



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

School Days - Our K-8 school days run from 7:55 AM -2:35 PM. Students can enter their classrooms starting at 7:30 AM. All students must be picked up by 2:45 PM unless they're enrolled in SAC, participating in an SMS after-school activity, or receive pre-authorization from Mrs. Swanson.

SAC - This after school care program is for students in grades Pre K - Grade 5 runs from 2:30 to 5:00 PM in the school cafeteria. SAC runs on all school days. *Subject to change for an early dismissal due to inclement weather.* All families must pre-register. Junior High students can receive Power Hours for helping with the SAC program. For more information, go to www.stmarys-owatonna.org > Admissions > SAC Program.

Busing – Our busing is provided by the Owatonna Bus Company. They are in charge of student eligibility and routing. Buses drop off and pick up students on Cedar Avenue, and run routes with the public schools.

Carline - If you pick up your K-8th grade child(ren), you will use the Oak Avenue entrance. You can either park your car and walk and meet your child, or you could enter the carline. For safety reasons, children should not walk in the parking lot to meet you. If you use the carline, and your child is not outside waiting, you will be asked to continue driving in the circle to keep the carline moving. For a diagram on how the carline works and where you can park, go to: www.stmarys-owatonna.org > Resources > Transportation > Carline Diagram.

Communication - Our staff very much welcomes open communication with our families. Please never hesitate to outreach to your child(ren)'s classroom teacher(s) or administration at any time. K-5 teachers will send a weekly update to parents. In Junior High, we encourage more independence. You will receive some notes and updates from teachers, however, they may not be as frequent or inclusive of all that is going on. Be sure to ask questions if you need clarification or talk with your teacher if you have concerns.

Conferences – Conferences are held each fall and spring, or upon request from the teacher or parent. Pre-K through 5th grade parents will sign up for their preferred time slot. Junior High parents will visit with their student's teachers in the gymnasium.

St. Mary's Updates/News/Happenings - Mrs. Swanson will send a weekly update to the email you have listed in FACTS, typically on Fridays. You will want to make sure to review these emails to stay up-to-date. On our website you can also view what events are coming up at St. Mary's, through the calendar option. And don't forget to like us on Facebook. You will get to see a lot of familiar faces and all the great things going on at SMS!

Tuition – The fiscal school year starts July 1, therefore tuition payments start in July. You are able to choose the frequency of payments that work for your family - annual, bi-annual, monthly, etc. Talk with Mrs. Connie Lembke in the school office to set up your preferred plan. Tuition may be paid through FACTS, checks dropped off in the school office, or sent with your child in an envelope labeled "tuition" and given to your child's teacher.

Breakfast & Lunch – This school year both breakfast and lunch will be free to All students. Students receive 1 free breakfast and 1 free lunch. Additional milks may be purchased. You also have the option to bring a home meal. The breakfast and lunch menu can be found on stmarys-owatonna.org > Resources > Lunch/Recess. Your child may qualify for additional benefits. Talk to Mrs. Connie Lembke in the office for more information.

Illness – St. Mary's School encourages regular school attendance for all students. Unnecessary absences have a negative effect on school performance and academic success. However, if your child is sick, he/she should stay home. Please follow the guidelines listed on www.stmarys-owatonna.org > Resources > Health & Wellness > Guidelines for keeping sick children home. **When your child will miss school due to illness, please notify the school office by 8:45 a.m. - call 446-2300.** Please share the symptoms your child is experiencing when you call in. Your student's classroom teacher also appreciates an email.

Health Forms - Our school nurse, Janice Hoverstad, is at SMS typically from 9 AM - 1 PM. She maintains current health records on each student. Every student should have a current immunization record and a health history form on file. If a prescription medication needs to be given, a consent form will need to be brought in with the medication. Students with chronic health conditions, such as asthma, severe allergies, seizure disorders, and Type I Diabetes, will need to provide more care information. Please contact Janice at 507-413-6509 if you have questions.

Snow Days/Emergencies - Parents will be alerted when school has been canceled or if there is another important message to share. If all Owatonna Public Schools are closed, St. Mary's is also closed because we share bussing. Please make sure your contact information and alerts are set up appropriately in FACTS.

Testing – SMS uses the NWEA standardized testing program in grades 2-8. AimsWeb is the testing used for students in grades K & 1. DRA testing is also done in K-2nd grade. We are proud that typically our students score above national and local averages.

Service - At St. Mary's School, we believe in instilling the value of service to inspire students to put God and the needs of others first. All grades participate in some service activities throughout the year. In Junior High, service becomes more ingrained into the curriculum. Junior High students must complete 9 "Power Hours" each quarter, including service to our school, churches, and community. At least one hour of service needs to be completed in each of these categories each quarter. For more information about Power Hours, go to www.stmarys-owatonna.org > Resources > Handbook > Junior High Student Resource Guide.

Servant Leaders for Life - Our Servant Leaders for Life Program was developed for our Junior High Students to celebrate academic achievement, reward student performance and recognize service. For more information about this program, go to www.stmarys-owatonna.org > Resources > Handbook > Junior High Student Resource Guide.

Volunteering - As a private school, we very much depend on and appreciate parent volunteers. We believe engaged parents are an important key to the success of their child(ren)'s education. There are a wide variety of volunteer opportunities available, and we encourage you to share your talents with us! There is something for everyone - such as lunchroom volunteers, classroom helpers, committee members, event planning, field trip volunteers, selling scrip after Sunday Mass, and so much more! If you are interested in volunteering, please talk with your child's teacher and/or the school office so we can find the right job for you! Go to www.stmarys-owatonna.org > Resources > Volunteer Opportunities to learn more.

VIRTUS Training/Background Check - Volunteers who have contact with students are required to complete a background check and VIRTUS “Protecting God’s Children” training. Paperwork for the background check is available in the school office. The “Protecting God’s Children” training takes place in Owatonna quarterly (roughly), but it can be completed in any Diocese of Winona-Rochester location or online. To see when/where sessions are available, go to www.virtus.org > First Time Registrant > View a List of Sessions > Winona-Rochester Diocese. If you see one you would like to register for, click on the button at the bottom of the list that says “Start Registration” and follow the prompts. Parents will receive notification when their training or background check needs to be renewed.

Dress Code – While St. Mary’s does not require uniforms to be worn, we do have a dress code that upholds the Catholic values of modesty and chastity for our 5th-8th grade students. The complete dress code is listed in the student handbook. For a copy of the student handbook, go to www.stmarys-owatonna.org > Resources > Handbook > St. Mary’s Family Handbook.

Masses – SMS has school masses at both our Catholic parishes. The students in Grades K-8 attend masses every Wednesday except for the one Wednesday a month when we have Spirit Groups. Each grade takes turns leading mass. Teachers will communicate when it is their grade’s responsibility to prepare and lead mass. The Liturgy Schedule is posted online, go to www.stmarys-owatonna.org > Resources > Liturgy Schedule. We typically invite parents to join their children at mass any time their schedule allows. We encourage students to dress nicely on church days. Non-Catholic students can participate in the mass just as the other students do, however, they cannot receive communion. They will simply cross their arms in front of their body to receive a blessing instead of communion.

Spirit Groups - We ensure our older students have several opportunities to be integrated with our younger students. This philosophy doesn’t only help create great leaders, it allows our younger students to have great role models. Spirit Groups are a unique way our K-8 grades interact, with our older students taking on a leadership role. These groups participate in monthly events that allow students to build strong relationships while participating in activities that teach the virtues of our faith.

Band - All 5th - 8th grade students have the ability to participate in band. Information will come out in 4th grade for students to consider taking advantage of this offering.

SMS Sports - 6th - 8th graders have the ability to participate in SMS sports. In the Fall, we offer floor hockey and volleyball; basketball in the winter and in the spring baseball is offered. Some fees do apply to participate. Student grades must be kept above a C average in order to participate. Before starting, a Sports Physical must be completed. Many of our students enjoy participating in both the SMS sports and sports through local youth sports associations.

Theatre Opportunity - Every Fall or Spring, our 6th - 8th grade students have the chance to participate in a school play. Information will be sent out as far as when auditions will take place.

Fundraising - We do our best to limit our fundraising, however, our budget is dependent on some fundraising efforts. Some of our fundraisers don’t require additional money to be spent like Scrip. In other fundraisers, we do ask families to support us with their time, talent and treasure. Information is sent out about our big fundraising efforts as the event approaches.

Scrip Program – Scrip is a year-round fundraiser for our school – and is a very important way to keep our tuition cost down. It offers big earnings with no selling. When you purchase Scrip, you are purchasing a gift card/certificate to a national or local business that participates in the Scrip program. These businesses then donate a percentage of your purchase back to the school. There is no extra cost to you, just spend your regular shopping dollars with a Scrip gift card or certificate and SMS benefits in a big way! **Every K-8 family is required to earn \$300 in Scrip profit from June 1 - May 31.** To learn more or get signed up, go to: www.stmarys-owatonna.org > Giving > Scrip.

Scholarships - At St. Mary’s School, we do not want to deny anyone a Catholic education. If you struggle financially to make SMS work for your family, we invite you to apply for scholarships through our parishes and our diocese. You do not have to be Catholic to apply. For deadlines and more information, please check out stmarys-owatonna.org > Admissions > K-8th Grade Tuition Assistance. Because our budget is set on tuition received, we ask that you are open to our business manager, Connie Lembke, on what you can afford each Spring for the next school year. Should your situation change during the year please contact Connie Lembke to discuss options.

School Support - We all are one large family that supports one another and helps each student reach their potential in mind, body, and Spirit. The following people play a role in making a positive experience for each student: teachers, principal, educational assistants, school counselor, nurse, priests, all other SMS staff, all students and parents - and of course that includes yourself and your family! As with all of life’s opportunities, every experience is what you make it to be. If you have concerns over something that is happening, please talk with your child’s teacher and if it doesn’t get solved, please contact our 5th-8th grade Dean of Students (Stacey Ginskey) or Principal (Jen Swanson). We are here to support one another.

Notify Us - Please be sure to notify the school office if your address, phone number, or email changes. Also, please notify us if there are any family changes. We not only need to update our school records, we also know changes can be stressful for children and would like to support our students in good and challenging times.

Contact Us - We welcome questions at any time. Please never hesitate to contact any staff with any concern or clarification. Our school’s main line is: 507-446-2300. From there, you can be transferred.

All of our staff emails can be found on stmarys-owatonna.org > About > Staff Directory. However, a few email addresses you may need:

TITLE	NAME	EMAIL ADDRESS
Principal	Jen Swanson	jswanson@stmarys-owatonna.org
Dean of Students (Grades 5-8)	Stacey Ginskey	sginskey@stmarys-owatonna.org
Business Office Manager	Connie Lembke	clembke@stmarys-owatonna.org
Marketing & Admissions Manager	Jonathan Scheeler	jscheeler@stmarys-owatonna.org
School Nurse	Janice Hoverstad	jhoverstad@stmarys-owatonna.org

Thank you for choosing St. Mary’s School. We look forward to a great year!