade if the student has more than 17.0 absences, excused or unexcused, in a year.

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. The school does not concede to parents the right to alter the school calendar for their convenience. Missed assignments are the student’s responsibility.

PERMISSION TO LEAVE SCHOOL EARLY

1. No child is allowed to leave school early without having proper parent/guardian approval either by phone or advanced written permission being granted from the office. No child will be allowed to leave the campus without prior approval.
2. A permission slip will be given to the student who will in turn take it immediately to the teacher whose class the student will be excused from.
3. Every student must check out through the office prior to leaving the office and the campus.
4. Parents must call or send a note to the office by 8:00 A.M. (unless there is a valid reason for notifying at a later time) on the date that the student is to be excused stating the reason for leaving early, the time the student will be picked up from the office and the approximate day/time that he/she will return.
5. Parents must pick up the student directly from the office unless approval is given by someone in the office.
6. Students who are away from school for an appointment for 3 ½ hours or more will be counted as absent for ½ a day. Three (3) early withdrawals each of which are less than 3 ½ hours are considered a one-half day absence.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

1. A student with a contagious illness may not attend classes. The following guidelines will be used to determine if a child may attend school:

Exclusion Guideline	Return to School Guidelines
Oral temperature of 100degrees or above	Fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication
Vomiting, nausea, or severe abdominal pain	Symptom free for 24 hours
Marked drowsiness or malaise	Symptom free
Sore throat, acute cold, or persistent cough	Symptom free
Red, inflamed, or discharging eyes	Written physician release
Wound, skin, and soft tissue infections	Exclusion until drainage is contained and covered with a clean, dry bandage
Swollen glands around jaws, ears, or neck	Written physician release
Suspected scabies or impetigo	Written physician release
Any skin lesion in the weeping stage	Covered and diagnosed as non-infectious
Earache	Symptom free
Pediculosis	Lice AND nit free
Other symptoms suggestive of an acute illness	Written physician release

2. A student who is suspected of having a contagious illness will be sent home.
3. Upon returning to school, the parents will be asked to present written verification from a physician stating that the student is free of illness and the possibility of transmitting the disease.

IMMUNIZATIONS

(Adopted by the Diocese of Austin 6/08)

Every student enrolled in a Catholic school in the Diocese of Austin shall be immunized against vaccine preventable diseases caused by infectious agents in accordance with the immunization schedule adopted by the Texas Department of State Health (commonly known as the “Minimum State Vaccine Requirements for Texas School Entrance/Attendance”). Each year, every student must present evidence of the required immunizations from a physician or health care provider authorized to administer immunizations to the school before the first day of school.

The immunizations must be current. A student who fails to present the required evidence shall not be accepted for enrollment.

There are no exceptions to the foregoing requirement unless the student presents a written statement signed by the student's physician (M.D. or D.O.) who is authorized to practice in the State of Texas, stating that:

- the physician has examined the student;*
- the physician has determined that the student has either:
 - an allergy to the vaccination(s) identified in the statement and will suffer the severe allergic reaction(s) described in the statement;
 - an immunodeficiency described in the statement and will suffer a serious health risk(s), which is also described in the statement, if the student receives the vaccination(s) specifically identified in the statement; or
 - a neurological disorder described in the statement and will suffer a serious health risk(s), which is also described in the statement, if the student receives the vaccination(s) specifically identified in the statement; and
- it is the physician's judgment that the student will pose no serious health risk to the
 - rest of the school community if admitted to the school without receiving the identified vaccination(s).

Exceptions under this policy apply only to the vaccine(s) specifically identified in the physician's statement as causing a severe allergic reaction or a serious health risk to the student.

The physician's statement under this policy shall be in a form that is acceptable to the Superintendent of Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Austin. The superintendent shall make acceptable forms available.

Immunizations are not in conflict with the Catholic faith. Conscientious objections or waivers, which may be permissible for enrollment in public schools, do not qualify as an exception to this policy (Atty. Gen. Op. GA-0420).

*A physician's exam and renewal of exemption are required upon entrance to elementary, middle school, and high school.

State vaccination requirements are explained in detail below or can be located at www.immunizetexas.com:

2025 - 2026 Texas Minimum State Vaccine Requirements for Students Grades K - 12

This chart summarizes the vaccine requirements incorporated in the Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Title 25 Health Services, §§97.61-97.72. This document is not intended as a substitute for the TAC, which has other provisions and details. The Department of State Health Services (DSHS) is granted authority to set immunization requirements by the Texas Education Code, Chapter 38.

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

A student shall show acceptable evidence of vaccination prior to entry, attendance, or transfer to a public or private elementary or secondary school in Texas.

Vaccine Required (Attention to notes and footnotes)	Minimum Number of Doses Required by Grade Level												Notes			
	Grades K - sixth						Grade seventh		Grades eighth-12th							
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		8	9	10		11	12	
Diphtheria/Tetanus/ Pertussis(DTaP/ DTP/ DT/ Td/Tdap)	Five doses or four doses						Three dose primary series and one booster dose of tdap / td within the last five years		Three dose primary series and one booster dose of tdap / td within the last 10 years				For K – sixth grade: five doses of diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine; one dose must have been received on or after the fourth birthday. However, four doses meet the requirement if the fourth dose was received on or after the fourth birthday. ¹ For students aged 7 years and older, three doses meet the requirement if one dose was received on or after the fourth birthday. ¹ For seventh grade: one dose of Tdap is required if at least five years have passed since the last dose of tetanus-containing vaccine.* For eighth – 12th grade: one dose of Tdap is required when 10 years have passed since the last dose of tetanus-containing vaccine. **Td is acceptable in place of Tdap if a medical contraindication to pertussis exists.			
Polio	Four doses or three doses												For K-12th grade: four doses of polio; one dose must be received on or after the fourth birthday. ¹ However, three doses meet the requirement if the third dose was received on or after the fourth birthday. ¹ Polio vaccine is not required for persons eighteen years of age or older.			
Measles, Mumps, and Rubella ² (MMR)	Two doses												For K – 12th grade: two doses are required, with the first dose received on or after the first birthday. ¹ Students vaccinated prior to 2009 with two doses of measles and one dose each of rubella and mumps satisfy this requirement.			
Hepatitis B ²	Three doses												For students aged 11 – 15 years, two doses meet the requirement if adult hepatitis B vaccine (Recombivax®) was received. Dosage (10 mcg /1.0 mL) and type of vaccine (Recombivax®) must be clearly documented. If Recombivax® was not the vaccine received, a three dose series is required.			
Varicella ^{2,3}	Two doses												For K – 12th grade: two doses are required, with the first dose received on or after the first birthday. ¹			
Meningococcal (MCV4)							One dose						For seventh – 12th grade, one dose of quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate vaccine is required on or after the student's 11th ¹ birthday.			
Hepatitis A ²	Two doses												For K – 12th grade: two doses are required, with the first dose received on or after the first birthday. ¹			

NOTE: Shaded area indicates that the vaccine is not required for the respective grade.

Provisional Enrollment: All immunizations should be completed by the first date of attendance. However, if this is not possible and if permitted by local school district policy, a child/student may be provisionally enrolled and allowed to attend a child-care facility or school, provided at least one immunization in the series has been received. The remaining required immunizations must be completed as soon as medically possible (**by the end of the first nine weeks**) in order for the child/student to remain enrolled.

Documentation: Since many types of personal immunization records are in use, any document will be acceptable, provided it has been validated by a physician or public health personnel.

INJURY OR ILLNESS AT SCHOOL

When a student becomes ill or is injured at school, the procedures on the emergency card will be followed. It is extremely important that parents notify the office immediately when there is a change in an address and/or telephone number at work or at home. This also applies to secondary contacts.

ACCIDENT INSURANCE

Accident insurance provided by the Diocese is available for students should there be a need. If a student is injured on school property or during a school sponsored activity off campus requiring medical attention; parents are encouraged to contact the secretary or the principal about this insurance.

HEALTH SCREENING

During the year, students in grades 4K through eighth grade are screened for hearing and vision. If students are found in need of medical treatment or more extensive testing, parents will be notified. Scoliosis exams are also required for students in grades 5 and 8 and other grade levels by parent permission. Students are examined at school by a qualified physician. There is no charge for this exam.

FIRE/DISASTER DRILLS

State law requires that schools conduct periodic fire drills. There will be one unobstructed and one obstructed fire drill per month from August through May. Disaster drills will also be enacted periodically during the year.

OFFICE RECORDS

Parents/Guardians are requested to notify the school office in writing of any change of address, home telephone numbers, cell phone numbers, business phone numbers, e-mail addresses and/or phone numbers of emergency contacts. This will guarantee that office records are accurate, complete, and up-to-date.

CURRICULUM (Course of Study)

St. Mary's School follows the course of study mandated by the Texas Catholic Conference and the Diocese of Austin. Every teacher is issued and instructed in the portion of the curriculum that pertains to her/him. Parents may inspect this information either from the teacher(s) or through the office.

St. Mary's is fully accredited by the Texas Catholic Conference and accreditation standards are followed in their entirety. Curriculum requirements and instructional time for each are as follows:

Pre-Kindergarten (4K)

Daily	30 minutes Religion 30 minutes Uninterrupted Free Play 40% Instructional Day - English Language Arts 20% Instructional Day - Mathematics (Cognition Development)
Weekly	Physical Education Health, Fine Arts (Art, Music, Theater, Dance), Social Studies, Science, Technology, and Guidance (integrated into the major curriculum areas above) Foreign Language instruction may be included as part of the Language Arts program.

Kindergarten

Bell to Bell:	7 hours, full-day session Instructional Time: 5 hours, 20 minutes
Daily	30 minutes Religion 40% Instructional Day - English Language Arts 20% Instructional Day - Mathematics
Weekly	Physical Education Fine Arts, (Art, Music, Theater, Dance), Health, Science, Social Studies, Technology, and Guidance (integrated into the major curriculum areas or taught as a separate subject.

Grades 1 - 3

Bell to Bell: 7 hours
Instructional Time: 6 hours

Daily 30 minutes Religion
60 minutes Mathematics
120 minutes English Language Arts

Weekly Social Studies, Science
Physical Education
Health, Fine Arts (Art, Music, Theater, Dance)
Technology and Guidance (integrated into the major curriculum areas or taught as a separate subject)
Foreign Language instruction is strongly encouraged.

Grades 4 – 5

Bell to Bell: 7 hours
Instructional Time: 6 hours

Daily 30 minutes Religion
80 – 120 minutes Language Arts
40 – 60 minutes Mathematics

Weekly 200 – 225 minutes Science
200 – 225 minutes Social Studies

Physical Education
Health, Fine Arts (Art, Music, Theater, Dance)
Technology and Guidance (integrated into the major curriculum areas or taught as a separate subject)
Foreign Language instruction is strongly encouraged.

MIDDLE SCHOOL/DEPARTMENTAL

Grades 6 – 8

Bell to Bell 7 hours
Instructional Time: 6 hours

Minimum of 7 units per year for each year (grades 6, 7 & 8 only)
1 unit = 200 minutes per week for 1 year*

<u>Units</u>	<u>Academic Requirements</u>
1	Religion
1	Language Arts
1	Mathematics
1	Science
1	Social Studies (Texas History-Grade 7)** (U.S. History through Reconstruction-Grade8)
½	Physical Education
<u>11/2</u> 7	Electives, such as: Band, Foreign Language, Music, Theater, Technology Application

Physical Education is an important required course in all grades. The Texas Catholic Conference and the Diocesan

Education Department mandate that a course of study be implemented that provides the same skills and elements as prescribed by the Texas Education Agency. St. Mary's will provide for the needs of its students in this vital area of the total curriculum. Grading and other evaluation practices shall apply as is done in the other subject areas. The following guidelines shall apply:

1. All students in kindergarten through the eighth grade are required to participate in an organized curriculum-based physical education program, unless there exists a legitimate reason for limiting participation. A modified program will be enacted if necessary for students requiring limited participation.
2. Parent requests to deter or limit a student's participation for whatever reason and for any length of time must be in **writing** and referred to the office in time to be transmitted to the teacher in advance as appropriate. The note should outline reasons, any action the school and/or teacher might need to take in order to provide proper care for the student, and the approximate date the student may resume his/her normal activity. Parent requests are limited to four (4) consecutive days. Beyond four (4) consecutive days, a note from a certified physician shall be required stating the reason(s) why the student should not participate and the approximate duration for nonparticipation. Parents should note on the student's locator card any allergies or other health-related problems that teachers need to be aware of that might necessitate adjustments in his/her activities.
3. A prescribed uniform and proper footwear for participation are required for every student in grades 6 through 8. Middle school students may store uniforms in the lockers provided, while classroom teachers will provide an adequate and safe location within each classroom. These and other requirements will be explained by the teacher.
4. All students will receive a grade just as in other subjects and will be of the same value as in the other subjects.
5. During outside activities, students are not to leave the fenced area without permission from the teacher.

GRADING PRACTICES AND REPORT CARDS

Pre-K and Kindergarten grade progress reporting is based on the following scale:

E	Excellent
S	Satisfactory
N	Needs Improvement
U	Unsatisfactory
*	Skill Not Introduced or Tested During Grading Period

For grades 1-8, the following grading scale is in effect:

90-100	A
80-89	B
75-79	C
70-74	D
	Below 70: Failing

Grades Kindergarten and 1:

In all subjects, all grades will be weighted equally.

In Reading/Phonics/Language, religion, and math subject categories, a minimum of 18 grades per nine weeks is required.

In all other subject categories, a minimum of 6 grades per nine weeks is required.

Grades 2-5:

In core subjects, grades will be calculated using the following breakdown:

Daily Work: 50% (a minimum of 12 grades per nine weeks is required)

Tests:	40%	(a minimum of 4 grades per nine weeks is required)
Participation/Projects:	10%	(a minimum of 5 grades per nine weeks is required)

In other subjects (physical education, handwriting, fine arts, computer, and Spanish), all grades will be weighted equally and a minimum of 9 grades per nine weeks is required.

Grades 6-8:

In all subjects, grades will be calculated using the following breakdown:

Daily Work:	25%	(a minimum of 15 grades per nine weeks is required)
Tests:	25%	(a minimum of 4 grades per nine weeks is required)
Projects:	25%	(a minimum of 2 grade per nine weeks is required)
Nine Weeks Test:	25%	(a minimum of 1 grade per nine weeks is required)

In physical education class, all grades will be weighted equally and a minimum of 9 grades per nine weeks is required.

In grades 6-8, all report card grades will be rounded to the nearest tenth (ex: 90.45 will appear as a 90.5, an 89.43 will appear as an 89.4).

LATE WORK POLICY: There is an expectation that assigned work will be turned in on time. Work that is not turned in on the due date will be accepted only one day late, with a thirty (30) point deduction in grades 2-8. After one day, late work will not be accepted and will be recorded as a grade of zero in the gradebook.

Teachers should have frequent contact with parents when students are not performing to their abilities, even if the students are not actually failing any subject. It is then the responsibility of the parent to respond to the teacher. Parents are encouraged to contact the teacher(s) at any time during the year. Contact times during the school day when teachers can be reached during non-instructional time and staff telephone numbers will be sent home at the beginning of the school year.

Report cards are issued on Thursday following the end of a nine -week period (see school calendar).

HONOR ROLL

Students in grades 1-8 will be eligible for nine weeks honor roll by maintaining the following averages and obtaining a satisfactory conduct grade:

1. HIGH HONOR ROLL: A grade of 90 or above in all subjects (excluding handwriting)
2. HONOR ROLL: A grade of 85 or above in all subjects (excluding handwriting)
3. Any conduct grade except "unsatisfactory."

TESTING

The Iowa Test of Basic Skills is given to all students in grades kindergarten through eight. The ACRE Test (Assessment of Catechesis Religious Education) is given to students in grades five and eight.

PROMOTION AND RETENTION

The following is the current Diocesan policy regarding promotion and retention:

1. Elementary grades: To be promoted from one grade level to the next, a Student shall attain for the year an overall average of 70 or above which is derived by averaging the final numerical grade for language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and religion. In addition, a student shall attain an average of 70 or above in language arts and in mathematics. Grades for health, fine arts, and physical education will also have the numerical grading scale outlined above.

2. Middle school (5-8): To be promoted from one grade level to the next, a student shall attain an overall average of 70 or above for the year in all courses taken. In addition, a student shall attain an average of 70 or above in four of the following subjects: language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and religion.

Advancement to the next grade in St. Mary's Catholic School is based on a student's daily performance, test results, recommendations of teachers, and the student's ability to complete work successfully on a more advanced level.

Promotion to the next grade level depends on successful completion of all subject areas. The administration may recommend the repetition of a grade, tutoring, or summer school classes as a requirement 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. No student will be required to repeat the same grade or subject more than twice, regardless of the student's grade or any other reason(s).

HOMEWORK

The purpose of homework should be "an extension, reinforcement, enrichment and enhancement of skills generated as a result of daily activities and experiences." It is the student's responsibility to complete homework in accordance with teacher directives. We request that parents make homework a top priority at home.

FIELD TRIPS (local Board policy approved by the pastor and adopted June 1996)

Field trips and other excursions involving one or multiple students should have clear objectives that relate directly to curriculum objectives. These activities should, for the most part, be "extensions" of those learning goals being pursued at the classroom level. Field Trips will not be taken as a reward or "just for fun." All field trips will relate to instructional objectives.

1. The staff member or other party responsible must advise the principal at least ten (10) school days prior to the projected trip. The purpose must be aligned with the objectives stated above, type of transportation to be used, plans for transportation both ways (including the names of drivers and their relationship to the school), and the names of any other chaperones.

2. After the principal's approval, the staff member or other person(s) responsible will send a memo of explanation to all parents/guardians by way of the students involved with a waiver signed by the parents/guardians acknowledging permission for the student to participate. The memo must be cosigned by the principal prior to delivery. This memo will be transmitted to the parents/guardians at least five (5) attendance days prior to the day of the trip, unless an unforeseeable situation develops that is acceptable to the principal. Failure to return the signed waiver portion of the memo prior to the trip will prevent the student's participation (this is a liability protection for the school and a safety precaution for the student). Verbal confirmation on the part of the parents/guardians by whatever means **will not** be accepted. Verbal confirmation cannot be verified if a liability issue arises as a result of the trip. The legitimate signed waiver by the legal parents/guardians returned and verified by the teacher(s) and principal shall constitute permission for the student to participate. **The parents/guardians must understand and appreciate the school's highest priority in safeguarding the safety of each student and its concern for any liability claim which it might have to endure as a result of not having written permission from the parents/guardian. Parents/guardians have every right to deny their child(s) participation in any field trip, regardless of the reason. Not signing the waiver form is an acceptable means of denying this participation. Suitable in-school supervision and assignment will be issued to any student not participating in a field trip.**

3. It is the sponsor's responsibility to strictly enforce rules of conduct that will insure ultimate safety and maximum accomplishment of the objective. **"Field trips are a privilege, not a right." (Diocesan Education Board, May 1999).** Only pupils who act responsibly will be permitted to go on field trips.
4. Special care will be taken to not overload transportation vehicles that may jeopardize safety. No more than five (5), including the driver, will be allowed when transporting by a vehicle, unless the vehicle is a van or similar type mode of transportation designed to transport more than five (5). The school has a small bus/van that will safely transport fifteen passengers, including the driver.
5. Only designated grade level(s) students will be allowed to participate. A parent/guardian driver and/or chaperone are asked not to request permission to take a sibling from a grade not designated to participate in the field trip. This interrupts the student(s)' academic day and places the school in a situation of being held liable should the student be injured.
6. Every driver of a personal vehicle used on a field trip must show proof of active liability and a valid in-force commercial license having no restrictions and must be on file in the office prior to any trip. **Drivers should be aware that their insurance could be summoned in the event of an accident or injury.** Any person having been convicted of a driving related incident other than "minor" traffic violations will not be allowed to drive a vehicle containing one or more children who are not his/her own sibling(s).
7. Prior attendance at Ethics and Integrity in Ministry workshop is a **requirement** for driving a vehicle transporting students or for attending a school field trip.
8. Out-of-town trips will be limited to approximately 100 miles from the school. Distances greater than this will be at the discretion of the principal.
9. Overnight trips **will not** be approved by the principal. Again, this significantly increases the danger to the participants and increases liability potential.
10. All expenses necessary for the student to participate will be the full responsibility of the student, unless otherwise noted.
11. Students not participating, for whatever the reason, cannot receive an excused absence for not attending school during the time that classes are in session and the time in which the field trip is being conducted, unless there is a valid reason for being absent, such as personal illness. A student at school at the time the field trip is in progress will not be permitted to leave the school until the designated release time. The student will be assigned to a supervised location and provided with suitable academic pursuits.
12. Student cell phones are not allowed on field trips unless otherwise directed by the teacher and/or administrator.
13. If parents organize a non-school trip, the principal will not take responsibility for preparations for the trip, such as participation in fund-raising or dissemination of materials, etc. (Diocesan Education Board, May 1999).

STUDENT CONDUCT: PROMOTING A CHRISTIAN ENVIRONMENT FOR LEARNING

The staff will attempt at all times to conduct themselves in such a manner that will convey love and respect for all students and parents. Likewise, the staff should expect students and parents to act the same toward them. St. Mary's School has high expectations for excellent student behavior. Students are responsible for conducting themselves properly, in a manner appropriate to their age and level of maturity.

When a discipline problem occurs, depending on the act, the student involved and other circumstances, the following course of action may be conducted or modified as best meets the needs of the student: **personal conference with the student, conference with parents, loss of minor privileges, lunch detention, detention after school, or other**

courses of action designed to modify negative behavior.

CONDUCT OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

Conduct, whether inside or outside the school, that is detrimental to the reputation of the school, will be punishable as the principal deems necessary. The principal may suspend or invoke additional or alternative disciplinary action as he/she deems necessary. The principal reserves the right to waive and/or deviate from any and all disciplinary regulations for just cause at his or her discretion.

BLOGS / SOCIAL MEDIA

Engagement in online blogs such as, but not limited to: Facebook®, Instagram®, Snapchat®, etc... may result in disciplinary actions if the content of the student's social media includes defamatory comments regarding the school, the faculty, other students or the parish.

BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING

St. Mary's Catholic School attempts to provide a safe environment for all individuals. All students must respect and abide by principles of good, Catholic, moral conduct. Bullying or hazing of others, including teachers and personnel, will not be tolerated in a Catholic school. Parents/legal guardians are expected to reinforce these standards at home.

For the purposes of this policy, "bullying" means:

- an expression of any kind, whether written, oral, or physical conduct, that is determined to have the effect of physically harming another, damaging another's property, or placing another in reasonable fear of harm to another's person or property; or
- any conduct that is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive to create an intimidating, threatening, or abusive environment for another; or
- any conduct that is designed or likely to result in causing physical, emotional, or psychological harm to another.

Bullying includes, but is not limited to the following types of conduct:

- physical assault against a person or group of people because of a perceived physical, economic, intellectual, cultural, or racial difference;
- derogatory name calling of an insulting or personal nature intended to offend another;
- verbal abuse;
- threats intended to intimidate another;
- demanding money, material goods or favors by means of threat or force;
- ridiculing an individual because of physical, economic, sexual, intellectual, cultural, or racial difference;
- graffiti designed to intimidate or embarrass;
- inciting others to commit acts of bullying;
- using language that is intended to insult or discriminate against another based on a protected class; or
- deliberate exclusion or isolation of an individual or group by other students.

"Cyber-bullying" means bullying through the use of any electronic means, including, but not limited to, the Internet, text messages, e-mail, blogging, telephones, or fax machines. Cyber-bullying is a form of bullying.

Students or faculty/staff are to report all allegations or believed cases of bullying, of any kind, to the principal. All Allegations will be promptly investigated. Persons who allege bullying by others should, to the extent possible, maintain evidence of the alleged bullying. The proper disciplinary action against any person found to be in violation of this policy will be determined by the principal.

DETENTION (alternative, or added punishment at the discretion of the principal)

The principal may assign detention or apply additional punitive action for any violation of the following. The principal may suspend or invoke additional or alternative disciplinary action as he/she deems necessary.

1. Disrespect to staff, another student or adult (such acts include but not limited to abuse name-calling, disrespectful response to one in authority, etc.).
2. Consistent disruptive behavior.
3. Intimidation, bullying (threats of physical harm, actions to induce fear, offensive language - name-calling) toward another student. Repeated violations can result in student suspension and/or ultimate expulsion.
4. Refusal to complete assignments.
5. Disrespectful or profane language or gestures any place in the school or on the school grounds before, during, or after school, or at a school sponsored event.
6. Stealing, destroying or defacing school property or the property of others. Student or parents are subject to being required to repair any damage or replace any stolen item.
7. Fighting (student can be suspended by the principal).
8. Cheating on tests and other assignments: student will be given a "0" for the test or assignment and the parents will be notified. Repeated violations will result in additional punishment.
9. Excessive tardies, excused or unexcused. Habitual tardiness to school in the morning is mostly parental fault.
10. Forging another person's signature: parents will be notified.
11. Leaving the school building or grounds from the time of first arriving until designated dismissal time.
12. Bringing cell phones, electronic toys, and any other item that can be disruptive. These and other deemed as disruptive and/or dangerous items will be confiscated.
13. Bringing a knife or similar object. It is the parent's responsibility to monitor, as best they can, inappropriate items that the student may attempt bringing to school.
14. Any other offense that the teacher or principal feels is appropriate to warrant detention.

After notification of parent/guardian or other designated individual(s), detention can be scheduled on the day of the offense, if the principal so decides. If a student does not show up for detention on the day assigned, the student may be assigned detention for two or more consecutive days and/or other punitive action deemed appropriate.

SUSPENSION

"When disciplinary measures have failed to bring about desirable behavior, including parent conference, the principal will contact the parent/guardian that the pupil will be suspended from school for a period of up to **three** days. A reasonable attempt will be made to hold a conference to explain the situation and the specific requirements for the suspension. The principal will explain in writing the offense(s) committed and the details for the suspension and other restrictions the student may incur after the suspension. The student will be restricted from entering the school premises during the full time of the suspension. The pastor will be informed of the suspension, including a copy of the suspension letter." (Diocesan Education Board, May 1999) In addition, the student will not be allowed to make up any assignment or test missed during the time of the suspension and the teacher will record a "0" for any test or assignment given or due during the duration of the suspension. The acts listed below (not inclusive) are examples that **can** result in student suspension and being placed on probation:

1. In possession of drugs (legal or illegal), consuming legal or illegal drugs or distributing legal or illegal drugs to another student(s). Only drugs prescribed by a physician and distributed to a student as described elsewhere in this handbook are permissible.
2. Smoking or possession of tobacco in any form on school property or at any school sponsored event. The school has the right to require any student to deposit all items in his/her possession if there is a legitimate reason for doing so.
3. Fighting (for whatever the circumstances) on or near school property or at any school sponsored event.
4. Consuming or under the influence of alcohol, possession of alcohol on or near school property or at any school sponsored event. Law enforcement authorities will be notified for possible investigation of violations in providing alcohol to minors.
5. Profanity and/or vulgar gestures directed at a member of the staff or other adults and students.
6. Possessing a dangerous weapon (may result in expulsion).
7. Other acts in which previous disciplinary measures have not positively changed student behavior.

8. Any other act(s) which the principal deems such action is appropriate.

PROBATION

Probation is given for relatively serious or continued misconduct. A student is put on probation for a specified period of time. Probation means the school has taken the first step toward expulsion and a repetition of the offense that brought about the probation could result in expulsion. During the probationary period, the student will be required to fulfill specific requirements in order to be removed from the probation. A copy of the probation letter and the requirements for conduct during this time will be placed on file.

EXPULSION

The expulsion of a student from a Catholic school is a **serious** matter and should be invoked only as a last resort. The principal, with the approval of the pastor, expels the pupil from the school for the remainder of the school year. The principal then notifies the superintendent of the expulsion. A copy of the expulsion notice is sent to the pastor and superintendent (Diocesan Education Board, Apr. 1997). In order for an expelled student to be re-admitted at the beginning of the next academic year, the student and parents must meet with the principal and the pastor for consideration. The decision to accept the student with a probationary clause shall be at the discretion of the principal and pastor. There is not an appeal process.

“Attending a Catholic School is a privilege, not a right. The Catholic schools reserve the right of the principal to withdraw a student when such is in the best interests of the school and/or the student.” (Diocesan Education Board, May 1999) Reasons for expulsion include but are not limited to the following:

1. “Sexual harassment and sexual violence directed from staff to student, student to staff, staff to staff or student to student.” (Diocesan Education Board, Apr. 1997). **Any suspected violation of this policy should be reported immediately to the principal.**
2. Possession of, consuming, or under the influence of an illegal drug or alcohol or distributing a legal, illegal drug or alcohol to another student(s). Law enforcement officers will be promptly notified.
3. Physical or verbal aggression toward a staff member, student teacher, substitute teacher, or any other individual acting with authority.
4. Possession of a firearm or any other item considered by the principal as a highly dangerous instrument designed to inflict bodily harm and/or death. As a precaution, students are not to bring to school any item designed to be a weapon, which includes any kind and size of knife or instrument that includes a knife.
5. After a second suspension in the same academic year.
6. Any other conduct or act that the principal determines to be an expulsion offense.

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. Textbooks must have a proper book cover. No writing in textbooks is permitted. The student will pay a fine or replacement for damaged or lost texts before any final reports, transcripts, or diplomas are presented.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

St. Mary’s Catholic School reserves the right to search anything that is brought on school property. Lockers, desks and other storage spaces are school property, and the school reserves the right to search them at any time. Dangerous weapons, illegal substances, cell phones and any possessions forbidden by the school handbook may be seized. The school may, at any time, unannounced, and selectively check any of these spaces and their contents to insure the health and safety of the student, other students, staff and all others. Students may also be instructed to display any item(s) they may have in their possession when there is reasonable concern that such item(s) may be prohibitive. Again, it is the parent’s responsibility, within reason, to monitor what the student brings to school.

If the principal or a teacher believes that a student is carrying any such items, the principal/teacher should ask the student for it. If the student refuses, the student may be asked to empty pockets, purses, book bags, etc. If the student still refuses, the principal/teacher must make a decision to either:

- gain possession of the article immediately if persons are in danger;
- request the parent/legal guardian to come to school to conduct the search of the student;
- follow suspension and/or expulsion policies;
- call the local police department.

STUDENT DRESS CODE (Revised 05/ 2013)

- IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PARENTS OR GUARDIANS TO SEE THAT A STUDENT IS DRESSED AND GROOMED ACCORDING TO THE STANDARDS OF ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL DRESS CODE.
- Students are required to be in full uniform on the first day of school and each day thereafter. Exceptions are made on "dress-up days" and other days as determined by the principal.
- Students that are not in full uniform will be required to call his/her parents to bring the appropriate clothing to school.
- Uniform/dress code policy may be addressed at the discretion of the principal.

The following dress code will be followed by all students on all days *except* spirit days:

Boys:

- SMS Polo Shirt w/ Logo
 - S/S or L/S
 - Red, White, or Black
- SMS Sweatshirt w/ Logo (not on Mass days)
 - Red, White, or Black
- Khaki Pants (slack style; no "jeggings" or "skinny jeans")
- Khaki Shorts (August-October 31 and March-May only) (not on Mass days)
- SMS Fleece Jacket w/ Logo

Girls:

- SMS Polo Shirt w/ Logo
 - S/S or L/S
 - Red, White, or Black
- SMS Sweatshirt w/ Logo (not on Mass days)
 - Red, White, or Black
- Khaki Pants (slack style; no "jeggings" or "skinny jeans") (not on Mass days)
- Khaki Shorts or Skort (August-October 31 and March-May only)) (not on Mass days)
- Skirt
- Jumper
- SMS Fleece Jacket w/ Logo

Shirts

- All Polo shirts must be purchased through Get Noticed. (Students may continue to wear older red Mass shirts.)
- No other shirt may be visible from below the hem of the Polo shirt.
- Undershirts may be worn as long as the sleeve length matches that of the sleeve length of the SMS Polo.
- Red Polo shirts only will be worn on Mass days (no sweatshirts and no other colored polos).

Pants

- Pants may be either flat front or pleated and must be uniform-style. Pants may be purchased from Get

- Noticed or other stores where uniform-style pants are sold (Academy, Target, Dillard's, etc...).
- Pants that are cargo-style or have flap-style pockets are not permitted.
- **Pants that are "jeggings" or "skinny jeans" style are not permitted**

Shorts/Skort

- Shorts/Skort must be purchased through Get Noticed.
- A skort is considered to be the same as shorts (not worn on Mass days).
- Shorts may be either flat front or pleated.
- Shorts may be altered, but shall not be more than two inches above the knee when kneeling.
- Shorts/Skorts may be worn during August-October 31 and March-May only.

Skirts

- Skirts must be purchased through Get Noticed.
- Skirts may be altered, but shall not be more than two inches above the knee when kneeling.
- Black modesty shorts must be worn under skirts. Modesty shorts may be purchased through Get Noticed, but may be purchased elsewhere as well.

Shoes

- Shoes must be closed toe and closed heel.
- Athletic shoes/sneakers are permitted.
- Boots may be worn only under slacks (not with shorts, skirts).
- Girls may wear *solid-colored* white, red, black, or grey tights (tights must go down to the ankle).

Jackets

- Only SMS fleece zip-up jackets may be worn during class.
- Fleece zip-up jacket must be purchased through Get Noticed.
- Hoodies are not allowed.
- All other jackets and winter coats that are worn to school must be removed after entering the school building.

On Mass days, boys must wear slacks and a red polo, and girls must wear a skirt (not a skort) or a jumper and a red polo.

The following dress code will be followed for spirit days:

Spirit Days

- Official SMS (purchased through any school organization) t-shirts are permitted.
- Official SMS (purchased through any school organization) sweatshirts without hoods are permitted.
- Full-length or capri (for girls) blue jeans (no other color jeans may be worn), that are hemmed, and without holes, are permitted.
- Uniform khaki shorts are permitted August-November and March-May only.

Teachers have the responsibility to enforce the dress code and are instructed to do so. The final authority to interpret the dress code rests with the principal or designee.

Staff and students are expected to be appropriately dressed at ALL school functions conducted both on and off campus (this includes dances, sporting events, 8th grade graduation, etc...). The principal or designee has the discretion to determine the appropriateness of any clothing, jewelry, etc. worn by students.

1. No articles of clothing with suggestive writing or pictures, or inappropriate advertising, slogans or symbols which portray anti-Christian themes.
2. Shoes: Shoes must be worn at all times and must be closed toe and closed heel. Tennis shoes must be worn in physical education class. For safety reasons, students in shoes that do not comply with the dress code may not play on mulched playground area.
3. Caps, hats, visors, do-rags, headbands or any other cap-like articles are not to be worn in school buildings. Sunglasses will not be worn in school buildings.

4. Boys are not allowed to wear earrings. Girls may not have more than two earrings per earlobe. No body, nose or face piercing is allowed. Tattoos are to be covered at all times.
5. Hair: Hair must be neatly groomed and not dyed to any extremes. Haircuts that are bizarre, such as punk cuts, design cuts or Mohawks are not allowed. Boys will not have ponytails or buns. Boys' hair when combed straight down must not touch the eyebrows in the front, bottom of earlobes on the side, or a standard shirt collar in the back.
6. Appropriate under garments must be worn and covered at all times.

The above guidelines will be enforced at non-campus activities while the students are representing the school. These events are under the legal jurisdiction of the school and the students are obligated to follow the same standards. Suitable clothing and footwear will be kept in the school office for students to wear should he/she be in violation of the dress code. Parents will be notified and subject to bringing as soon as possible acceptable clothing and footwear. Parents may also be advised regarding discipline for future infractions.

Human life is a gift from God and is thus sacred. The Catholic Church affirms and upholds the dignity of all life and abhors any violations against it. Further, the Catholic Church strives to protect, defend, and build up the dignity and integrity of every person. There is no tolerance for abuse of another person of any kind in any school or church institution. All personnel will comply with Diocese of Austin Ethics & Integrity in Ministry policies and will assist in maintaining a safe, loving and positive environment for all members of the community.

Texas Family Code, Section 34.02(c), requires any person with cause to believe that a child has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect to report such abuse. Failure to report identified or suspected child abuse is a Class B misdemeanor offense punishable by a fine or confinement in jail, or both a fine and confinement.

Definitions of abuse and neglect are found in the Texas Family Code, Section 34.012. Generally, "abuse" includes acts or omissions by a person responsible for a child's care which results in mental, emotional, or physical injury to the child and/or substantial harm or impairment. Generally, "neglect" includes acts or omissions by a person responsible for a child's care that risks or results in substantial harm to the child.

Any person, who in good faith, reports or assists in the investigation of a report of child abuse or neglect is immune from civil or criminal liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed. (Vernon's Civil Statutes, Article 695C-2). Immunity extends to participation in any judicial proceeding resulting from the report. School personnel who may be called as witnesses in court on child abuse cases shall be permitted to do so without loss of school pay. The person to be called as a witness must have "first hand" knowledge of the abuse.

All cases of identified or suspected child abuse must be reported to Child Protective Services (CPS) of the Texas Department of Human Services, which has responsibility for investigating reports. The person who identifies or suspects child abuse is responsible for making the report and notifies the principal. The principal may assist the person filing the appropriate report. The written report will be prepared according to or the CPS online form. The report will contain all pertinent information and a description of the circumstances that resulted in the report. One copy will be retained in the local school by the principal, one copy will be sent to the CPS.

Workers from the Child Protective Services are authorized to interview, examine, videotape, and photograph children at school, without parent permission, if in the worker's opinion, contact with the child is necessary. In the event that the child is placed in protective custody, school officials will have the CPS worker complete the required release form. The principal shall require the CPS worker to show identification, sign in at the office, and state the purpose of the visit.

In making the decision to report incidents of child abuse and neglect, the principal and school personnel should consider the following factors in making available to any person some portion of the educational records of a child in the school:

- the seriousness of the threat to the child's health or safety;
- the need for the information from the child's educational records to protect the child's health and safety;

- whether the information is being disclosed to persons who are in a position to deal with the emergency; and
- whether time is essential in dealing with the emergency.

Suspected Student Abuse by a Staff Member

Any indication/suspicion of improper conduct by a staff member toward a student(s) must be immediately reported to the principal. Examples could be but are not limited to unnecessary physical contact and/or verbal comments that are abusive and unnatural. Timely reporting is important so that there can be an immediate investigation of the allegations. The principal will immediately inform the pastor and they will determine a prompt course of action that is in the best interests of the student(s). This will result in immediate consultation by the principal and the pastor with the alleged staff member and reported to the local law enforcement authorities. There is a written policy in the Staff Handbook that clearly addresses this topic. Anyone desiring to see the policy as stated in the Staff Handbook may do so by contacting the principal or the pastor.

MEDICATION (Diocesan Policy)

Only medication which is necessary for a child to remain in school will be given during school hours. No medication will be given to any child without a signed permission form from the parent or legal guardian.

Only medication prescribed by a licensed physician or dentist and dispensed by a registered pharmacist will be administered during school hours by authorized school personnel.

“Over-the-counter” medication such as acetaminophen, ointments, cold tablets, cough syrups, eye drops, etc. will not be given unless prescribed by a licensed physician and labeled by a licensed pharmacist with proper directions.

As impossible as the above sounds, this Diocesan policy is meant to safeguard the student’s health and free the school from liability, so please understand and comply. A parent, legal guardian, relative or another adult approved by the parent may come to school and administer over-the-counter medications if he/she so desires. Any individual other than the parent must be approved in advance by the principal and/or his/her designee.

The designated staff member will dispense the medication at the appropriate time and record on a medication log. Each student’s medication must be in a properly labeled container with the following information:

- Student’s name
- Physician/Dentist’s name
- Date
- Name of medication
- Dosage
- Directions for administration, including specific times (must not stipulate “as needed”)
- Duration that medication is to be given

Students are not permitted to possess medication of any kind while on campus. Parents must bring medication to the office rather than have the student do it. Students are forbidden to give any medication to other students; likewise, students may not accept medication from one another.

A “Request for Administration of Medication” form must be fully completed and returned to the school office before any medication is administered. If forms are needed throughout the year, they may be obtained from the office.

TUITION AND FEES

All registration and tuition payments made in advance are non-refundable, whether a child is voluntarily withdrawn, or withdrawn at the decision of the school.



St. Mary's Catholic School - West, TX

2026-2027 Tuition and Fee Schedule

(Effective June 2026)

Any student, regardless of age, who wishes to register for the upcoming school year must be in good financial, academic, and disciplinary standing with the school.

All families will also be charged a \$55.00 annual fee from FACTS Tuition Management (unless tuition is paid in full). Before registration monies will be accepted, there must be no outstanding balance owed to SMCS.

Tuition Assistance is available to families who qualify. SMCS uses FACTS tuition assistance online application as a starting point for any family who wishes to apply for tuition assistance. The online application opens up at the end of January each year. Every effort is made by SCMS to assist families in making a Catholic education possible for their children.

Registration Fee

	\$275 per family/per school year (paid in June)
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Pre-K Tuition

\$5,565 per year for each student	\$556.50 per month (Aug-May)
<u>Scholarships Available:</u>	
Up to 25% scholarship for additional student in Pre-K	
\$500 scholarship for additional student in Grades K-8	

Grades K-8 Tuition

\$5,064 per year for each student	\$506.40 per month (Aug-May)
<u>Scholarships Available:</u>	
Up to 25% scholarship for each additional student in Grades K-8	
*\$600 OR \$1,000 scholarship per family for donating Assumption parishioners (\$600 one child; \$1,000 more than one child)	

*Parishioner Scholarship: In order to qualify for the donating Assumption parishioners scholarship, the family with which the child resides must be registered at Church of the Assumption (West, TX) and contribute by parish envelopes a minimum of \$600.00 to the church during the prior calendar year (January-December). For example, to qualify for the scholarship for the 2026-2027 school year, a registered family at Church of the Assumption must have made a minimum total contribution of \$600.00 by December 31, 2025. These contributions can be made up of one payment or multiple payments. Church envelopes must be used because this is how the church keeps track of contributions.

TUITION/FEE PAYMENT POLICY

1. Payment Options for Registration

- A. Registration payments for returning students are billed in May and are due July 1st. **No monies will be applied to registration payments if the family has an outstanding tuition balance.**
- B. All prepayments are non-refundable and non-transferable.

2. Payment of Tuition Beginning in August

- A. All families will be required to pay tuition using the FACTS tuition management system. Families will choose a payment schedule and method using FACTS to have ACH or credit card transmittals to tuition accounts.
- B. It is the parents' responsibility to notify the principal for requesting an extension of a delinquent account or to negotiate a time payment plan or some similar agreement. This contact should be completed by the parents. Should a delinquent account occur, the principal will notify the parents of the delinquency and a copy forwarded to the pastor and president of the school board. Repeated tuition violations can result in an immediate dismissal.

Diocesan policy gives the school the authority to withhold nine week grade reports, deny the transfer of student records to another school, and/or not allow a student to re-enroll when there is an unresolved financial debt.

TUITION ASSISTANCE

The SMCS school board offers a generous tuition assistance plan (up to 50% of tuition assistance for qualifying families) for families who wish to enroll at St. Mary's Catholic School. Every Catholic child, regardless of family financial status, should have, if at all possible, the right to the Catholic experience at St. Mary's School. Scholarship applications can be obtained from the school office.

All students who are attending SMCS and receiving tuition assistance are expected to maintain a satisfactory and disciplinary status with the school. Students who are not performing in a satisfactory manner will be required to attend a meeting, in conjunction with the parent/guardian to determine an appropriate plan of action.

CAFETERIA REQUIREMENTS

- 1. Hot lunches are served most days in the cafeteria (sandwiches are sold on occasion).
- 2. When absolutely necessary, students may charge their lunches. All charges should be paid the next attendance day. If there are two unpaid charges at any time, the student will be denied the opportunity to charge and will receive a sandwich. It is the parent's responsibility to monitor money available in the student's lunch account.
- 3. Students will purchase lunches in the cafeteria from 7:15 to 7:55. The student may pay for lunches in advance. All lunch money should be sent to the school office in an envelope marked "Lunch Money for (Child's Name)".
- 4. Students are allowed to bring their lunch meal to school (carbonated drinks are not allowed). It must be in an appropriate container that will not leak. The container must be kept in the student's (4K-5th grade primary teacher's classroom; 6-8th grades in homeroom teacher's classroom) and removed only when the class is going to its appointed lunch time. All food and drink must be kept in the container and removed only when arriving at the cafeteria.
- 5. All food and drink must be consumed in the cafeteria.
- 6. Bringing food and/or drink directly from a café or fast-food establishment are not permitted unless the parent is staying to eat with the child. In this instance, it is only acceptable to bring food for YOUR child.
- 7. Students will not be allowed to call home for a forgotten lunch or lunch money.
- 8. Students may not bring any form of carbonated drinks or any item in a glass container for lunch or for any other event.
- 9. All students are expected to eat some form of lunch each day. Students who are observed not eating during their lunch period will be reported to their parents.

Lunchroom Food/Beverage Prices

- Regular student lunch \$4.50
- Regular adult lunch \$5.50
- Ala carte items:
 - Lunch entrée \$2.50
 - Vegetable or Side Dish \$1.25
 - Fruit or Dessert \$1.25
 - Gatorade \$1.75
 - Snacks \$1.50
 - Ice Cream \$1.50
 - Milk or Water \$1.25

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. Curricular activities occur within the regular school day and constitute the delivery of instruction as specified in the curriculum.
2. Co-curricular activities are an extension of classroom instruction in which participation is by the entire class or a significant portion thereof. They relate directly to and enhance student learning of essential elements through participation, demonstration, illustration, and observation. Co-curricular activities are included in the teacher's instructional plan and are conducted by or supervised by a classroom counselor, or principal. This shall not prevent pupils from participating in after-school co-curricular activities. Absences for participation in co-curricular activities that require a student to miss a class other than the sponsoring class or course shall be counted under the 10-day rule (see below).
3. Extracurricular activities are school-sponsored activities, which are not directly related to instruction of the essential elements, but they may have an indirect relation to some areas of the curriculum. They offer worthwhile and significant contributions to student's personal, physical, and social development. Participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege and not a right, and pupils must meet specific requirements in order to participate. Activities may include, but are not limited to, performances, contests, demonstrations, displays, and club activities.

10 DAY RULE

St. Mary's will not schedule, nor permit pupils to participate in any school related or sanctioned activities on or off campus that would require, permit, or allow a student to be absent from class in any course more than ten times during the school year (full-year course). A student in grades five through eight may participate in extracurricular activities on or off campus for the first nine weeks of the school year only if the student has earned the cumulative number of credits in state-approved courses indicated in this subsection:

- (1) beginning at the fifth grade year — regularly passed from the fourth grade to the fifth;
- (2) beginning at the sixth grade year — regularly passed from the fifth grade to the sixth;
- (3) beginning at the seventh grade year — regularly passed from the sixth to the seventh;
- (4) beginning at the eighth grade year - have credit for all but one of the courses required for the seventh grade year.

In order to be eligible to participate in an extracurricular activity event for a nine weeks period following the initial nine weeks period of a school year, a student must not have a recorded grade average lower than 70 on a scale of 0 to 100 in any course for that preceding nine weeks period.

PRACTICE

A student may not practice more than eight hours per school week in any single extracurricular activity. There shall be a limit to the total number of hours any student may practice in a combination of all extracurricular activities outside the school day of 20 hours per school week. Performance including travel time held after the beginning of the school week but prior to the end of the school week (excluding holidays), though held outside of the school day shall be counted against practice time, provided the total time counted against practice time for the first of such performance

shall be limited to two hours.

Any student not earning a satisfactory, passing grade in any subject at the end of an official grading period shall not be eligible to participate in an extracurricular sporting activity until the three week point of the following grading period. At the three week point in the following grading period, a student must have earned passing grades in all subjects to become eligible to participate again.

NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY

Membership in NJHS is an honor bestowed upon a student. Selection to HJHS is a privilege, not a right. Selection for membership is based on outstanding scholarship, citizenship, character, leadership, and service. The requirements for joining the NJHS are an overall average of 90 in each of the core classes: English, Math, Religion, Science, and History, no individual nine weeks grades below 80, and conduct and citizenship grades of satisfactory. It is limited to the 7th and 8th Grades, and begins after the 1st nine weeks grading period. If a student falls below 85 in any one nine week period they can be placed on probation for one nine week period and given the opportunity to bring their grades up. Failure to bring their grades up and keep them up will be cause to remove them from the NJHS. In addition, NJHS is a service organization. They are to encourage academic excellence in all the grades, and if any fund raising is done during the school year, a percentage of the funds earned must be earmarked for charitable organizations.

CHEERLEADER SELECTION/PARTICIPATION (Board of Trustees approved policy, July 11, 2001)

Participation as a cheerleader is open to any girl or boy who is in the appropriate grade during the year of her/his serving in this capacity. The following are eligibility requirements:

1. In order to be eligible to participate in an extracurricular activity (includes cheerleading, drill team, athletics, etc.) event for a nine weeks period following the initial nine weeks period of a school year, a student must not have recorded a grade lower than an 70 on a scale of 0 to 100 in any course for that preceding nine weeks period. If a violation occurs, the student is temporarily suspended from the activity until the reporting period of the next nine weeks. Should the student then meet or exceed the above requirement, he or she may resume this activity during the following nine weeks. The principal is responsible for compliance and enforcing penalties.
2. Must not have received an unsatisfactory conduct report during each nine weeks' reporting period. A violation will result in at least one suspension of performance in the next activity to multiple suspensions of following activities to suspension for the entire year. The principal is responsible for compliance and enforcing penalties.
3. Must purchase in advance all necessary uniforms and equipment before being allowed to participate.
4. Must abide by all guidelines set forth by the sponsor or coach.
5. The principal can terminate participation temporarily or permanently in any situation in which he determines a cheerleader is not in compliance with these regulations and/or whose conduct does not measure up to the standards of St. Mary's School

When there are less than eight students eligible to participate from the eighth grade, whatever number of students needed to total eight will be selected from eligible seventh grade students. Eligibility requirements will be the same as above.

The additional seventh grade cheerleaders will be selected in a closed session tryout by an impartial judge(s) approved by the principal and sponsor. The principal or his/her designate will oversee the selection process to assure compliance to the closed session policy.

"In order to be eligible to participate in an extracurricular activity event for a nine weeks period following the initial nine weeks period of a school year, a student must not have a recorded grade average lower than 70 on a scale of 0 to 100 in any course for that preceding period." (Diocese of Austin, Diocesan Education Board, 7/02, Policy 313)

TELEPHONE USE

The telephone in the office must be kept open for school business. Unless it is an emergency, students will not be allowed to make calls during operating hours. All arrangements for whatever the student may need prior to arriving at school should be taken care of in advance. Leaving lunch money at home, homework, etc. will not be valid excuses for using the school phone. Likewise, parents and other should take care of all matters prior to school and contact the student only in the case of an absolute necessity.

INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURE

Should weather conditions result in the cancellation of school, notification will be announced over local radio and television (KWTX-Channel 10) stations. It should not be necessary to contact any member of the school staff or the church. If St. Mary's is not mentioned as being closed, **we will have school**. In most instances, we follow the decision made by the West ISD.

RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES AND CONFLICTS (Diocesan Education Board, My 1999)

"Disputes or conflicts can arise in the educational setting. It is important that such matters be resolved as quickly as possible. If the dispute/conflict is with a teacher, the first step for parent/guardian is discussion of the problem with that teacher. If the problem is not resolved satisfactorily, the parent/guardian may proceed to the second step and request a meeting with the Principal.

If the dispute/conflict is with the Principal, the first step for parent/guardian is discussion of the problem with the Principal. If the problem is not resolved satisfactorily, the parent/guardian may proceed to the second step and request a meeting with the Pastor of the parochial school." The school board is an advisory board; and, therefore, has no direct jurisdiction in these matters.

MASS SCHEDULE AND RELATED CHURCH ACTIVITIES

All students and staff celebrate Mass which is usually scheduled for 8:15 A.M. every Thursday when classes are in session. Circumstances at times change the day. The staff and students go to Mass directly from their classrooms. It is extremely important that students be punctual to school so that there is no delay in the class proceeding to Church. There will be other occasions for one to all classes attending a Mass or some other service or activity in the Church. Parents and others are invited and encouraged to join the school in the attendance of these Masses and other services.

TECHNOLOGY AND INTERNET DAFETY ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

St. Mary's Catholic School (SMCS) believes in the educational value of electronic devices and services to support the curriculum and student learning. While on campus, students agree to access only the school's servers and the Internet by using the infrastructure and filtering system provided by **SMCS**.

By deploying a filtering system, **SMCS** will make every effort to protect students and teachers from misuse or abuse as a result of their experience with an information service. This places **SMCS** in compliance with Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). *You and your child's signature will indicate acknowledgement, understanding and agreement to comply with this policy.*

This policy applies to the following:

- **School provided technology resources** such as computers, tablets, one to one devices; and
- **Student devices** defined as, any device brought to school by the student with the school's and student family's permission. This includes but is not limited to "smart" phones, tablets, laptops, e-readers and other devices with Wi-Fi capability.

The following policies are guidelines for appropriate use of technology:

1. I understand that this is not an exhaustive list and agree to ask a teacher or designated authority if I

have a question about what is a violation of technology acceptable use.

2. I recognize the use of **SMCS** technology is a privilege, not a right. Inappropriate use such as vandalism or intentional modification of system settings may result in immediate revocation of my technology privileges. I acknowledge that I may be financially responsible for computer or component misuse resulting in physical damage. I further acknowledge that the school is not responsible for technical support or physical damage to **student devices**.
3. I understand that technology use is for education to enhance learning of the designated curriculum. I will not access, store, or display non-educational material or inappropriate material, such as, obscene writings, drawings, or photographs, vulgarity, violence, gambling, etc.
I also agree not to post, store or display inappropriate language, or pictures that contain personal, prejudicial threatening, discriminatory, harassing, bullying or false content.
4. I understand that **SMCS** will use a CIPA Compliant Content Filter to block harmful materials. I agree **SMCS** administrators and/or the technology personnel may audit or monitor my system, data, files or network at any time. I realize that after prior notice files stored on the school's storage system may be deleted from the system.
5. I will not gain unauthorized access, including "hacking" or engage in other activities; such as attempting to log into another's account, use others' files without permission, attempt to learn others' passwords, disrupt computer systems by spreading viruses, installing unauthorized programs, threatening the safety of a person or engaging in any illegal activities.
6. I agree to safeguard my login and password information and will not give this information to other students. If I bring a **student device** I agree to secure it with a PIN or password and provide antivirus protection, if available, for my device.
7. I understand that I am required to use the infrastructure or wireless access provided for students by **SMCS**. If my device has a 3G or 4G data plan, I agree not to use it to access the Internet while on the school campus.
8. If the school provides email, I understand that I am required to use school email accounts provided by the school. Whether or not the school provides email, I agree not to use my personal email account while on school the school campus.
9. I understand that all electronic communications sent to me through the school provided email system is confidential and that my secure account must not be shared with anyone.
10. I understand that if Google Apps for Education, other apps or software for student use are provided by **SMCS** any communication or documents created therein is property of **SMCS** and subject to all school policies.
11. I will respect resources by using the bandwidth on campus only as part of an assigned in-class activity:
12. I will not use instant messaging services such as texting or other forms of direct electronic communications such as electronic mail or chat rooms on campus unless they are part of an activity assigned by my teacher.
13. I will conform to safety and security measures when using electronic communications. I will not provide information about myself or others without permission of my parents, teachers, or the individual's permission. Personal contact information includes but is not limited to photos, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, etc. I agree not to meet with someone I have met online without my parent's approval.
14. I will promptly disclose to my teacher or other school authority any message, file or display I receive that is inappropriate.
15. I will respect privacy by not re-posting a message sent to me privately without permission of the original sender. I will not post private information about another person.
16. I acknowledge copyright law violations with regard to software and Internet based content such as, but not limited to, downloading of copyrighted music, clip art, games, computer programs, web pages, etc. I will not plagiarize works that I find on the Internet or other resources such as books or files.
17. I acknowledge that cyberbullying is prohibited. I understand that no use of the Internet (in school or off campus) may be used for harassment. "Cyberbullying" is when a student is tormented, threatened,

harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another student using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, web site postings, blogs or mobile phones. If I believe I have been a target of cyberbullying, I agree to print a copy of the material and immediately report this to my teacher or designated authority.

User (Student) Technology Contract

By signing the handbook agreement, I acknowledge that I have read, understand and will abide by the **Technology and Internet Safety Acceptable Use Policy** for **St. Mary's Catholic School**. I understand that any violation of these regulations is unethical and may constitute revocation of my access privileges. Furthermore, additional school disciplinary action may be taken, and/or appropriate legal action initiated.

Parent/Guardian Technology Contract

By signing the handbook agreement, as the parent of this student, I acknowledge that I have read the **Technology and Internet Safety Acceptable Use Policy** for **St. Mary's Catholic School**. I understand that technology access is designed for educational purposes. I understand that **SMCS** uses a CIPA Compliant Content Filter to block Internet access to harmful materials. However, I am aware that it is impossible for the school to restrict access to all controversial materials and I will not hold **SMCS** responsible for materials acquired on the network. Further, I accept full responsibility for supervision if and when my student's use of school's technology resources is not in a school setting. I hereby give permission for my student to use the school's technology resources including the Internet. If my student brings a personal device to **SMCS**, I agree that it meets the school's requirements and I hereby give permission for its use at **SMCS**. Furthermore, I understand that **SMCS** is not responsible for damage or technical support to the **student device**. I certify that I have reviewed this information with my student.

RIGHT TO AMEND

St. Mary's Catholic School reserves the right to amend this handbook. Notice of amendments will be sent to parents via student folder in note or memo form.

2026-2027 STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK AGREEMENT



Parents as Partners Agreement

We, the faculty and staff of St. Mary's Catholic School, welcome you and your family to our school community. You will find that each of us is firmly committed to the formation of a school community, which will provide a strong academic education within the framework of Catholic beliefs, values and traditions.

Since belonging to our school community demands the commitment and dedication of the staff to the philosophy and goals of the school, it is likewise necessary for each parent to accept the philosophy and goals and to support the efforts of the staff and administration to implement and achieve them.

The Catholic Church and St. Mary's Catholic School recognize parents as the primary educators of their children. The education of students at our school is a partnership between parents and the school. If, in the opinion of the administration, the partnership is irretrievably broken, the school reserves the right to require the parent to withdraw his or her child. This is a very serious decision that is not made lightly.

Similarly, it is necessary for you, the primary educators of your children, to understand fully your part in the formation of the school community. We ask you, therefore, to read the Student and Parent Handbook in its entirety, the following Agreement, and provide your signature at the end to signify that you have read both. This signed form should be returned to the school office by the end of the first week of school.

AGREEMENT

1. We understand that the Catholic school is under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Austin. We accept, therefore, that:
 - A. The pastor of the Church is the ex-officio chief administrative officer of the school, who, with the principal and staff, carries out the policies of the Diocesan Office of Education and, on points not covered by Diocesan policy, determines policies, in collaboration with the Local School Board, appropriate to the needs of the school, and;
 - B. The principal is responsible for the immediate direction and supervision of the school program.
2. We understand that certain responsibilities require our continuous support if the school is to achieve its goals. We agree, therefore:
 - A. To worship with our child, to actively participate in sacramental preparation programs, to make an effort to expand our own knowledge and the practice of our faith in order to help religion be an integral part of our children's lives rather than merely a subject that is taught during one segment of the day;
 - B. To encourage our children to learn by providing an environment suitable for home study;
 - C. To abide by the decision of the principal regarding suitable grade placement and advancement or retention of our children;
 - D. To abide by all school and Diocesan regulations and policies;
 - E. To complete and return all forms and records necessary to comply with school, Diocesan or state regulations.

- F. To follow all attendance guidelines and ensure that our child is in regular attendance at school.
3. We understand that tuition covers a very small part of the total cost of educating our children. We agree, therefore:
- A. To support our school through regular tuition payments;
 - B. To assist in making up the deficit by assuming a share of the duties for fund-raising and other support activities sponsored by the school;
 - C. To abide by the decision of the Pastor, Board of Trustees, or principal should circumstances require us to request such help.

Photography/Videography Release

By signing this, I grant St. Mary's Catholic School permission to take my child's photograph and/or videotape me and to use it, and any likeness thereof, for instructional and possible internet and social media publication purposes. The photos and/or video tapes will be used strictly by St. Mary's Catholic School or in advertising for St. Mary's Catholic School. I hereby release St. Mary's Catholic School and the photographer/videographer from any and all claims or liabilities with respect thereto. Parents not wishing to release the use of student images must notify the school in writing by September 1st of the current school year.

Student Directory Information

Within the first month of the school year, a Student Directory listing students' and parents' names, addresses, home telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses is made available. The Student Directory should be used to acquaint parents with the names of their children(s) classmates and parents. These directories should not be **used** or **sold** for other purposes. To opt out of this directory, the parent/guardian must make the request in writing to the school office.

Recognition of St. Mary's School Code of Conduct / Student-Parent Handbook

I have read the 2026-2027 Student-Parent Handbook and agree to follow the school policies and procedures as stated. I understand that St. Mary's Catholic School reserves the right to amend this handbook. Notice of amendments will be sent to parents via students in note or memo form.

I also understand and agree that my child(ren) shall be held accountable for the behavior and consequences outlined in the student code of conduct at school and at school sponsored and related activities, including school sponsored travel, and for any school related misconduct, regardless of time and location. I understand that any student who violates the student code of conduct shall be subject to disciplinary action. I understand that I may call and schedule conferences with teachers and the principal to discuss academics and other things.

_____ Signature of Parent/Guardian	_____ Date
_____ Signature of Parent/Guardian	_____ Date
_____ Signature of Student	_____ Date
_____ Signature of Student	_____ Date
_____ Signature of Student	_____ Date
_____ Signature of Student	_____ Date