



**ST. MARK CATHOLIC SCHOOL**  
WHERE FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE MEET

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# PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

**2026-2027**

## **St. Mark Catholic School**

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[www.stmcs.net](http://www.stmcs.net)

*This handbook contains information needed by both students and parents during the school year. The information in the handbook reflects the procedures, requirements, and Diocesan and St. Mark Catholic School policies that are currently in effect. The school reserves the right to institute changes that alter any of the information in this handbook.*

Policies & protocols for campus safety and health supersede handbook policies.

**The PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & AGREEMENT FORM must be completed electronically on FACTS® Family Portal for your child's registration to be complete.**

(Revised 01/09/26)

Dear Parents and Students,

***"What greater work is there than training the mind and  
forming the habits of the young?"  
-St. John Chrysostom***

Welcome to St. Mark Catholic School! In choosing St. Mark, you have demonstrated a commitment to the values and philosophy of an outstanding Catholic education.

St. Mark Catholic School continues to claim strength as a vibrant Catholic Institution where children are nurtured spiritually, academically, physically, and socially daily. As children participate weekly in the celebration of the Eucharist along with other daily practices that nourish their spiritual life, they are strengthening the foundation of a faith life that will carry them well into the future. With a dedicated and highly competent faculty and staff, we continue to work diligently to meet the challenge of providing all our students with a rigorous and relevant 21<sup>st</sup> century Catholic education.

As we enter this partnership, the Parent/Student Handbook reflects the policies of St. Mark Catholic School for the 2026-2027 school year. Please read this document carefully. The Parent/Student Handbook Acknowledgement Form must be completed electronically on FACTS® Family Portal for your child's registration to be completed. This agreement states that you have read and intend to abide by the policies of St. Mark Catholic School during the 2026-2027 school year.

The faculty and staff of St. Mark Catholic School look forward to working with you to promote healthy social and emotional skills, spiritual development, and academic excellence in the context of the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Together, let us pray that God, who has begun this good work in us, may carry it through to completion.

Peace & Prayers,



Pam Steinkirchner  
Principal

### Welcoming Statement

*As a school founded on Gospel Values and Catholic faith, St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic School is committed to creating, maintaining, and nurturing a diverse community knowing that individuals experience the world through various perspectives.*

*Accountability to, respect of, and learning from, each other's varying backgrounds and experiences is what we strive to instill in our community.*

*We are committed to creating an environment that instills love and kindness by understanding that our thoughts, words, and actions, impact one another.*

*As a community we will continue to learn, improve, and educate ourselves through the magisterium of the Catholic Church about the sacredness and uniqueness of each individual person.*

### School Mission Statement

*Our mission is to educate each student in a spirit of faith, gospel values, and academic excellence according to Roman Catholic principles.*

### School Prayer

*Lord God, Bless our St. Mark school community with Your grace and peace. Guide us in building a nurturing environment where kindness prevails, and every individual is valued. Help us to learn together, grow in Your love, and act with compassion towards one another. May we always strive for peace in our hearts and in our world, walking in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, our greatest teacher. Amen.*

### School Mantra

*Every day we treat others as we would Jesus Christ with all our hearts, mind, and soul.*

### St. Mark Catholic Parish Vision Statement

*St. Mark Catholic Church creates welcoming communities that both provide life-changing encounters with Jesus Christ and form missionary disciples who transform the world for Christ, one person at a time.*

### ST. Mark Catholic School

St. Mark Catholic School is a pre-Kindergarten through Grade 8 Catholic Elementary and Middle School that operates under the Diocese of Dallas Catholic Schools Office.

The curriculum stresses academic achievement within a Christian community where the child feels that he/she is loved and respected by his/her peers and teachers. Vatican II texts are used so that our theology is compliant with the bishops of the world. United with each other in meaningful liturgy and prayer, students can further come to an understanding of the Christian life. At St. Mark Catholic School, we are trying to "teach as Jesus did."

The Diocesan curriculum guidelines and standards, consistent with the State of Texas guidelines, are followed for the teaching of all secular subject areas. The curriculum is marked by current content and fresh approaches to methodology. There is an emphasis on principles rather than fact, on learning through problem solving rather than by precept. We strive to offer a program which makes use of many sources of reading materials, a wide variety of audio-visual and technology tools, and a multi-text differentiated approach to the content areas.

## History

St. Mark Catholic School was established in 1982 to fulfill a need in the community of St. Mark the Evangelist Parish. The school opened and welcomed one hundred thirteen students in grades kindergarten through third grade.

The enrollment, staff, and facilities steadily expanded as the Catholic population in Plano, and the neighboring communities, increased. Presently, nearly 560 students, along with 80 staff members, occupy the school plant consisting of three buildings, totaling 84,000 square feet on a 14.7- acre site.

St. Mark Catholic School is proud and honored to be **nominated five times and recognized three times (1992, 2007, 2024) by the United States Department of Education as a Blue-Ribbon Exemplary School**. This school recognition is awarded to schools that distinguish themselves as among the nation's most successful institutions of learning. The schools chosen are judged to have strong leadership, high-quality teaching, appropriate and up-to-date curriculum, and policies, as well as practices which ensure a safe environment conducive to learning, and strong parental interest and involvement.

In 2018, St. Mark Catholic School was named 1 of 3 nationwide finalists in the **Today's Catholic Teacher "Innovations in Catholic Education" (ICE) Awards** in the category of "An Innovative Project Facilitated by Technology" for the integration of the SmartLab into the curriculum and received special recognition at the ICE Awards during the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) Convention. Contestants included elementary through high schools across the country.

In 2023, St. Mark Catholic School was awarded a **National Catholic Identity Award** at the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) Convention. This award honors a school that demonstrates effectively and clearly what Catholic Identity looks like when it is lived through service and action.

St. Mark Catholic School Graduates, and their families continue to prove their commitment to Catholic education by maintaining a high percentage of graduates continuing to Catholic high schools.

## Goals

It is the goal of this school to encourage students to become knowledgeable, creative people who make responsible choices in their daily lives as well as allowing and encouraging others to do so.

It is the goal of this school to uphold and teach respect for others as unique individuals and as members of the body of Christ; members who are active participants, now and in the future, within Church, local and global communities.

It is the goal of this school to be a caring, disciplined community in which the partnership of Church, school and home nurture and challenge students as they develop their spiritual, cognitive, and emotional endowments.

## Philosophy

St. Mark Catholic School functions under the premise that students enrolled in this school have the ability to learn and can learn well. Learning is a lifelong process and this process begins in the grade levels incorporated in this school program. The child's ability levels will change each time the student encounters a new learning experience. This school will incorporate high expectations for the escalation of the student's ability level as he/she successfully approaches and completes learning experiences designed in the program of curriculum and instruction.

The overall educational package is aimed at the growth of the student's spiritual, moral, intellectual, social, cultural, physical, mental, and self-disciplined endowments:

**Religious education** forms the cornerstone for life. Students learn the teachings, traditions, and practices of the Roman Catholic Church; the relevance of scripture; evangelization; servant leadership; the teachings of Jesus Christ; and the promise of salvation. Moral education guides and illumines the student's intelligence for moral decision making, forming the will and developing the conscience.

**Academic education** focuses on the intellectual development of the student as he/she advances through a variety of visual, tactile, and immersed educational learning experiences. Cognitive development is sequential and exploratory as designed in the planned program of curriculum and instruction.

**Community and cultural experiences** result from an organized plan of student appreciation, respect of our diverse community, and involvement in school, parish, and local activities. These activities are presented in both intra-curricular and extra-curricular arenas. Students participate in music, literature, theater, and art activities that promote creativity and appreciation for aesthetic values.

**Physical education** strengthens the energies of the body, focuses on healthy lifestyle choices, contributes to self-confidence, and promotes a cooperative team spirit. Although the school sanctions competitive sports, students are encouraged to enter sports programs for the benefits that personal physical challenge can bring, and not for the sake of winning at all costs.

**Discipline** focuses on respect for oneself, property, environment, and others. Incorporation of Gospel values is used to set positive examples for Christian behavior and to build a true sense of social justice. Self-discipline is the goal as students experience age-appropriate consequences for actions and choices.

### *Commitment to Students*

Catholic education is an expression of the mission entrusted by Jesus to the Church He founded. Through education, the Church seeks to prepare its members to proclaim the Good News and to translate this proclamation into action. Since the Christian vocation is a call to transform oneself and society with God's help, the educational efforts of the Church must encompass the twin purposes of personal sanctification and social reform in light of Christian values.

The Catholic school educator makes the well-being of students the foundation of all decisions and actions. Therefore, the Catholic school educator:

- Provides educational assistance with respect and reverence for each student.
- Preserves student's rights to privacy by judiciously protecting confidential information.
- Protects students when their well-being is threatened by unsafe, incompetent, unethical, or illegal actions of any person—student or adult.

### *Parents as Partners*

As partners in the educational process at St. Mark Catholic School, we ask parents:

To set rules, times, and limits so that your child:

- Goes to bed early on school nights.
- Arrives at school on time and is picked up on time at the end of the day.
- Is in attendance, as much as possible, during the school day.
- Is dressed according to the school dress code and appropriately for the seasons.

- Practices good hygiene habits.
- Completes assignments on time; and is given the opportunity to learn independently.
- Has lunch money in lunch account or a nutritional sack lunch every day.

To actively participate in activities such as Parent-Teacher Conferences and H.S.A. sponsored events.

To see that the student pays for any damage to school books or property due to carelessness or neglect on the part of the student.

To notify the school with a written note/email when the student has been absent or tardy.

To **keep FACTS® Family Portal updated** of any changes of address or important phone numbers.

To meet all financial obligations to the school.

To inform the school of any special situation regarding the student's well-being, safety, and health, including any legal documents.

To complete and return to school any requested information promptly, including permission slips and forms and to participate in school surveys.

To read school emails, daily behavior sheets, notes and newsletters and to show interest in the student's total education.

To support the religious and educational goals of the school.

To attend Mass regularly and teach the Catholic faith by word and example following the Parishioner guidelines given at enrollment.

To support and cooperate with the discipline policy of the school.

To treat teachers with respect, courtesy, and confidentiality in discussing teacher/student problems, both in and out of school.

### *Parents' Role in Education*

We, at St. Mark Catholic School, consider it a privilege to work with parents in the education of children because we believe parents are the primary educators of their children. Therefore, it is your right and duty to become the primary role models for the development of your child's physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, and psychological life. Your choice of St. Mark Catholic School involves a commitment and exhibits a concern for helping your child to recognize God as the greatest good in his/her life.

A good example is the strongest teacher. Your personal relationship with God, with each other, and with the Church community will affect the way your child relates to God and others. Ideals taught in school are not well-rooted in the child unless these are nurtured and lived by the example of good Catholic/Christian morality and by an honest personal relationship with God in your family life.

Once you have chosen to enter a partnership with us at St. Mark Catholic School, we trust you will be loyal to this commitment. During these formative years (Pre-K to 8), your child needs constant support from both parents

and faculty to develop his/her moral, intellectual, social, cultural, and physical endowment. Neither parents nor teachers can afford to doubt the sincerity of the efforts of their educational partner in the quest for challenging, yet nourishing, the student to reach his/her potential. It is vital that both parents and teachers remember that allowing oneself to be caught between the student and the other partner will never have positive results. To divide authority between school and home or within the home will only teach disrespect of all authority. If there is an incident at school, you as parents must make investigation of the complete story your first step. Evidence of mutual respect between parents and teachers will model good mature behavior, communication, and relationships. Talking negatively about a child’s teacher at home will only create an attitude of distrust toward the teacher, the school, and the parent.

Students are naturally eager to grow and learn. However, sometimes in the process of maturation, new interests may cause them to lose focus. As this natural process occurs, the student needs both understanding and correction. At times, your child may perceive discipline as restrictive. However, it is boundaries and limits which provide a young person with both guidance and security. It is essential that a child take responsibility for grades he/she has earned, preparing for classwork, and be accountable for homework, long-term assignments, major tests, service projects, and all other assignments. Parents are encouraged to let their child experience a logical consequence for being unprepared, an inappropriate action or behavior choice. Parents are also encouraged to let their children inform them of both successful and challenging events of the day. To build self-esteem and confidence, ask open-ended questions and let your child tell you about a good grade, a friend connection/conversation, a “Caught Being Good,” or a recognition or award. Together, let us continue our partnership and support one another in helping all children succeed in finding and expanding their God-given talents.

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<b>ADMISSION INFORMATION</b>
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**Nondiscriminatory Policy:** St. Mark Catholic School admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the

administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, or athletic and other school-administered programs.

**Admission Order:** In the process of admitting students, admission will be offered in the following order, pending fulfillment of other admission requirements, and available space:

- Currently enrolled students in good standing
- Siblings of currently enrolled students in good standing
- Children of St. Mark Catholic School Alumni
- St. Mark Catholic Church Parishioners (priority based on time in St. Mark parish)
- Catholic families transferring from other Catholic schools, in and out of the Diocese of Dallas
- Non-Parishioner's students whose parents accept the philosophy of St. Mark Catholic School

Waitlist acceptance is an on-going process, carried over from year to year. Priority for waitlist will be determined the same as general admission order based upon availability and grade-level readiness.

All students, Catholic and Non-Catholic, are required to actively participate in religion classes, religious celebrations, liturgies, and daily prayers while attending St. Mark Catholic School.

Unless transferring from another Catholic school outside of the Diocese of Dallas, St. Mark Catholic School does not traditionally accept new students in eighth grade. Exceptions to this will be discussed and approved by the Administration.

### **Admission Age Requirements:**

Children entering pre-K3 must be three years of age on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of that school year and fully toilet trained.

Children entering pre-K4 must be four years of age on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of that school year and fully toilet trained.

Transitional Kindergarten (sometimes referred to as pre-K5) is offered to students five years of age who would benefit from a readiness program designed to ensure success in kindergarten.

Children entering Kindergarten must be five years of age on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of that school year. Students will be conditionally accepted into kindergarten with full acceptance contingent on displayed readiness.

Children entering First Grade must be six years of age on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of that school year. Students will be conditionally accepted into First Grade with full acceptance contingent on displayed readiness.

Children entering Second Grade must be seven years of age on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of that school year. Students will be conditionally accepted into Second Grade with full acceptance contingent on displayed readiness.

At the time of registration, all new students seeking admission to St. Mark Catholic School are evaluated based on current standardized test scores, report cards, and grade-level readiness screening.

**Admission Documents:** Students entering St. Mark Catholic School will need to submit the following documents for inclusion in their permanent record folder. These will be reviewed to determine whether the

program at St. Mark Catholic School will meet the educational needs of the student. Admission of a new student is pending until all documents are received.

\*Immunization Records  
\*Report Cards

\*Birth Certificate  
\*Standardized Test Results

\*Baptismal Certificate  
\*Teacher Recommendation Form

**Requests to Visit the School:** During the hours of operation, the admission coordinator is available to conduct school tours in order to familiarize interested families with the total school program. Our primary commitment, during the day, is the instruction of our students. To avoid disruption to the academic program flow and to ensure the security of students in the classrooms, tours will be conducted to view rooms from the hallway but cannot include classroom observation requests.

**Referral Thank You Program:** We want to thank you for sharing your LION PRIDE! Each year, St. Mark is honored to welcome new families to our school community, many of whom are personally referred to us by you, our St. Mark families. We think you should be rewarded for bringing new families to our school.

Through our "Referral Thank You Program," your family can receive a **\$750 tuition credit** for referring one new family to St. Mark. Families can refer more than one new family.

**Here's how it works:**

- The referral program is open to all families with students currently enrolled at St. Mark Catholic School.
- The referral family must be identified by the new family when the application is submitted (specifically the "how did you hear about us" question on the application).
- Only one family can be designated as the referral family.
- The new family cannot have any siblings currently or previously enrolled at St. Mark nor can they already be identified as a prospective family.
- Approval of the new student's admission is not guaranteed.

**Tuition Credit**

- The tuition credit will be applied 4 months after the new student starts school.
- Both the referral and new families must be enrolled at the time the tuition credit is applied.
- Families have the option of donating their tuition credit towards the financial aid program. Donation letters will be provided for tax purposes.
- Tuition credit will not be paid in cash, nor can it be applied to other fees.

The St. Mark Referral Thank You Program became effective February 5, 2016. The St. Mark Referral Thank You Program is subject to review and modification and may be suspended at any time. Interpretation of the program parameters will be at the discretion of the Principal and Pastor.

**REGISTRATION**

**Application for new students:** Admission for new students is contingent upon available openings after the re-registration process for current students is complete and upon compliance with the admissions procedures of the school.

**Application for Re-Registration:** Families with students currently attending St. Mark Catholic School will have the opportunity to submit their Application for Re-Registration annually in late winter. The following criteria will be considered in the decision to either accept or not accept this application:

- At the time of application, all tuition, and fees (including but not exclusive of After School Program, Library, textbooks, athletics) must be current.
- Students must have displayed successful academic growth and appropriate behavior.
- Retention, summer school/tutorial programs, or specific behavior modification procedures may be stipulated, and re-registration will be contingent upon this agreement.
- Should there be any impediment hindering the re-registration, parents will be notified.
- A non-refundable enrollment fee must accompany all applications for enrollment. **Reminder: Enrollment fees are not refundable.**

**Parishioner Status for Purposes of Registration:** For purposes of registration and re-registration, the term Parishioner refers to families officially registered in the Parish who have fulfilled the following:

- Have at least 1 Catholic parent
- A minimum annual offering of \$1,200 to the parish.
- Active participation in at least one St. Mark parish ministry/organization.
- Attendance at a minimum of 30 Sunday Masses per year at St. Mark.

Families who are highly engaged in another Catholic Parish are encouraged to contact the Parish regarding a Pastor's exemption.

## FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

**Tuition Policy:** St. Mark Catholic School Advisory Council (SAC) accepts responsibility for recommending to the Pastor policies concerning the amount of tuition, the manner of payment, and, in general, the development of policy in this area. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of the SAC to ensure financial resources are available for the school and enrollment is available and is as affordable as possible to all families.

**Tuition Payment Options:** Families who are parishioners of St. Mark Catholic Church shall receive the benefit of reduced rates of tuition to be determined annually by the SAC. For purposes of registration and re-registration, the term Parishioner refers to families officially registered in the Parish and who have fulfilled the parish contribution quota (as evidenced by payment receipts or statements). Please see the school fee schedule for the required minimum amount. The calendar year refers to January 1st through December 31st. If the contribution is not met, the tuition rate will be changed to non-parishioner status. The non-parishioner rate will remain until the following December 31<sup>st</sup>. All payments must be made in US Dollars.

Families, who are not parishioners of St. Mark Catholic Church, with children enrolled in the full-time program of the school, shall make tuition payments at higher rates than parishioners (tuition to be determined annually by the SAC.)

All families shall be expected to make tuition payments according to one of the following payment plans. Each family's preferred manner of payment must be submitted each year at the time of the student registration. Options for payment shall include:

1. Full Payment Option: Pay in full by June 30th. This payment is made through the FACTS® Tuition Management Plan.
2. Monthly Payments Option: A variety of monthly payment options are available through the FACTS® Tuition Management Plan. This plan is an automatic payment plan made through your bank. Those choosing this plan will authorize their bank to make automatic monthly payments. Payment begins in June.

### **FACTS® Tuition Management Service Overview:**

- There is an annual, non-refundable administrative fee for enrollment in the FACTS® program per family. This fee will be collected by FACTS® – please do not make this payment to the school.
- Your enrollment form to FACTS® must be completed with your registration.

### **Late Registrations:**

- Families registering after June 1<sup>st</sup> shall be expected to fulfill their tuition obligation according to the tuition policy stated above.
- Tuition for students registering on or after the first day of school shall be prorated over the number of school months they will be in attendance.

**Delinquent Payments:** It shall be the responsibility of each school family to keep the School Business Office informed of their need to make any changes in their preferred tuition payment plan or adjustments of tuition expected to be paid. Delinquency will require parents to sign the Catholic Schools Office payment agreement available in the School Business Office.

Failure to communicate promptly with the School Business Office on the matter of delinquent tuition may adversely impact the student's continued enrollment in St. Mark Catholic School.

**Tuition Assistance:** A limited amount of tuition assistance is available for school families experiencing economic difficulties. Normally, requests for such assistance should be made at the time of registration. However, since such circumstances often are unpredictable, families should not hesitate to inform the School Business Office of their need whenever it may arise during the year.

For the sake of your family's security and peace of mind and for the general financial stability of our school, we encourage parents or guardians to contact the School Business Office as soon as possible when they are experiencing economic difficulties. The School Administration will work out arrangements with families on an individual basis and in a way that respects the concern and commitment of all our school families for the education and religious formation of their children.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FORMS are available ONLINE at [online.factsmgt.com](http://online.factsmgt.com). The FACTS® Grant and Aid Application becomes available in January and must be submitted/verified by April 1. Applications verified after April 1 will be considered late and receive a deduction in the amount.

For an application to be considered verified, all required documents must be submitted to FACTS®. Please allow a minimum of 2 weeks' lead time to ensure your application is completed and verified prior to the deadline. FACTS® will notify applicants if additional information is needed. It is the applicant's responsibility to read and respond to any notices from FACTS®.

**Financial Delinquency & Re-Registration:** School families failing to pay tuition according to the agreement that they have made with the school, who have been unwilling to make suitable alternative arrangements with the school, or who have other outstanding financial obligations to the school, including, but not limited to, After School Program, athletic fees, textbook damage, lost textbook, and cafeteria will be informed that their child/children will not be re-admitted to the school nor will they be allowed to participate in Graduation or Field Day until debts are paid in full.

### **School Fees:**

- For complete details, please refer to the Schedule of Fees posted on the school website at [www.stmcs.net](http://www.stmcs.net).

### **After School Program:**

- For complete details and fees, please visit the After-School Program page on the school website at [www.stmcs.net](http://www.stmcs.net).

### **Withdrawal Policy:**

- Withdrawal notification must be made in writing to the School Business Office.
- A \$500 withdrawal fee per family, per school year will be assessed for notices received after June 1<sup>st</sup>. Note, this fee is assessed even if siblings remain enrolled at the school.
- Tuition will be pro-rated over the number of months the student was in attendance (including partial months) for 10 months (August – May).
- The school will not forward records for students who withdraw with an outstanding balance.

**Late Payment Fee:** A \$25 late fee will be assessed on any school payment made later than 5 business days after the date it was due. Additional late fees will continue to accumulate every 5 business days until the payment, including delinquent fee(s), is paid in full. Payments include, but are not limited to, after-school program, athletic fees, and late pick up fees. The late re-enrollment fee is \$100 per student.

**Termination of Enrollment:** A student's enrollment may be terminated for a variety of reasons including academic, behavior, non-payment of fees/tuition, severe misconduct (per Diocesan Policy), alcohol, drugs, and hazardous substances, or parental behavior. All members of the school community, including parents and family members, are expected to comply with all school rules and policies while on campus and in communications with the school, be respectful, cooperate with the school with respect to all decisions affecting the student, and avoid behavior which disrupts the orderly administration of the school.

A community member's failure to meet these expectations jeopardizes school administration, requires the school to expend limited resources to address inappropriate and unnecessary behavior, and detracts from the school's core mission and, as a result, may jeopardize a student's continued participation in the school community. At the chief administrator's sole discretion, the failure of a student's parents or other family members to comply with these expectations, separate and apart from the student's conduct, may result in suspension or expulsion of the student. Except in cases of severe misconduct which may jeopardize the safety or security of another member of the school community, the chief administrator should provide one written warning to the parent involved before suspending or expelling a student for parental misconduct.

The final decision to expel a student rest with the school's chief administrator and will not be reviewed except to ensure compliance with any applicable pre-expulsion procedures. The pastor will be consulted in any decision making. Prepaid tuition and fees are not refunded if a student is expelled.

## ACADEMIC INFORMATION

The Diocese of Dallas Office of Education, in compliance with the standards of the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Education Department (TCCBED), designs curriculum. Curriculum and instruction include sequential and constructive programs of learning in religion, language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, music, art, drama, physical education, health, guidance, foreign language, computer literacy, and technology assisted activities. Instructional delivery focuses on various learning styles, multiple intelligences, and student-centered activities.

### **Curriculum:**

Religion- Religious formation and education is integrated daily throughout the curriculum. Specific religious studies include but are not limited to: Catholic doctrine and tradition, Bible study, social justice, community service, Eucharistic Adoration, middle-school Apologetics, middle-school Theology of the Body, preparation for the reception of the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation.

The entire school community attends 8:30 Mass on Fridays. Fifth graders present the music. Students in grades 1-8 lead the celebration of Mass. School families are encouraged to attend.

Second grade Catholic students may receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation in the first semester and First Eucharist in the spring. A Baptismal certificate must be on file with the school to begin Sacrament preparation. All religious documents of candidates seeking sacraments will be reviewed by the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade Religion teacher and the Pastor. The Pastor has the final decision. Parent sacramental classes will be required.

Eighth grade Catholic students prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation. Confirmation takes place in the spring of the eighth-grade year. All religious documents of candidates seeking sacraments will be reviewed by the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Religion teacher and the Pastor. The Pastor has the final decision. Parent sacramental classes will be required, as will hours of student service to the broader community.

Language Arts- Reading, English, Spelling, Vocabulary, Grammar, Phonics, composition, library skills, ISEE Prep, and appreciation of literature. Students in grades 1-8 will take 3 STAR Reading assessments to monitor their independent reading level (IRL). To allow teachers to meet students' individual needs in ELA instruction, an Honor's section will be offered in grades 7 & 8. Placement into Honors will be determined using a rubric (see below) containing results of placement tests, NWEA tests, CogAT tests, report cards, and teacher recommendations with equal weight given to each data point.

Handwriting- PK utilizes Handwriting without Tears. Grades K-3 utilize Zaner-Bloser. Grades 4 through 8 are expected to submit all handwritten work in cursive.

Mathematics- Mathematics, pre-algebra, algebra, financial literacy, and ISEE Prep. To allow teachers to meet students' individual needs in math instruction, an Honor's section will be offered in grades 7 & 8. Grade 8 Honors math is algebra. Placement into Honors will be determined using a rubric (see below) containing results of placement tests, NWEA tests, CogAT tests, report card grades, and teacher recommendations with equal weight given to each data point. Students in grades 1-8 will take 3 STAR Math assessments as a diagnostic tool to monitor their independent progress.

Science- STREAM, general sciences including earth, life, physical, dissection, and laboratory experiences.

Social Studies- History, Geography, Economics, state history, Junior Achievement, and current events.

Spanish- Vocabulary, common expressions, grammar, conversation, geography, and culture.

Computer Literacy - Word processing, data base, spread sheets, web design, coding, effective use of social media, appropriate and ethical use of E-devices, AI, AR/VR, and integration with curricular subjects.

Fine Arts - Music, visual arts, performing arts, and band/orchestra.

Physical Education- Formal physical fitness, health, team sports programs appropriate for each grade.

Social/Emotional/Mental Well-Being/Guidance- Along with our licensed school counselor, student academic support specialist, nurse, school resources, and Second-Step guidance program, students' well-being is fostered through mental, social, and emotional development, encouragement of communication, and safety of children through assemblies, classroom education, parent education, virtues, and advocacy.

Accelerated Reader (Grades 4-8)- The Accelerated Reader Program (AR) is a computerized program that tests reading comprehension. Students select books on their reading level, read independently, and take an independent comprehension test on the computer.

- Students are required to read 3 books and take 3 AR quizzes quarterly. Genres for the 3 books will be 2 free-choice and 1 assigned. One quiz is taken every 3-week period. The grade received on the AR quiz is the grade recorded in the gradebook as a Reading quiz grade. Quizzes may only be taken during school hours in class or the library with teacher permission.
- Students in grades 1-3 will take 3 STAR Reading Comprehension Assessments as a reading comprehension diagnostic tool and ZPD results will be sent home to parents to sign & return for a HW grade. Also attached to this will be the student's Reading log documenting achievement and genre.
- It is at the teacher's discretion if books and quizzes are allowed outside of student's ZPD Reading Level and if permission is needed prior to taking a quiz on a novel or story read in class.
- Students cannot help other students with their AR tests, and books may not be used during test taking. Academic dishonesty will result in a zero for the AR quiz and detention.

Smart Lab & The Lions Learning Lab – fully integrated, customized facilities where students explore many disciplines through applied technology and project-based learning. Applications in the labs serve to reinforce cross-curricular academics and to build next generation skills. Students are able to experience first-hand a variety of disciplines including graphic design, robotics, Photoshop, medicine, digital animation, scientific data analysis, software engineering, music studio applications, circuitry, mechanics and structures. They have opportunities to rotate through projects and are encouraged to discover, explore, and apply a wide range of technologies to their project work. Further, an appropriate level of challenge is provided to each student, addressing all learning styles. From students who need extra support to students identified as gifted/talented, there is something to enable everyone to work at their own level and pace. Students in Grades 3-8 will continually rotate through the Smart lab while PK-2 will rotate through the Lion Learning Lab.

Electives- Exploratory classes on a variety of topics are made available to middle school students such as Yearbook, Hodge Podge Art, Theater, Athletics, Cultural studies, Art History, Teachers in Training, Cooking, Finance, and Study Hall.

7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade information- Science, Social Studies, Religion, Spanish, and Computer Literacy are heterogeneously grouped. English Language Arts and Math are leveled into On-Grade Level or Honors. All students by this time at St. Mark Catholic School, regardless of placement, are working well above the standard for the grade level producing above average work. The two On-Grade Level sections will be mirrors of each other and the A-B letters are only used to distinguish sections for scheduling. All classes, except 8<sup>th</sup> grade math, will follow the same Diocesan curriculum and standards, however, the Honors class will move at a brisker pace, have extended activities, require more independent work, and push students to an exceptional level of performance expected of Honor's students. Eighth grade On-Grade Level math is Pre-Algebra the first semester and Algebra the second semester. Eighth grade Honors math is Algebra both semesters. The final decision regarding a student's placement rests with the school administration using the following rubrics.

Honors Rubric		
	Score	Rubric
<b>3 Quarter Cumulative Average - Math (Report Card)</b>		
Honors (Add 1 point)		
<b>3 Quarter Cumulative Average - English and Reading (Report Card)</b>		
Honors (Add 1 point)		
<b>NWEA NPR</b>		
Math Scores		
ELA Scores		
<b>CoGat SAS</b>		
Verbal		
Quantitative		
Nonverbal		
<b>St. Mark Math Assessment</b>		
<b>St. Mark ELA Assessment</b>		
<b>Q3 Math Star - % Rank</b>		
<b>Q3 ELA Star - % Rank</b>		
<b>Teacher Recommendation</b>		
<b>Teacher Recommendation</b>		
<b>Teacher Recommendation</b>		
<b>Total Rubric Score</b>		
<b>Rubric Percentile</b>		

Student Name _____					
Rubric Category Score	5	4	3	2	1
<b>3 Quarter Cumulative Average</b>	94-100	85-93	76-84	70-75	69 Below
Honors (Add 1 point)					
<b>NWEA NPR</b>					
	95-100	90-94	80-89	70-79	69 Below
<b>CoGat SAS</b>					
	128-150	106-127	96-105	95-86	85 Below
<b>STM Math Assessment</b>					
	94-100	85-93	76-84	70-75	69 Below
<b>STM ELA Assessment</b>					
	94-100	85-93	76-84	70-75	69 Below
<b>Q3 Math Star - % Rank</b>					
	90-100	80-89	70-79	60-69	59 Below
<b>Q3 ELA Star - % Rank</b>					
	90-100	80-89	70-79	60-69	59 Below
<b>Attitude, Behavior, Participation, Preparedness, Self-Advocacy</b>	Very High	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Very Low
	Very High	Average	Average	Average	Very Low

**Assessments:** NWEA Assessments and CogAT are the standardized tests selected by the Diocesan Catholic Schools Office. As part of the planning and evaluation program for students in grades 1<sup>st</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>. NWEA will be administered annually in September and April and CogAT will be administered in September Standardized tests provide a basis for educational guidance and the measurement of effectiveness in curriculum, instructional procedures, and student achievement. Teachers use these results to: 1) identify students needing both enrichment and/or extra support, 2) look for and adjust instructional weakness, and 3) identify student's ability

and mastery of content are in sync. Parents receive copies of individual student profiles and test results indicating achievement scores numerically with written explanations of their child's performance on this test.

### NWEA Assessments

The NWEA Assessment test is a nationally standardized achievement test. Test results show your child's achievement compared to students across the nation. The test is primarily used to evaluate the progress of a single student over a period of years, and to assess the student's content mastery, strengths, and weaknesses. The NWEA Assessment scores reflect a student's compilation of knowledge between what is learned in the classroom, personal experiences, educational support in the home, and books read. There is no need to study or prepare for this assessment. Students are expected to show grade level growth year to year. NWEA will be administered over 2 days in both September and April. Most St. Mark students show growth of more than one grade level year to year. Research shows this remarkable growth is attributed to the effectiveness of the classroom teacher, the curriculum quality, and student's retention of knowledge. Assessments missed due to discretionary absences will not be made up.

NWEA Assessment scores are used to nominate students for gifted and talented programs such as Senior DECATS and CLEAR enrichment programs in the Diocese, academic contests and to recommend students for remediation or instructional intervention.

### Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)

The CogAT is an abilities test, not an achievement test and will be administered for 1 day in September. The test measures a student's general and specific reasoning abilities. Reasoning abilities reflect how well students can learn new tasks and solve problems. Knowing how a student processes information greatly influences how instruction will be designed and delivered to the student. Assessments missed due to discretionary absences will not be made up.

The Ability Profile Interpretation on the CogAT gives teachers specific recommendations for differentiating instruction to each possible profile combination. The CogAT is compared to the NWEA Assessment to ensure students are working up to their potential.

### Classroom Assessments & Personal Learning Plans

Periodic classroom tests, quizzes, and projects are used to assess subject mastery. The purpose of these assessments is to provide a measure of progress toward objectives and gain feedback to allow the teacher to gauge the success of instructional goals and the need for re-teaching. Subject mastery may be measured in a variety of ways such as oral evaluation, evaluation by observation, and/or written evaluation.

Students will not be permitted to retake a quiz or a test in order to improve their academic standing unless the student has a documented learning diagnosis and retakes are listed as an accommodation. Specific details about accommodations will be discussed and documented during team conferences.

STAR Reading and Math Assessments will be used to determine a student's reading and math level and progress. A report will be sent home informing parents of their child's results.

Middle school students will take Mid-Terms and Final Exams to assess the cumulative knowledge of subject matter taught during the academic year. These exams help students be more fully prepared for the assessment challenges and expectations of high school. In grade 6, Mid-Terms and Finals count as a regular test grade. In grades 7 and 8, Mid-Terms and Finals count as 15% of a student's average.

**Homework:** Homework assignments serve to review and reinforce the concepts presented in class. Although the amount of home study will vary within grades and on different days, a reasonable guideline is listed below.

Kindergarten

30 minutes

First Grade	30 minutes
Second Grade	45 minutes
Third Grade	60 minutes
Fourth Grade	60 minutes
Fifth Grade	90 minutes
Sixth Grade	90 minutes
Seventh, Eighth Grades	120 minutes

- Parents are encouraged to provide a positive environment for completion of daily homework by setting regular study periods in a location conducive to study.
- At least 10-20 minutes per night (as appropriate to the grade level of the student) should be used for review and drill of math facts.
- Students should be encouraged to read and drill in areas of weakness during daily homework time when no formal homework has been assigned.
- Homework is assessed for completion and credit is given for completion.
- Students do not receive grade credit for homework or classwork that is turned in late. Late work is recorded as a zero in the grade book. Parents may not bring or scan in forgotten homework, assignments, or deliver supplies to school. We understand that things can happen in life. If for some reason your child gets home without the necessary homework materials, we encourage your child to be resourceful and find a way to still complete the assignment at home. The most important element is for your child to get the practice that homework allows for students to be successful in class the next day. Teachers will accept work from a student, brought into the school on the day it is due even if it is a photocopy of a forgotten worksheet, without points being deducted. Example – if a worksheet is forgotten at school, a student could call a friend, take a picture, and complete the assignment and still bring it into school.
- Class work and homework that is missed because of an absence must be turned in no later than 3 school days after the student returns to school. Classwork assignments must be completed at school. Long-term projects may still be due on the date assigned at the teacher's discretion. Under special circumstances, an extension of no more than 3 additional days may be given to make up for missed work. Any work not turned in on the due date will be entered as an "I" which will average as a zero. The "I" will be changed and the valid grade entered when the absent work is either turned in according to the approved time frame or when classwork and assessments are completed at school.

**Grades, Progress Reports & Report Cards:** Student progress is assessed through daily class assignments, homework assignments, quizzes, and tests and/or projects along with work habits and conduct. Grades that are assigned to these procedures are weighed for specific percentage values and are reflected on student progress reports and report cards. No extra credit will be made available to students as we are reinforcing strong work habits and responsibility.

Weighted values are assigned as follows:

Class Work (includes participation) = 30%, Daily Homework= 10%, Quizzes= 20%, Tests/Projects= 40%

Weighted values for second and fourth quarter in grades 7 and 8 only are assigned as follows:

Class Work (includes participation) = 25%, Daily Homework= 10%, Quizzes= 20%, Tests/Projects= 30%, Final= 15% (for 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> quarter)

Grades will be recorded in FACTS® Family Portal on a weekly basis no later than Sunday at 4:00 PM.

Assessment of student progress (academic, work habits and conduct) in grades one through eight is assigned a grade value using the following matrix:

Academics

E (Excellent)	94-100	(A)
G (Good)	85-93	(B)
S (Satisfactory)	76-84	(C)
N (Needs Improvement)	70-75	(D)
U (Unsatisfactory)	69-below	(F)

<u>Conduct &amp; Work Habits</u>	<u>Grades 1-5</u>	<u>Middle School</u>
E (Excellent)	= 0-3 check marks	= 0 Sanctions
G (Good)	= 4-6 check marks	= 1-2 Sanctions
S (Satisfactory)	= 7-10 check marks	= 1 Detention
N (Needs Improvement)	= 11-15 check marks	= 2 Detentions
U (Unsatisfactory)	= 16+ check marks	= 3+ Detentions
Detention =6 check marks in one week		

\*Students with an In-School or Out-of-School Suspension will receive no higher than an N on their conduct grade – which will affect eligibility of participation in extra-curricular activities.

Academic dishonesty of any type will not be tolerated. Students participating in any academic dishonesty will receive both a zero and a detention.

- Plagiarism and copying other students' work: The use of others' works to produce or facilitate any form of academic dishonesty including plagiarism is strictly prohibited. Students must not copy others' work, claim it as their own, or seek unfair advantage.
- Unethical AI Practices: Any use of AI that violates COPPA, student confidentiality (CSO policy 4504), ethical guidelines, breaches data privacy, or engages in harmful activities is strictly prohibited. The use of AI to produce or facilitate any form of academic dishonesty is strictly prohibited. Students must not use AI to claim work as their own or seek unfair advantage.
- If academic dishonesty occurs on a TEST, the student will be given the opportunity to come in the next morning at 7:15am and retake the test with the maximum possible grade being a 50. This will be documented in FACTS® Family Portal.

Progress Reports are sent home on Wednesdays via FACTS® Family Portal after the fourth week of the grading period for grades one through eight.

Report Cards are sent home on Wednesdays via FACTS® Family Portal the week following the end of each grading period for grades one through eight. A documented parent-teacher conference is required if a student is receiving a D or F on the report card in any subject.

Pre-Kindergarten, Transitional Kindergarten, and Kindergarten student progress is reported on a different report card designed to indicate on-going development and readiness. These students will receive a report card at the

end of the first, second, third and fourth reporting periods. All grade reports are sent home on Wednesdays.

**Promotion and Retention Policy:** The following policies clarify the conditions under which a student is required to attend summer school/tutoring or repeat the grade. The goal of these policies is to provide additional opportunities to master the objective.

A student is advanced to the next grade level if all requirements have been met, and the school agrees that advancement to the next grade level is beneficial to the child. Progression through the grades is a matter of achievement in basic skills, maturation, and social, civic, and emotional development. A team conference will be held to create a plan for success by the first week of the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester if a student is trending towards conditional promotion or retention. The final decision regarding a student's promotion or class placement rests with the school administration.

Placement in TK or kindergarten: Promotion to the Kindergarten program will be based on a student's overall progress with consideration given to the child's maturity and readiness to meet the academic demands of kindergarten. If a student is not meeting key developmental or academic milestones necessary for success in kindergarten (benchmark assessments, report cards, teacher feedback, kindergarten readiness screener), a conference will be scheduled with the parents to discuss the most appropriate placement for the success of the child. The final decision regarding a student's promotion or grade placement rests with the school administration.

#### Conditional Promotion Policy:

A student who meets the following criteria on their final report card average is required to make up for the deficiency.

Grades 1 – 3: receives a final average of D or F (75 or below) in any one of the following subjects: Reading, Math, or English; or attendance of less than 90% of days that school is in session (missing more than 18 days).

Grades 4 – 8: receives a final average of F (69 or below) in any one of the following subjects: Reading, Math, English, Religion, Science, or Social Studies; or attendance of less than 90% of days that school is in session (missing more than 18 days).

The student is required to complete one of the following programs in the targeted area to be promoted to the next grade. Parents must provide documentation of satisfactory completion of the requirements to the assistant principal prior to the first day of school. Should the criteria not be met successfully prior to the start of school, the student will not be able to re-enroll in the next grade at St. Mark Catholic School. The student **MUST** repeat the grade for which they were placed on conditional promotion.

1. Summer school coursework from an accredited public or private school, or
2. Twenty hours of tutoring, in the area of concern, by a degreed teacher certified in the subject to be tutored. Cannot be a direct family member.
3. For credit recovery due to excessive absences- successful completion of 3 hours of tutoring for every day absent beyond 18 days, by a degreed teacher.

#### Retention Policy:

A student is retained at the end of the school year and must repeat the grade if the student meets the following criteria on their final report card average. A team conference will be scheduled no later than one week after the

completion of the third quarter to make parents aware of the possibility of retention and determine a plan of action.

Grades 1 – 3: receives a final average of F (69 or below) in any two or more of the following subjects: Reading, Math, or English.

Grades 4 – 8: receives a final average of F (69 or below) in any two or more of the following subjects: Reading, Math, English, Religion, Science, or Social Studies. Eighth graders who are retained must repeat the grade at a different school.

Kindergarten: Students must display ongoing academic development and readiness in the areas of language development, number development and readiness, social development, work/play habits, and physical development. Assessment of these areas is indicated as Mastered, Progressing, or Improvement Needed. Promotion to the first grade is based on the student's ability to achieve the Mastered or Progressing level of assessment and successful completion of grade-readiness screening. Consistent performance in the areas of development at the Improvement Needed level will necessitate another year in kindergarten. The final decision regarding a student's promotion rests with the school administration.

**Student Referral for Testing and Evaluation:** Teachers have specific guidelines to follow in a referral process. Parents who have concerns about their student's abilities and are considering formal evaluation should meet with their child's teachers, school guidance counselor and/or student academic support specialist, and administration in a team conference. Teachers may not complete parent's request for evaluation paperwork unless a team conference has taken place. All testing materials and summary forms will be sent by the school to the testing agency designated by the parent. Testing results are kept confidential with the counselor and are not part of the student's permanent record.

St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic School provides accommodations for students with psycho-educational or documentation verifying a learning disability prepared by a licensed psychologist, learning disability specialist or neuropsychologist. The documentation must include the descriptions of testing procedures, instruments used, test and subtest results. Interpretation and recommendations based on data gathered and academic accommodations must be listed. All paperwork should be provided to the student academic support specialist. A Learning Plan is created for students with paperwork on file to ensure the student's learning needs are being met. Documentation must not be older than three years. If past 3 years, formal accommodations may not be offered.

## SCHOOL CALENDAR and HOURS OF OPERATION

**See the School Website for the most up to date calendar-[www.stmcs.net](http://www.stmcs.net).**

**Inclement Weather Day/Remote Learning:** In the case of an Inclement Weather Day or a reason for remote learning, all students will attend virtual Off-Campus Learning. Parents will receive a notification from the school as soon as the decision is made, as well as a link to access grade-level lesson plans. Students are required to be online from 8:00AM -12:00PM for virtual learning/inclement weather days.

**Procedure for Notification:** When inclement weather occurs, announcements of school closing or delayed opening will be announced on television channel **NBC 5**, either the evening before or between the hours of 6 AM and 7 AM. Notification will also be made via FACTS Family Portal, an email from the school, along with a posting on the school website. If a delayed opening is announced, students may not be dropped off at school earlier than the designated time (10:00 AM). Parents and students should watch television (NBC 5) and check e-

mail, refraining from calling the school office or parish offices. In most cases, St. Mark Catholic School will follow the same closing or delayed opening as the Plano Independent School District. The school will not be liable for any student on campus outside of the scheduled school day.

**Hours of Operation:** The total school program works on an effective time schedule designed to maximize instructional time for students. It is essential that students arrive on time to begin classes promptly. It is essential for the safety and proper supervision of students that they be picked up promptly at the end of the school day, or in other cases, at the designated time for after school activities.

Students are not allowed to be left unattended on the church or school property prior to or after official school hours. The school is not liable for any person on campus outside the school's designated hours.

Anyone coming into the school during school hours must enter the main entrance, register with the receptionist, and obtain a visitor or volunteer identification badge to be worn at all times while on the school property.

7:15 AM: Cafeteria doors open for early arrival.  
7:40 AM: Students report to their classrooms.  
7:55 AM: Official start of school day. Tardy Bell. Students must be in their classrooms at this time, or they will be sent to the office for a tardy slip. Late students should enter through the main school door and cannot be dropped off outside a locked door.  
3:25 PM: End of day prayer and ASP dismissed to ASP personnel.  
3:30 PM: Official end of school day. Bell rings to release all students to dismissal areas.  
3:50PM Students not picked up will be walked to ASP.  
4:00 PM: School office closed.

Announcements begin at 8:00 AM. Students stand and show reverence for morning prayer, Pledge of Allegiance, and the St. Mark Mission Statement.

If students are picked up by anyone other than the parent, guardian, or regular carpool driver, written notification must be submitted to the school office and teacher and be an approved pick-up person listed in Family Portal. Identification will be checked.

Students will not be allowed to re-enter the school building after they have been dismissed at 3:30 PM. Re-entry for books, assignments, etc. may only take place between 3:50-4:00 PM.

All students must be picked up within 20 minutes of their dismissal time. All students remaining after 3:50 PM will be escorted to the After-School Program. Parents drive directly to the After-School Program in the Smyth Pastoral Building. The late pick-up rate is \$15 for the first 10 minutes (3:50 to 4:00 PM) and then \$30 per hour, charged in 30-minute increments. This fee is billed per child and an invoice will be sent to parents at the end of each month. These fees must be paid upon billing.

After School Program (ASP): The phone number for ASP is 972-295-6931. Please remember the ASP phone will only be answered during ASP hours 3:30 – 6:00PM. All students must be picked up by 6:00 PM each day, and by 3:00 PM on early closure days. Starting at 6:01 PM (or 3:01 PM on early closure days), \$5.00 per minute per child will be assessed and billed to the parent. All parents need to go to the ASP office, Suite 106, and ring the bell to sign the late pick-up roster with ASP personnel. These fees must be paid upon billing.

Use of the facilities is for school and parish sponsored and approved events only, both during the school day, and after school hours, including weekends. Individuals or groups may not use the facilities (including gymnasiums and athletic fields) without prior approval. Any entity using school facilities must adhere to the agreed upon

policies and procedures or will be assessed a non-compliance fee. These fees must be paid upon billing. St. Mark Catholic School is not liable for any accidents, personal injuries, or property damage occurring outside the school day or for non-school sponsored activities.

## ATTENDANCE and ABSENCE POLICIES

**Attendance:** Student learning reaches its highest potential when students are in attendance and actively involved in classroom learning activities. Students are expected to attend school and be on time every day unless illness or family/personal reasons necessitate absence. Parents should plan vacations during regularly scheduled school breaks.

Texas Compulsory Attendance law states a student may not be given credit or a final grade unless the student is in attendance for at least 90% of the days the class is offered. There are 176 instructional days offered that are based on instructional minutes approved by the Diocese.

Students who miss school without the consent of their parents are considered truant. Truancy will be addressed through the school disciplinary procedure and a disciplinary conference will occur before the student is readmitted to school. For credit recovery due to excessive absences, successful completion of 3 hours of tutoring for every day absent beyond 18 days, by a degreed teacher, is required.

- If, for any reason, a student will not attend school, the parent should email [frontoffice@stmcs.net](mailto:frontoffice@stmcs.net) along with the homebase teacher between 7:30am and 9:00am to report the absence.
- Upon return to school, the student must bring a written note signed by the parent explaining the reason for the absence. In some cases, where a medical condition, injury, or communicable disease was the reason for absence, a doctor's note may be required.
- Absence notes must be presented to the school office before the student is readmitted to school.
- Students who arrive after 10:00AM are considered ½ day absent. Students who leave before 12:00PM are considered ½ day absent.
- Parents are urged to schedule medical appointments outside the school day. If such appointments are necessary, parents must come to the school office to sign out students. Students will be released from the front office only.
- Students should be fever free, without the use of fever-reducing medication, for 24 hours before returning to school. Students who are sent home during the school day with a fever will not be allowed to return to school the next day as this would not allow for the 24-hour protection of the entire school community.
- When a student is absent **FOR ANY REASON** or sent home from school due to illness or behavior, he/she is not eligible to participate in any after-school activities on that day, including sporting events, pep rallies, performances, or extra-curricular clubs on or off school campus.
- If a student is absent on a Friday and is scheduled to participate in athletic activities over the weekend, the Athletic Director will be made aware of the absence and will contact parents to follow up regarding student athletic participation.
- If conditions justify an early emergency dismissal, the student shall leave the school under conditions specified on the emergency notification form in FACTS.

**Work Missed Due to Absence:** Students are responsible for work missed because of absenteeism or tardiness.

- Students may request makeup assignments when they return to school after their absence. Parents and students may check Family Portal for assignments at any time.
- After 3 consecutive days of absence, due to illness or family emergency, parents may request daily work assignments. These requests must be made no later than 12 NOON of the day you will pick up the work to the teachers directly by email.
- There are no time extensions for work missed due to tardiness or time missed because of medical appointments that occur within the school day.
- For absences, students have 3 school days from the day they return to school to make up work. After the three-days, work will not be accepted for grade credit, unless teacher approved.
- Tests, quizzes, and classwork assignments must be completed in school.
- It is the student's responsibility to ask their teachers and actively work to identify missed assignments, to check Family Portal and to turn in by the due date. Class work assignments must be completed in school.
- Long-term projects may still be due on the date assigned, if reasonable. If not, an extension of no more than 3 days may be given.
- If a long-term project/test grade is late, it is at the teacher's discretion to take off 10 points from the earned grade per day.
- Makeup tests must be rescheduled with the individual teacher according to the teacher's availability either before or after school within 3 days of returning.
- Discretionary absences during Standardized Testing will not be made up.
- Work will not be distributed before an absence due to vacation, trips, etc. Parents/students can check Family Portal for missed work/assignments.

**Tardiness:** It is important that students develop good habits of punctuality and responsibility. When a child is late to class, it provokes a disruption to all members of the classroom community, and valuable instructional time is lost.

- Students are counted tardy if they are not in the first classroom when the 7:55 AM bell rings.
- Students who arrive after 7:55 AM must enter through the main door and report to the school office to obtain a tardy slip before being accepted into class. Parents/Guardians must walk in with their child to sign in at the main school door if after 7:55AM. ECE students must be walked up to the ECE door after 7:55AM.
- If a student exceeds six tardies, parents will be notified via Ren Web. At that time, parents must contact the principal to discuss a plan to ensure student success.

**Early Pick-up Prior to Dismissal:** Requests to release students from class just prior to dismissal are a disruption in the school day and may create a safety issue. Between 3:15 and 3:30 PM many essential stages of closure to the school day are taking place. End of the day announcements from the office occur at this time. Classroom instructions will often include a review of homework assignments and reminders of tests, projects, or other significant information for the next day. Students who are called out of class early to go to their lockers and then leave school cannot only become a distraction to others, but often they miss essential elements at the end of the day closure.

Considering these facts, we also understand that some doctor or dentist offices do not maintain the highest level of flexibility regarding appointments. When it becomes necessary for you to ask for students to be dismissed from class at the end of the day, please adhere to the following procedures:

- Send an email to the receptionist and to the homebase teacher stating early pick up and the time to be picked up that day.
- Present yourself to the school receptionist no later than 3:00 and 3:10 PM and the child will be called from the classroom to pick up in the front office.

- Students will not be let out between 3:10 and 3:30.
- Our goal is to make this procedure effective as possible.
- The person picking up the student must be on the student's approved pick-up list and must bring identification to the front office.

## UNIFORM and APPEARANCE REQUIREMENTS

The outward image and general appearance of the Catholic school student has traditionally been one that is an excellent reflection on the student, his/her family, and the school. Students should stand out for their character and not their outward appearance.

Students who have received written notification of non-compliance with these standards have three (3) business days to comply and will return once compliance is confirmed by administration.

### **Hair:**

- Hair, including cuts and styles, should not interfere with the learning process.
- A student's hair must be kept clean, neat, combed, out of the eyes, and away from the face.
- Boys hair must be off the collar.
- Facial hair is not allowed on students.
- No mohawks, shapes, or lines shaved into the scalp will be allowed.
- Hair color of any type, highlighting, lowlighting, glints, Sun-in type products, or bleaching is prohibited. Hair must be the natural hair color. Hair extensions must match the natural color of hair and be one color. No feathers.
- Girls who choose to wear hair ribbons, barrettes, beads, or headbands must select styles that are simple and match school colors – black, grey, white, green, yellow/gold, clear, uniform plaid. Cat-eared headbands are not allowed.
- Administration has the final determination of acceptable hairstyles and accessories.

Our administration is aware of and sensitive to hairstyles that may have ethnic or cultural importance to our students. Therefore, we will address hairstyles on a case-by-case basis.

### **Accessories & General Appearance:**

- Excessive use of jewelry and other accessories is not only inappropriate for the age of our students and the style of the uniform, but also, it can be dangerous during playground and P.E. times. The school is not responsible for lost items.
- Jewelry will be limited to:
  - \* One watch (non-beeping), no smart watches are allowed (watches must be cleared by administration – no phone/data/camera or recording ability allowed).
  - \* One simple necklace or religious medal.
  - \* One simple ring per hand.
  - \* One simple religious bracelet allowed.
- Earrings: Girls may wear only stud style earrings, no hoops, rings, or dangles. Girls may wear only one pair of earrings at a time. Boys may not wear earrings of any kind. Body piercings, excluding ears, are prohibited.
- Artificial fingernails are not permitted.
- Make-up and/ or nail polish may not be worn by students of any age while at school. If in violation of this policy or having the appearance of violating this policy, students will be sent to the nurse to check and remove.
- Nails should be cleaned and trimmed.
- Designer or manufacturer labels and logos are not appropriate to the school uniform and may not be worn on any clothing item.

- Uniforms must be kept clean and well pressed. General grooming and cleanliness are of high importance and standards will be enforced.
- The formal school uniform (Girls EC-5 Plaid jumper/yellow shirts/green sweater, Girls MS – Plaid skirt/white shirt/green sweater, Boys EC-5 Grey pants/yellow shirt/green sweater, Boys MS – Grey pants/white shirt/green sweater) must be worn at all Liturgical celebrations.
- Uniform sweaters are required at all Liturgical celebrations.
- School sweatshirts may not be worn in Mass.
- Jeans, jeans pass, sneaker passes, or any type of dress-down allowances are not allowed on Monday, Wednesday, or Fridays unless it is an all-school dress down day. Only tennis shoes may be worn when using a sneaker pass.
- Students may not write on hands, legs, arms, clothing, shoes, etc.
- Tattoos and drawings on skin are not allowed.
- Students must be in full uniform, ready for school, when getting out of the car.

**DPL Sports, & Boy/Girl Scout Uniforms:** Students may wear their DPL sports jersey on game days (after Mass if on a Friday.) Students may wear their Scout uniforms on meeting days.

**Dress Down Days:** At various times throughout the school year, students will be given “dress down” days. On these days, students are permitted to come to school in non-uniform clothing. Students may wear:

- Modest attire (no tight fitting or low-cut clothing)
- Neat jeans may be worn or slacks free of holes, or the appearance of holes. Capri-style pants, Cargo style pants, or school walking shorts (1<sup>st</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> quarter only) are allowed. Leggings, sweatpants, tennis skirts, non-uniform skorts, or non-uniform shorts are not allowed.
- Closed-toe and closed- ankle shoes are only allowed. Sandals, Crocs, slippers, and/or flip-flops are not allowed.
- Girls may wear modest length dresses. Straps must be at least as wide as the uniform jumper to cover the shoulders. It is suggested that girls bring a sweater to school should straps need to be covered.
- All clothing should be free of inappropriate slogans and graphics.
- Jeans passes follow dress-down day guidelines
- Administration has the final decision of appropriate attire on Dress Down Days.

**Spirit Dress Days:** The first Monday of school of each month is designated “School Spirit Day.” (please refer to school calendar) On these days, students may wear:

- A St. Mark t-shirt, jersey, or sweatshirt (this includes any shirt with the St. Mark name, including Field Day shirts.) Solid green/gold shirts without the St. Mark name are not allowed.
- Neat jeans or slacks free of holes, or the appearance of holes, Capri-style pants, Cargo style pants, or school walking shorts (1<sup>st</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> quarter only) are allowed. Leggings, sweatpants, tennis skirts, skorts, or non-uniform shorts are not allowed.
- Closed shoes only allowed. Sandals, Crocs, and/or flip-flops are not allowed.
- Hats and accessories are not allowed.
- The Lion’s Den spirit store has many options that meet the spirit day dress criteria.
- Warning: Students who repeatedly violate the uniform policy will be denied participation in the next out-of-uniform day or will serve detention.

**Themed Dress Down Day:** At various times throughout the school year, students will be given “themed dress down” days. If the student chooses not to wear the themed clothing, jeans and a spirit shirt are acceptable.

**May Crowning Dress Days:** May Crowning is celebrated the Friday before Mother's Day. Students are asked to bring one flower to honor our Mother Mary. Students have the option of wearing the school uniform or "Sunday best" attire.

Guidelines for "Sunday best" attire: Clothing must be modest. No jeans, shorts, skirts, tennis skirts, sweatpants, or leggings. Girls' dresses may not have spaghetti straps. Dress straps must be at least as wide as the school uniform jumper straps. It is suggested that girls bring a sweater to school should straps need to be covered. Sandals with a back strap and tennis shoes are acceptable; flip flops, Crocs, and slide-in sandals are unacceptable.

**Field Day:** Field Day is a fun day for students in PK-7th grade where they participate in many different indoor and outdoor games and activities organized by the P.E. Department and the HSA Field Day Committee.

Students should wear Shorts (conservative style; bottom hem should be fingertip length and longer than the shirt), no bike shorts are allowed. · Field Day t-shirt supplied by the school. · Closed-toe athletic shoes and socks  
A hat is recommended (ball cap or sun hat style). · We recommend that parents apply sunscreen to children before school. Each child should bring a refillable water bottle, healthy nut-free snack, and a towel.

Reminder, only volunteers who have signed up and are current on Safe Environment training may work Field Day.

**Specific Uniform Requirements:** Because uniform items purchased from vendors other than Flynn O'Hara Uniforms are not guaranteed to be the accepted color or style, we do not recommend purchasing them. Please consult Flynn O'Hara Uniforms for more information regarding acceptable styles. Uniform items must not bear visible designer names or emblems on any part of the clothing.

Students must always be in standard school attire except on special dress days. The only other St. Mark branded clothing allowed during the school day are the approved uniform sweatshirts. If students choose to wear an extra layer under their school shirt, it must be white.

The following protocol is for students out of compliance on a regular school day:

EC-5<sup>th</sup> Grade-

- 1<sup>st</sup> time- warning.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> time- written notice on behavior sheet, Renweb notice.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> time- student sent to office to call home; parent must come to the school with proper clothing for their child, Renweb notice.

Middle School-

- 1<sup>st</sup> time- warning, Renweb notice.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> time- sanction issued, Renweb notice.
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> time-sanction issued, and student is sent to office to call home; parent must come to the school with proper clothing for their child, Renweb notice.
- Uniform violations reset quarterly.
  - All sweaters and vests should have the family name clearly marked on the inside of the clothing item.
  - All uniform regulations and guidelines are subject to the discretion of the school administrators.
  - Students may wear the official St. Mark logo uniform sweatshirts with their school uniform on Monday – Thursday and may not be worn on Mass liturgical days. It is an optional item for girls and boys, Preschool-8<sup>th</sup> grades. A uniform shirt must be worn underneath. A sweater must be worn on all Mass liturgical days.

- EC-5<sup>th</sup> grade girls have the option of wearing a skort, shorts, or jumper on Monday – Thursdays with either the Peter Pan shirt or polo shirt. All shirts must have an official logo. The jumper must be worn on liturgical days. Shirts must be tucked into the skort.
- Middle School boys and girls have the option of wearing the green polo shirt with the official school logo on Monday – Thursdays instead of the school sweater or sweatshirt. The polo shirt must be tucked in to boys' pants and girls' skirts. The white shirt needs to be worn with a sweater or sweatshirt. **The white shirt and vest/sweater must be worn on liturgical days.**
- On cold days, girls may wear only solid black, grey, or white leggings/tights under their jumpers/skirts.



### **Boys Uniform (Preschool –Kindergarten):**

**Pants:** Dark grey uniform pants. The formal uniform of pants, shirt, sweater must be worn on Liturgical days.



**Shorts:** The walking shorts are uniform gray without cuffs. Length regulation is no shorter than 2 inches above the knee. Twill walking shorts with “all-around” elastic may be worn. Walking shorts may be worn only in the first and last grading periods. Walking shorts may not be worn on Liturgical days.



**Shirts:** Yellow, long or short-sleeved, cotton Oxford or knit polo, imprinted with the green school logo. The yellow uniform knit polo shirt imprinted with the green school logo is worn with the walking shorts. Shirts must be tucked in to shorts or pants.



**Sweater:** Dark green long sleeved pullover or buttoned cardigan with the school logo embroidered in gold. **A sweater is required for Mass liturgical days.** Optional on regular school days. Monday -Thursday, the optional St. Mark official logo uniform sweatshirts may be worn.



**Shoes & Socks:** Solid black tennis shoes with dark rubber soles. Velcro is required in PK3 and PK4. Velcro or shoelace required in TK/Kindergarten. No logos, characters, or lights.

Black or dark gray crew socks. No logos. No low ankle socks.



Students in preschool through kindergarten do not change clothes or shoes for P.E. classes.



**Girls Uniform (Preschool – Kindergarten):**

**Jumpers:** Uniform green/gray plaid. Length regulation: No shorter than the top of the kneecap. **The formal uniform of jumper, shirt, sweater must be worn on Mass liturgical days.**



**Modesty Shorts:** Modesty shorts must be worn under the jumper (dark green knit shorts with “all-around” elastic are recommended). Modesty shorts should not fall below the hemline of the uniform jumper.



**Skort:** Uniform green/gray plaid 2-pleat skort may be worn Monday -Thursday, year-round. Yellow knit polo or Peter Pan shirt with official logo must be tucked in skort. **Skort may not be worn on Mass liturgical days. (No picture shown)**

**Shirts:** Yellow, long or short-sleeved, Peter Pan or Oxford collar. Girls have the option of wearing the yellow uniform blouse, or a yellow uniform knit polo shirt imprinted with the green school logo, with walking shorts or skort. Shirts must be tucked in to shorts or skorts.



**Sweater:** Dark green, long-sleeve pullover or buttoned cardigan with the school logo embroidered in gold is

required for **Mass liturgical days** and is optional on regular school days. Monday -Thursday, the optional St. Mark logo official uniform sweatshirts may be worn.



**Shoes:** Solid white tennis shoes with rubber soles. Velcro is required in PK3 and PK4. Velcro or shoelace required in TK/Kindergarten. No logos, characters, or lights.

**Socks:** White, gray, black, or dark green crew or knee socks. No logos. No low ankle socks. Solid color tights only white, gray, black, or dark green.



**P.E. Uniform Code:** Students in preschool through kindergarten do not change clothes or shoes for P.E. classes.



### **Boys Uniform (grades 1-5):**

Dark gray uniform pants. **The formal uniform of pants, shirt, sweater must be worn on Mass liturgical days.**



**Belt:** A black belt is required.



**Shorts:** Uniform walking shorts. The walking shorts are uniform gray without cuffs. Length regulation is no shorter than 2 inches above the knee. Twill walking shorts with "all-around" elastic may be worn. Walking shorts may be worn only in the first and last grading periods. **Walking shorts may not be worn on Mass liturgical days.**



**Shirts:** Yellow, long or short-sleeved, cotton Oxford or knit polo, imprinted with the green school logo. The yellow uniform knit polo shirt imprinted with the green school logo is worn with the walking shorts. Shirts must be tucked in to shorts or pants.



**Sweater:** Dark green, long-sleeve pullover or buttoned cardigan with the school logo embroidered in gold. **A sweater is required for Mass liturgical days.** Optional on regular school days. Monday -Thursday, the optional St. Mark official logo uniform sweatshirts may be worn.



**Shoes:** Must be classic polish finish, tie or slip-on shoe, in black. Non-marking rubber or leather dark soles. No suede, topsiders, Sperry's, or tennis shoes.



**Socks:** Black or dark gray crew socks. No logos. No low ankle socks.

**P.E. Uniform Code:** Students in grades 1-4 wear their school uniforms to P.E. class and change into athletic shoes. Students in grade 5 wear the uniform P.E. shorts (no shorter than 2 inches above the knee), either a plain white or gray t-shirt or a St. Mark spirit t-shirt, and athletic shoes. All students in grades 1-5 must have a green nylon P.E. bag. See specifics below. Items purchased in the Lion's Den spirit store that meet the P.E. uniform criteria are acceptable.

P.E. shorts are not required in grades 1-4. Students in grade 5 must wear regulation green P.E. shorts. (no shorter than 2 inches above the knee). No modesty shorts allowed in PE.

P.E. shirts are not required in grades 1-4. Students in grade 5 must wear either a plain white or gray t-shirt or a St. Mark spirit t-shirt for P.E. class.

During the colder months, students in grades 5 have the option to wear sweatpants/sweatshirts imprinted with the school logo from the school spirit store, or sweatpants/sweatshirts in any solid color during P.E.

All students in grades 1-5 must wear athletic shoes with non-marking soles for P.E. class. No shoes with wheels. Must be Velcro or shoelace. When not in use, P.E. shoes are kept in the P.E.

All students in grades 1-5 must have a green nylon P.E. bag (purchased through the school). P.E. shoes are kept in the P.E. bag when not in use.



### Girls Uniform (grades 1-5):

**Jumpers:** Uniform green/gray plaid. Length regulation: No shorter than the top of the kneecap. **The formal uniform of jumper, shirt, sweater must be worn on Mass liturgical days.**



**Modesty Shorts:** Modesty shorts must be worn under the jumper (dark green knit shorts with “all-around” elastic are recommended). Modesty shorts should not fall below the hemline of the uniform jumper.



**Skort:** Uniform green/gray plaid 2-pleat skort may be worn Monday -Thursday, year-round. Yellow knit polo or Peter Pan shirt with official logo must be tucked in skort. **Skort may not be worn on Mass liturgical days.** (Picture not shown)

**Shirts:** Yellow, long or short-sleeved, Peter Pan or Oxford collar. Girls have the option of wearing the yellow uniform blouse, or a yellow uniform knit polo shirt imprinted with the green school logo, with walking shorts or skort. Shirts must be tucked in to shorts or skorts.



**Sweater:** Dark green, long-sleeve pullover or buttoned cardigan with the school logo embroidered in gold is **required for Mass liturgical days and is optional on regular school days.** Monday -Thursday, the optional St. Mark logo official uniform sweatshirts may be worn.



**Shoes:** Leather black/white saddle Oxford shoes. No tennis shoe “look-alikes.” Non-marking rubber or leather soles.



**Socks:** White, gray, black, or dark green crew or knee socks. No logos. No low ankle socks. Solid color tights only white, gray, black, or dark green.



Students in grades 1-4 wear their school uniforms to P.E. class and change into athletic shoes. Students in grade 5 wear the uniform P.E. shorts (no shorter than 2 inches above the knee), either a plain white or gray t-shirt or a St. Mark spirit t-shirt, and athletic shoes. All students in grades 1-5 must have a green nylon P.E. bag. See specifics below. Items purchased in the Lion’s Den spirit store that meet the P.E. uniform criteria are acceptable.

P.E. shorts are not required in grades 1-4. Students in grades 5 must wear regulation green P.E. shorts (no shorter than 2 inches above the knee). Modesty shorts are not allowed in PE.

P.E. shirts are not required in grades 1-4. Students in grade 5 must wear either a plain white or gray t-shirt or a St. Mark spirit t-shirt for P.E. class.

During the colder months, students in grades 5 have the option to wear sweatpants/sweatshirts imprinted with the school logo from the school spirit store, or sweatpants/sweatshirts in any solid color during P.E.

All students in grades 1-5 must wear athletic shoes with non-marking soles for P.E. No shoes with wheels. Must be Velcro or shoe laced. When not in use, P.E. shoes are kept in the P.E. bag.

All students in grades 1-5 must have a green nylon P.E. bag (purchased through the school). P.E. shoes are kept in the P.E. bag when not in use.



### **Boys Uniform (grades 6-8):**

**Pants:** Dark gray uniform pants. **The formal uniform of pants, shirt, sweater must be worn on Mass liturgical days.**



**Belt:** A black belt is required.



**Shirts:** White, long, or short-sleeved, cotton Oxford cloth or knit, or short sleeve forest green polo shirt with official school logo. A sweater or sweatshirt must be worn with white shirts. Green shirts may be worn without a sweater. Shirts must be tucked in to pants with a belt. **Formal uniform of pants, belt, sweater, white shirt must be worn on Mass liturgical days.**



**Sweater:** Dark green, long-sleeve V-neck pullover or V-neck sweater vest with the official school logo embroidered in white. **A sweater and white shirt are required for Mass liturgical days.** A sweater must be worn with white shirts but not with the green shirt option on regular school days. Monday -Thursday, the optional St. Mark official logo uniform sweatshirts may be worn. A school shirt must be worn under the sweatshirt.



**Shoes:** Must be classic polish finish, tie or slip-on shoe, in black. Non-marking rubber or leather dark soles. No suede, topsiders, Sperry's, or tennis shoes. Must be classic polish finish, tie or slip-on shoe, in black. Non-



marking rubber or leather dark soles. No suede, topsiders, Sperry's, or tennis shoes.

**Socks:** Black or dark gray crew socks. No logos. No low ankle socks.



**P.E. Uniform Code:** Students in grades 6-8 wear the uniform P.E. shorts, either a plain white or gray t-shirt, or a St. Mark spirit t-shirt, and athletic shoes. All students in grades 6-8 must have a green nylon P.E. bag. Students are responsible for placing their shoes in their assigned PE locker. See specifics below. Items purchased in the Lion's Den spirit store that meet the P.E. uniform criteria are acceptable.

Students in grades 6-8 must wear regulation green P.E. shorts. (no shorter than 2 inches above the knee). Modesty shorts are not allowed in PE.



PE Shirt: Students may wear either a plain white or gray t-shirt or a St. Mark spirit t-shirt for P.E. class.

During the colder months, students in grades 6-8 have the option to wear sweatpants/sweatshirts imprinted with the school logo from the school spirit store, or sweatpants/sweatshirts in any solid color during P.E.

Students in grades 6-8 must wear athletic shoes with non-marking soles for P.E. class. No shoes with wheels. When not in use, P.E. shoes are kept in the P.E. bag. Students are responsible for placing their shoes in their assigned PE locker.

Students in grades 6-8 must have a green nylon P.E. bag (purchased through the school). P.E. shoes are kept in the P.E. bag when not in use.



### **Girls Uniform (grades 6-8):**

**Skirts:** Uniform green/gray plaid. Length regulation: No shorter than the top of the kneecap.



**Modesty Shorts:** Modesty shorts must be worn under the jumper (dark green knit shorts with "all-around" elastic are recommended). Modesty shorts should not fall below the hemline of the uniform jumper.



**Shirts:** White, long, or short-sleeved, cotton Oxford cloth or knit, or short sleeve forest green polo shirt with official school logo. A sweater or sweatshirt must be worn with white shirts. Green shirts may be worn without a sweater. Shirts must be tucked in to skirt. **Formal uniform of skirt, sweater, white shirt must be worn on Mass liturgical days.**



**Sweaters:** Dark green, long-sleeve V-neck pullover or V-neck sweater vest with the official school logo embroidered in white. **A sweater and white shirt are required for Mass liturgical days.** A sweater must be worn with white shirts but not with the green shirt option on regular school days. Monday -Thursday, the optional St. Mark official logo uniform sweatshirts may be worn. A school shirt must be worn under the sweatshirt.



**Shoes:** Leather black/white saddle Oxford shoes. No tennis shoe "look-alikes." Non-marking rubber or leather soles.



**Socks:** White, gray, black, or dark green crew or knee socks. No logos. No low ankle socks. Solid color tights only white, gray, black, or dark green.



**PE Uniform code:** Students in grades 6-8 wear the uniform P.E. shorts (no shorter than 2 inches above the knee), either a plain white or gray t-shirt, or a St. Mark spirit t-shirt, and athletic shoes. All students in grades 6-8 must have a green nylon P.E. bag. See specifics below. Items purchased in the Lion's Den spirit store that meet the P.E. uniform criteria are acceptable.

Students in grades 6-8 must wear regulation green P.E. shorts. (no shorter than 2 inches above the knee). Modesty shorts are not allowed in PE.



**P.E. Shirts:** Students may wear either a plain white or gray t-shirt or a St. Mark spirit t-shirt.

**Optional:** During the colder months, students in grades 6-8 have the option to wear sweatpants/sweatshirts imprinted with the school logo from the school spirit store, or sweatpants/sweatshirts in any solid color during P.E.

Students in grades 6-8 must wear athletic shoes with non-marking soles for P.E. class. No shoes with wheels. When not in use, P.E. shoes are kept in the P.E. bag. Students are responsible for placing their shoes in their assigned PE locker.

Students in grades 6-8 must have a green nylon P.E. bag (purchased through the school). P.E. shoes are kept in the P.E. bag when not in use.

The outward image and general appearance of the Catholic school student has traditionally been one that is an excellent reflection on the student, his/her family, and the school. Students should stand out for their character and not their outward appearance.

Students who have received written notification of non-compliance with these standards have three (3) business days to comply. Students who choose to not comply by the end of the three (3) day grace period may not re-enter school until the standards have been met.

## CONDUCT STANDARDS

**Philosophy of Discipline:** One of the most important responsibilities of the Catholic school is the task of integrating faith and life in order to educate students to appreciate and practice good citizenship. Respect for the rights of others, honesty, good sportsmanship, cooperativeness, kindness, and a ready acceptance of other persons as equals are representative characteristics of the Catholic Christian way of life and good citizenship.

The terms punishment and discipline are not synonymous, nor are they correctly used interchangeably. Whereas punishment attempts to control people by some kind of force or reprisal, discipline is an active teaching process which at its best helps students figure out how to cope with difficulties. With punishment the teacher assumes responsibility for the students and imposes a make-up-for-it consequence. Discipline places the burden of responsibility on the student where it belongs and provides a supportive process for helping the student make whatever changes are necessary to resolve the situation. In this sense, discipline sets consistent, firm, and reasonable limits to behavior in line with student and group needs and with appropriate expectations of student and group behavior. It is the term used to describe the process of growing up and becoming productive members of society.

It is the role and the responsibility of parents, as the first and best educators of their children, as well as teachers, to facilitate this type of growth and development of children. It is also the role and responsibility of parents to know what their children are viewing online outside of school hours.

**Behavioral Expectations:** All students are expected to obey school rules and to develop the skills of personal responsibility and polite interaction with others. When a student disturbs the teaching/learning

environment of the school and/or is disruptive to others, school personnel will take appropriate action in order to promote the individual student's positive development and self-discipline. However, the primary consideration in all disciplinary decisions is the obligation of the school to maintain an acceptable learning environment and a safe place for all students.

Parent notification remains the cornerstone of a sound disciplinary program, with the school and home working together to develop the best behavior for each child. Most minor behavior issues are handled by the classroom teachers and other school personnel. A more serious disregard for school and classroom rules may warrant communication with parents, detention, a parent conference, or suspension. Repeated misbehavior or a single serious incident may warrant the child being sent to the Assistant Principal's Office, being sent home immediately, a parent conference, suspension and/or expulsion.

At the sole discretion of the chief administrator, a student may be placed on probation or suspension for conduct that, in the chief administrator's judgment, merits probation, suspension, or expulsion. Such conduct may take place on campus or off campus and may include, but is not limited to, serious violations of school rules and continued misconduct after previous consequences. Parents will be advised of probation, suspension, or a behavioral plan.

**Discipline and Privacy:** Teachers will keep confidential information entrusted to them so long as no one's life, health, or safety is at stake or in a need to know situation. Prompt parent notification would occur if otherwise. All disciplinary actions that affect any student will be kept in confidence with that student and their family. At no time will the school discuss the disciplinary situation of another student with anyone else nor the consequences assigned to another student with anyone else. In certain cases, when multiple students are involved in a single incident, some sharing of information may be necessary, but the school will not share any information concerning another student.

**Behavior of School Functions Outside the School Day:** Behavior policies that apply at school or on school premises will also apply at school functions after hours or off school premises. The same disciplinary policy and standards that apply to students while on school premises during the school day will apply to students while off school premises or after school hours at any school function.

**Field Trip Privilege:** Grades 6, 7, & 8 - If a student receives more than 2 detentions or an in/out of school suspension throughout the year, participation in field trips will be considered on an individual basis by administration but could result in the loss of field trip privileges, including but not limited to grade-level field trips, Pines, High School visits, and off-campus service projects.

Grades 1-5 – The privilege to attend off-campus activities will be determined on an individual basis dependent upon a student's behavior sheets. If a student receives either an in/out of school suspension throughout the year, participation in future field trips or off-campus activities will be decided by the administration.

If any student receives either an in-school or out-of-school suspension throughout the year, participation in school-related activities will be decided by the administration. If the student is not allowed to participate in the field trip/school-related activity, they are not allowed on the campus for any activities that day.

**Code of Conduct-Student:** Setting consistent guidelines and age appropriate expectations provides a foundation of security and encourages the necessary steps toward sensible, ethical, and moral decision making. The school *code of conduct* incorporates six behavior standards that, when observed and followed, will help ensure a successful school experience and enhance the process of self-discipline. Because work habits are

behaviors that will influence the student's total development, and because personal appearance standards will enhance the total profile of a St. Mark student, these have been included in the general code of conduct expected of each student who attends this school.

### **Behavior Standards:**

1. St. Mark students will display respect for others in speech, action, and manner. St. Mark students will maintain orderly and polite behavior, including abiding by specific school related rules while using classrooms, hallways, bathrooms, gymnasiums, play areas, field, arrival and dismissal areas and other common areas of the church and school. Behaviors such as pulling chairs out from a student, making fun of another student's academic ability or grades, referring to another person by race, gender, ethnicity, or using a cultural accent in a derogatory perceptive way is not allowed.
2. St. Mark students will display respect and prayerful participation in church and liturgical events.
3. St. Mark students will display respect for church and school property, and the property of others. Students will properly maintain the areas they use. Students will respect the personal and school areas of school personnel.
4. St. Mark students will be academically prepared for class daily including having all appropriate learning materials, having them ready when class begins, completing assignments on time, actively participating in class lessons, and arriving to classes on time. Writing on binders, folders, spirals, book covers, and pencil bags is prohibited. Students will not receive grade credit for late work. Students are responsible for presenting their own work, not the work of any others.
5. St. Mark students will be in complete uniform daily (unless for designated special dress privileges) following the specific uniform regulations described in this handbook. Students will be expected to adhere to the personal appearance regulations as outlined in this handbook.
6. St. Mark students are prohibited from bringing or having in their possession, electronic, laser, or recording devices. These devices include but are not limited to smart watches, laser pointers, electronic games, and/or cell phones. If devices are found or reported, the device will be confiscated and kept by the school Principal until the parent picks up. The second confiscation of any prohibited device will result in the parent meeting with the principal and a \$25 fee. The school reserves the right to search for all confiscated electronic devices. The school assumes no liability for any damaged or lost electronic devices brought to school.

In situations that involve serious violation of school or civil regulations, disciplinary action will move immediately into a process of Disciplinary Consequences & Procedures, as detailed below. Individual cases of inappropriate actions that are either severe and/or consistent will be dealt with on an individual basis and appropriate action up to and including expulsion will be decided accordingly by the school administration.

**Disciplinary Consequences & Procedures:** A positive approach to the process of growth in self-discipline is essential. The faculty and administration adhere to the premise that students at St. Mark Catholic School display acceptable and often commendable behavior. When individual cases of inappropriate actions arise that are severe, persistent, present endangerment, or go against the code of conduct, such cases will be dealt with individually. Disciplinary procedure will involve the student, the parents, the teachers, the Assistant Principal and/or Principal, and/or the Pastor as needed.

We are going to "catch students being good!" Each teacher will have a supply of "Caught Being Good" slips and may distribute them to students of any grade level for positive behavior. Students will place their slips in containers in their classrooms. Drawings for special privileges will be held at regular intervals. Students can also

be recognized for going above and beyond in living out our mission statement and their actions will be recognized. Positive actions will be relayed to parents.

There may be situations when other methods of positive or preventive reinforcement have not proven effective. There may be situations when undesired behavior is consistent, disruptive, or intentionally harmful to self or others. At these times, students will have their behavior noted either on their behavior sheet and/or in Family Portal, receive a detention, or parents will be contacted.

Detentions are conducted in the following manner:

- Detentions are served on an assigned Tuesday (only twice a month) at 7:00am with the Computer Literacy Teacher. Students, on the assigned day, will report to the Computer Lab on time.
- Students in grades 1-5 will serve detention if six or more checks are received during the week or if an action is seen as going against student conduct standards severe enough to warrant detention.
- Students in grades 6-8 will serve detention if they receive more than two sanctions during the grading period or if an action is seen as going against student conduct standards severe enough to warrant detention. If within a grading period a student receives more than five sanctions, he/she will serve another detention and mandatory parent meetings as described below. At the teacher's discretion a detention may be issued immediately.
- To make this a learning session, students will spend their detention in written or oral reflection (age appropriate) with the teacher. They will reflect on the issues, problem areas, and steps for improvement as they relate to the situation that led to the detention. Parents are asked to review and reinforce this reflection at home. At the end of detention, their completed Reflection form will be sent home for a parent signature and needs to be returned to the Detention-Duty teacher by 8 A.M. the next day. Failure to return signed form may result in student serving another detention.
- Unless otherwise indicated, detentions are held for 30 minutes. Parents will need to make necessary arrangements for detentions.
- If the student fails to report on time for the scheduled detention, a notice will be sent to the parents regarding further actions.

Suspensions are conducted in the following manner:

- Suspensions may be assigned as an in-school suspension or an out-of-school suspension from 1-3 days.
- If suspended, the student may not participate in any extracurricular activities during the duration of the suspension, including weekends.

The following are the levels of intervention, problem solving, and decision-making that are part of the disciplinary procedure. Severity of action may constitute a necessity to begin the procedure at advanced steps of the sequence.

**Step One:** When a student has received two detentions, a mandatory team conference will be scheduled to define and discuss areas of concern and to initiate an action plan for improvement.

**Step Two:** When a student continues to receive additional detentions or continues to display difficulty adhering to any item in the code of conduct, a mandatory team conference is scheduled to include parents, teachers, Assistant Principal and/or Principal. At the discretion of the principal the student may or may not be included in this conference. Areas of concern will be identified and discussed. A specific plan of action and/or formal recommendations will be instituted to include a specific time frame for improvement.

**Step Three:** Persistent or severe infractions as well as cases where earlier steps of the disciplinary procedure are ineffective will constitute a mandatory team conference with parents, teaching

staff, administration, and the Pastor. A decision, based on evidence or prediction of success or lack of success for the student at this school, will be made. Probation, suspension, recommendation for another educational program, expulsion, or denial of re-registration for the following school year are the considerations that will be reviewed and decided based on the Diocese of Dallas Handbook of Policies and Procedures.

The following violations constitute severity, and the disciplinary procedure will be instituted immediately:

- Physical or verbal aggression or harassment toward others.
- Conduct (inside or outside the framework of the school day) that is detrimental to the reputation of the school.
- Severity of action, inside or outside the framework of the school day, (including but not exclusive of use/possession of alcohol, drugs, tobacco in any form, weapons, or affiliation with gang groups) that endangers self or others.
- Immorality in speech or action; inside or outside the framework of the school day.

In some instances, where it would be in the best interest of the student, the school, or others, the student may be excluded from school immediately. The parent/guardian will be contacted and must come to pick up the student from school. Multiple situations will warrant a conference to discuss continuation of the school/parent partnership.

**Corporal Punishment:** Diocesan policy, local school policy, and Administrative regulation dictate a strict observance of no corporal punishment.

### **Anti-Bullying Policy:**

Bullying is defined as an act which:

1. Persistently hurts another individual either.
  - a. Physically (pushing, hitting, kicking, spitting, etc.)
  - b. Verbally (teasing, name-calling, using sarcasm, threatening, spreading rumors, etc.)
  - c. Indirectly (intimidating, tormenting, using hurtful gestures, making hurtful written comments, damaging property, etc.)
  - d. Through use of technology (cyber bullying – using any communication device such as e-mail, cell phone, camera, chat rooms, text messaging, or websites)
2. Is deliberate and sustained.
3. Is intended to isolate, hurt, or humiliate another individual, or to increase social standing at someone else's expense.
4. Is unprovoked.

Cyber bullying is bullying through e-mail, instant messaging, chat room exchanges, website posts, digital messages, text messages, or images sent to a cellular phone or personal digital assistant. Cyber bullying, like traditional bullying, involves an imbalance of power, aggression, and a negative action that is often repeated.

Counseling and corrective discipline by the principal, school counselor, and/or law enforcement, when necessary, will be used to change the behavior of the perpetrator and remediate the impact on the victim. This includes appropriate interventions, restoration of a positive climate, and support for victims and others impacted by the violation. False reports, retaliation for harassment, intimidation, or bullying also constitute violations of this policy. The following steps will be taken when dealing with bullying incidents:

1. Isolated or initial incidents which do not constitute bullying will be handled by the teacher in charge at the time of the incident. Depending on the severity of the incident, the principal and/or parents may be notified. Disciplinary guidelines set forth in the school handbook will be followed.

2. Whenever possible, any incidents which may constitute bullying should be reported immediately to the teacher in charge at the time of the incident. The teacher in charge at the time of the incident will immediately deal with those involved.
3. In some cases, students may choose to report the incident to a different adult in the building, such as their homeroom teacher. If so, students are encouraged to report as soon as possible following the incident.
4. The teacher in charge should be aware of any bullying incidents. Students engaging in bullying behavior will be disciplined according to the school discipline policy. Depending on the severity and length of the incident, parents may be notified, as well as other teachers who have the students involved in classes afterward. This will ensure that the incident does not continue when students proceed to the next class.
5. If the bullying does not cease after the student has been disciplined, parents will be brought in for a meeting with administration, and further action will be taken according to the school discipline policy.
6. The consequences for bullying will vary depending on the situation, and may include, but not limited to writing apology letters, community service, after school detention, in school and/or out of school suspension, expulsion, and referral to law enforcement.

In addition to the above outlined steps, the Anti-bullying policy requires the following:

1. Teachers and the School Counselor at St. Mark Catholic School:
  - a. Teach their students what constitutes bullying, effective strategies to avoid being bullied, and ways to report bullying.
  - b. Give their students opportunities to role play and practice the strategies taught to avoid bullying and to report incidents.
  - c. Teach their students strategies that can be used when students find themselves as bystanders to an incident. These strategies should also be practiced by the students under the guidance of the classroom teacher.
  - d. Every incident will be taken seriously. The teacher will determine if the report is unfounded or if further action should be taken.
2. Parents of St. Mark Catholic School students are expected to:
  - a. Report concerns of bullying behavior to their child's appropriate teacher as soon as possible following the incident. If concerns are not handled sufficiently at this level, a report should be made to the assistant principal.
  - b. Understand and support the school's anti-bullying policy and actively encourage their child to avoid bullying including cyber bullying. This includes encouraging their child (after an incident) to respond to the situation by using non-bullying behavior.
3. Students at St. Mark Catholic School should:
  - a. Report incidents of bullying they experience or witness to the teacher in charge at the time of the incident or to another staff member as soon as possible following the incident.
  - b. Whenever possible, stand up for the student being bullied and refrain from joining in bullying behavior.
  - c. Treat others with the respect and dignity that is expected of any Catholic school student.
  - d. Take pride in their school environment and play an active role in creating a positive learning atmosphere for all students.

**Harassment Policy:** St. Mark Catholic School is committed to a policy of non-discrimination within all school programs and activities. Harassment of employees or students is not condoned in a Christian environment and is strictly prohibited at St. Mark Catholic School. All allegations of harassment will be taken seriously and promptly investigated. Harassment that is either severe and/or consistent will be dealt with on an

individual basis and appropriate action up to and including expulsion will be decided accordingly by the school administration.

Harassment includes, but is not limited to the following behavior:

- Verbal conduct such as epithets, offensive derogatory language or comments, slurs or unwanted advances, imitations, or comments.
- Visual contact such as derogatory and/or sexually oriented posters, photography, cartoons, drawings, or gestures.
- Physical contact such as assault, unwanted touching, blocking normal movements, or interfering with work, study, or play.
- Threats and demands to submit to inappropriate requests as a condition of continued employment or grades or other benefits or to avoid some other loss and offers of benefits in return for inappropriate favors.
- Retaliation for having reported or threatened to report harassment.

Engagement in social media may result in disciplinary actions including suspension and/or expulsion if the content includes defamatory comments and/or pictures regarding a Catholic school, school personnel, other students, the parish, or the diocese.

Any student or teacher who believes he or she has been the subject of harassment shall report the alleged harassment in writing to the school Principal. The principal will take whatever actions he/she deems necessary to investigate the complaint, including but not limited to interviewing the accused person, the accusing person, and any witnesses. The principal will decide within thirty days of receiving the complaint.

**Grievance Policy:** The St. Mark Catholic School Grievance Policy is based on the premise that charitable communication solves most problems.

Parent Concerns or Complaints:

The Diocese generally supports a collaborative approach to resolving parental concerns or complaints regarding school employees. Accordingly, such concerns or complaints should generally be addressed to the affected employee first to allow an opportunity for open communication and direct problem-solving. If the concern or complaint cannot be resolved directly with the affected employee, it should be presented to the employee's supervisor (or the chief administrator), preferably in writing. If the complaint or concern is escalated to the supervisor or chief administrator, the affected employee will be notified of the concern or complaint and provided an opportunity to provide explanation and additional information. In parochial schools, the decision of the chief administrator as to resolution of the concern or complaint-acting in concert with the pastor when necessary-shall be final. In diocesan governed schools and private schools, the decision of the chief administrator as to resolution of the concern or complaint shall be final.

**Confidentiality:** Confidentiality is of paramount importance to the grievance process, and all participants must take all reasonable steps necessary to ensure that the facts of a grievance, the substance of any communications during the grievance processes, and the results of any grievance are not disclosed to or discussed with persons other than those directly involved in the grievance process.

**Parental Cooperation & Behavior:** All members of the school community, including parents and family members, are expected to comply with all school rules and policies while on campus and in communications with the school, be respectful, cooperate with the school with respect to all decisions affecting the student, and avoid behavior which disrupts the orderly administration of the school. A community member's failure to meet these expectations jeopardizes school administration, requires the school to expend limited resources to address

inappropriate and unnecessary behavior, and detracts from the school's core mission and, as a result, may jeopardize a student's continued participation in the school community. At the school's sole discretion, the failure of a student's parents or other family members to comply with these expectations, separate and apart from the student's conduct, may result in suspension or expulsion of the student.

## FACULTY and STAFF

The success of the St. Mark Catholic School program is directly attributed to the "excellence in education" standards of the entire faculty and staff. Each member of the faculty is selected for their qualifications and expertise in their teaching fields, as well as their commitment to effective instructional styles and life-long learning. Staff members have been recognized and awarded on local, regional, and national levels for their excellence in teaching and innovative instructional programs. Please refer to the school website at [www.stmcs.net](http://www.stmcs.net) for a complete faculty/staff list.

## GOVERNANCE, ADMINISTRATION, MANAGEMENT

The **Bishop** is the chief administrator of the Diocese. He is responsible for educating the faithful in the teachings of the Church. Catholic schools are part of his educational responsibility. In all things relative to education in the Diocese, the Bishop has ultimate authority.

The **Superintendent** is the delegate of the Bishop in matters relative to Catholic education. The role of the superintendent is to provide spiritual and professional support to the principals, to ensure adherence to diocesan policies, and to maintain a significant level of communication with the school communities.

The **Pastor** of the parish is the chief administrator of the parish and is canonically responsible for the total operation of all organizations within his parish, including the parochial school. The pastor is both spiritually and fiscally responsible for the school. The pastor delegates to the principal the responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school.

The **School Advisory Council (S.A.C.)** is a body consisting of voting members appointed by the Pastor and functions under the aegis of the Diocesan Board. The Pastor, Principal and Assistant Principal are ex-officio members. Local advisory councils act in an advisory role to the Principal and Pastor in the areas of policy, finance, strategic planning, operational effectiveness, and promotion of Catholic education. To help with communication between the school and parents, the board represents current students in all grades, alumni, teachers, administration, and Parish staff. If a parent has a discussion point, please contact the SAC President for them to bring the conversation to the next meeting.

SAC Board members are listed on the School Advisory Council page on the school website at [www.stmcs.net](http://www.stmcs.net).

The principal of the school is responsible for the overall day-to-day operation of the school, including curriculum development, staff development and formation, and maintaining the physical and spiritual well-being of the school. The principal is responsible for fulfilling and enforcing policies of the diocesan and local school boards. The principal is directly responsible to the Pastor of the parish.

**Contract Law:** Catholic schools function under contract law. By the act of registering at the school, parents and students agree to pursue the educational objectives and abide by the practices of the school as stated in the registration application, the Parent-Student Handbook, and local and Diocesan policies.

St. Mark Catholic School abides by the principle of subsidiary, which means that conflict is resolved at the lowest possible level. For example, areas of concern and efforts to resolve conflict must be directly (and in person)

addressed to the teacher, staff member, or administrator involved before attempting to appeal to higher levels of governance.

**Student Records:** St. Mark Catholic School adheres to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act regarding student records. Student records are kept locked in the school office and are treated as confidential.

Parental Access to Student Records:

Parents will be allowed to inspect and review their student's education records, at a date and time convenient to the school, unless a court has ordered otherwise. Records will always be reviewed in the presence of school personnel appointed by the chief administrator. The school may provide copies of the records and, if it does so, may charge a fee.

In the event a court order is in place which limits a parent's access to a student's educational records, or which otherwise limits the contact a parent may have with the school regarding the student, the family **must** provide a complete, final, signed copy of the order to the school when the student is enrolled. If such a court order is issued after a student has enrolled, the family **must** provide a complete, final, signed copy of the order to the school as soon as it is signed by the judge.

The school will, when and to the extent reasonably possible, honor restrictions on access to educational records imposed by such an order. However, school personnel are not family lawyers, and it is not the school's responsibility to enforce court orders. (See #4 in Appendix 1 titled: "Reimbursement for School Costs and Attorney's Fees" for additional information regarding school involvement in family custody disputes)

Schools will generally not release a student's records to third parties without the written consent of a student's parent or legally responsible adult. As an exception to this rule, a school may disclose student records to or for:

- a) School officials with legitimate educational interest.
- b) Other schools to which a student is transferring.
- c) Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes.
- d) Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student.
- e) Organizations conduct certain studies for or on behalf of the school.
- f) Accrediting organizations.
- g) To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena.
- h) Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- i) State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

If a specific reason exists to further limit access to a student's educational records, the student's parent or legally responsible adult must provide a specific, written request that explains the basis for the additional restriction to the school's chief administrator. The chief administrator, in his or her sole discretion, will determine whether implementing special procedures for a student's records is appropriate and reasonably feasible on a case-by-case basis.

It is the responsibility of the parents to share any official custodial information determined through the courts. Official custodial agreements will be kept in a confidential file in the office of the principal.

Permanent Student Records:

For students in grades pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup> grade, their cumulative record will be retained 5 years from the date of withdrawal or graduation. Attendance records will be retained for 5 years. In addition to the data concerning academic progress and attendance, a Permanent Student Record shall include the following:

- Legal name of student
- Place and date of birth

- Gender of student
- Name and address of parent (guardian)
- Religious preference
- School entrance date
- Date and place of Baptism, First Eucharist, and Confirmation (if applicable)
- Standardized test results
- Verification of required immunizations

Transcript requests must be submitted in writing to the school.

- Records of students transferring to other schools will only be sent through the U.S. Mail or faxed directly to the new school. No records will be given to parents to transport to the new school.
- No records will be sent to transferring schools of students whose financial commitment is in arrears.
- The school reserves the right to charge a shipping and processing fee for extra records sent to more than one home address.

**Accreditation:** Catholic Schools in the State of Texas are accredited by the Texas Catholic Conference Education Department with the approval of the Texas Education Agency. The official documents of accreditation are posted in the hall outside the school office.

## HEALTH and SAFETY

### Health History and Emergency Cards:

- Each student must have a **current** health history form on file in the nurse's office and in the Family Portal.
- Emergency contact and pick-up permission information for each student must be current in Facts Family Portal. Families must provide information to locate parents, guardians, or designated emergency contact persons.
- It is essential for parents to keep the information on the health history and emergency cards up to date.
- The school nurse must be advised of all changes to a student's health information.

### Certificate of Immunization:

- A certificate from a duly qualified physician stating that the child has met required immunizations must be presented at the time of registration.
- Failure to comply with immunization requirements will result in the child being restricted from attending school until such requirements are fulfilled.
- Immunizations must be kept up to date as prescribed by the Texas Catholic Conference Education Department.
- Required updates and additions to the immunization record must be reported to the school so a student's permanent health record can be maintained properly.

### Health Screenings:

- Vision and hearing screenings will be done annually on all students in PK4, TK, Kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> grades.
- Spinal screenings will be conducted for female students in grades 5 and 7, and male students in grade 8.
- Students in grades one, three, five, and seven will be screened for Acanthosis Nigricans.
- Referrals are sent to parents whose children exhibit a potential problem in any of the screenings. It is the responsibility of the parents to follow up on the referral with a physician and notify the school of the action taken.

- Records are kept of all screenings on the student health card and reports are made to the Texas Department of Health.

## Medications:

The school nurse will dispense medications according to the following guidelines.

- medication to be administered during the school day, both prescription and over the counter, must be accompanied by an official school medication permission form signed by the parent. These forms are available on the school website and in the school nurse's office.
- Prescription medication will be dispensed only if the medication is sent to school in the prescription bottle with the doctor's instructions printed on the front. Over-the-counter medication must be in the original container with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Medicine must be brought to the school office or given to the school nurse.
- Students may not keep medicine on their person or in their belongings to self-dispense medication of any kind. No exceptions will be made to the medication policy.
- Medication that is expired or left at the end of the school year must be picked up by a parent, or it will be disposed of after 2 weeks.

## Illness/Injury:

- Students with a temperature of 100 degrees or more or with diarrhea may not stay at school and must be picked up in a timely manner.
- Students may not return to school until they have been fever-free, without fever reducing medication, for 24 hours. Students who are sent home during the school day with a fever will not be allowed to return to school the next day as this would not allow for the 24-hour protection of the entire school community.
- Communicable diseases must be reported to the school nurse as soon as possible.
- Return to school will be set in accordance with regulations for illness or disease and/or a doctor's clearance letter.
- A parent note requesting a student's exclusion from PE classes due to illness or injury is acceptable for a period of up to three consecutive days. After three consecutive days, a doctor's note is required. Students who cannot participate in P.E. may not participate in recess or after school sports or activities, including clubs, band, orchestra, etc. Students may not return to P.E., school sports, or other activities until the exclusion period specified in the doctor's note has ended, or a new doctor's note is provided clearing them for participation.
- Parents will be notified by the school nurse of any concerning injuries that occur during the school day, per the discretion of the school nurse.
- Notifications regarding health alerts will be sent by the school nurse.
- A student who needs to wear tennis shoes due to an injury must provide a doctor's note to the nurse and must wear the approved tennis shoes. Girls must be all white tennis shoes. Boys must be all black tennis shoes.

**Students with life threatening allergies:** Students who have a severe, life-threatening allergy (e.g., food, insect bite/sting allergy) must submit the following to the school nurse:

- Medical Administration form and Allergy Action Plan (found on school website) by the first day of school and accompanying physicians note. All forms previously submitted must be renewed annually at the start of each school year.
- Epinephrine auto-injector and Benadryl

Students with severe allergies who have not submitted an action plan and/or emergency medication will not be able to participate in class parties or activities involving outside food.

Teachers and staff are trained in first aid and EpiPen administration. Teachers are made aware of students in their classes with life-threatening allergies.

“Nut-free” tables are available in the lunchroom for students with severe nut allergies. Students at these tables must have no nuts or nut products packed in their lunches. Students with severe nut allergies should be seated at these lunch tables, unless written permission is given from parents stating otherwise. **Student snacks must be nut free and healthy.**

**Stock Epinephrine Auto-Injectors:** In accordance with Texas Senate Bill 579 that was introduced into law on May 22, 2019, St. Mark Catholic School will maintain a stock supply of Epinephrine auto injectors in the school. The bill gives school nurses and trained, designated school personnel authority to administer an epinephrine auto injector to any student or other individual on school premises whom they believe in good faith is experiencing anaphylaxis.

An epinephrine auto injector is prefilled with epinephrine; the drug of choice for the emergency treatment of severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis) to foods, insect stings/bites, and other allergens.

School nurses and designated school personnel will be assigned and trained on the proper technique of Epinephrine Auto Injector administration.

The Protocol requires that any time an Epinephrine Auto Injector is administered, the individual must be transported via ambulance to the Emergency Room.

If your child has been diagnosed with an allergy/health condition that requires the use of an epinephrine auto injector, it is still your responsibility to provide your child’s own Epinephrine Auto Injector to the school nurse on or before the first day of class, including physician’s orders for treatment and school-specific allergy and medication forms.

**Sharing of Food:** Sharing of food student to student and/or teacher to student is not allowed .

**School Environment:** The school does all that it can to ensure the school environment is favorable to children with asthma or allergies. As far as possible, the school does not use chemicals in science and art lessons that are potential triggers for children with asthma.

## LUNCHROOM and RECESS PROCEDURES

The teachers on duty will make all decisions during the lunch period. At least two teachers will be on lunchroom duty. The Prefecting Lead will designate recess responsibilities. When the Temperature-Heat Index (THI) reaches 95° F, outdoor activity must be limited to 15 minutes, or moved indoors, with proper hydration of the children. When the temperature and/or wind chill is below 32° F, the children will be kept indoors for recess.

### Schedule:

<u>Grades</u>	<u>Lunch</u>	<u>Recess</u>
Kindergarten & TK	10:50-11:25	11:20-11:50
Pre-K	10:50-11:25	Varies by teacher.
Grades 1 & 2	11:30-11:55	11:55-12:20
Grades 3, 4, 5	12:00-12:25	12:25-12:50
Grades 6, 7, 8	12:30-1:00	Wednesday, Friday 1:00-1:30

1. Students will enter the eating area and walk quietly to their assigned tables/area.
2. Students will remain seated and use indoor voices at their tables. They can raise their hand if they need help.  
Students need to raise their hand before they get up for any reason.
3. Carbonated drinks/sodas, caffeine, and Energy drinks are not permitted.
4. If students bring their lunch from home, utensils need to be provided by parents.
5. Sharing food is prohibited. Using another student's lunch account is prohibited.
6. Students do not have access to microwave use.
7. Teachers/Prefectors will bring trashcans to each table while students clean the tables with a damp cloth. At that time, students throw away their trash and return lunch trays, in an orderly fashion.
8. Students will remain at their tables and the teacher on duty will dismiss them when their eating area (tables and floor) is clean.
9. Students will proceed outside in an orderly fashion, walking to the blacktop, field, and ball area.
10. Parents and family members are welcome to eat lunch with their children except for Field Day and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Farewell Luncheon. "Guest Tables" are set up in the back of the cafeterium for parents who visit at lunch. Students may not bring friends with them to the guest table.
11. School and/or cafeteria personnel cannot monitor individual student food orders or expenditures. Parents have the option to complete a lunch restriction form with the lunch service provider. Parents must be confident that their children clearly understand parental expectations and limitations for food selection and spending money on the family account. Participation in the cafeteria program is an option not a requirement.
12. The time for group parties or lunches is outside the school day. We do not allow small or large group lunch parties (i.e. bringing in pizza for a group of students) during the school day. Party decorations are not allowed in the cafeterium or classrooms.
13. Visitors may not use cell phones or electronic devices for calls, pictures, or recordings of any kind while in the facilities, including the hallways, cafeterium, gymnasiums, playground, and field without permission from administration due to privacy requests.

### **General Recess Rules:**

- Students walk from the cafeterium to the play areas in an organized fashion.
- Lunch boxes should be placed in an orderly manner in their designated areas.
- Any uneaten portion of a student's lunch must remain in the lunch box and may not be removed or consumed during recess. Similarly, students may not bring food with them from the cafeteria to the recess area.
- Students may not bring their own toys or equipment to school to be used during the recess period.
- Contact sports, such as football, chase, tag, or red rover are not acceptable recess games in any play area.

### **End of Recess:**

- The teacher on duty blows the whistle to indicate the end of recess.
- Students must stop playing and walk to class lines, picking up their lunchbox, if necessary.
- Students return all equipment to the containers.
- Teachers meet and escort students quietly into the building.
- The prefector will double check the recess area to make sure all equipment has been picked up and returned to the cart.
- The prefector will collect equipment carts and return them to the storage closet.

### **Use of Playground Equipment:**

The enclosed playground area is for use by students in grades PK-5<sup>th</sup> grade. PK<sub>3</sub> and PK<sub>4</sub> are only allowed to play on certain structures. Grades TK - 5 may use all the playground structures & swings. Students use the playground by grade level on a rotating schedule.

### Slides

Only one person is permitted down the slide at a time. Students should go down the slide feet first in a sitting position. Students should not be allowed to walk up the slides. Those students waiting their turn should form a line at the bottom of the steps leading up to the slide.

### Climbing

The large playground structure contains three pieces of climbing equipment. Students are only allowed to climb up this equipment. Climbing down these equipment pieces from the fort area is not permitted.

### Monkey Bars

The monkey bars are for upper body conditioning. Only one student at a time is permitted on the bars. Students waiting their turn should form a line behind the ladder. Students may not swing on the bars, hang upside down, or climb on top of this equipment.

### Swings

One student is permitted per swing. Students should swing facing the playground structures. Pushing students from behind or jumping from the swings is not permitted.

### Support Poles

Several support poles are placed within the playground structures to give stability. Climbing up or sliding down these poles is not permitted.

## **Field and Blacktop Activities:**

### Field

No contact sports are allowed due to there not being an official to supervise the safety and rules of the sport.

### Field Equipment

Field equipment may be used by students K-8 following the manufacturers safety guidelines.

### Blacktop

This area is designed for basketball shooting, four-square, hopscotch, jump rope, or similar organized games.

## **ATHLETIC POLICY**

**Philosophy:** The athletics department of St. Mark Catholic School is a vital part of the total educational system. The goal of the athletics department is to develop the talents of young men and women through competitive athletics while maintaining a strong sense of Christian morality.

At all times, even while losing, the contests the student athletes participate in are GAMES, and as such, should be fun for the participants and spectators alike. Winning is a worthwhile goal when viewed in the proper perspective. Great emphasis will be placed on building teamwork, execution, respect, and discipline rather than on the score.

Participation in athletics is an extension of the classroom environment. The rules of the classroom regarding success, desire, integrity, and perseverance are applicable during competition. These values are essential in a

“commitment to excellence” philosophy. Details about Academic and Conduct qualifications and other important information can be found in the Extra Curricular Activities section of this handbook.

The objective of the St. Mark Catholic School Athletics Department is to provide athletic programs with an emphasis on Christian principles and good sportsmanship at the amateur level. Refer to the [Athletics Handbook](#) on our website for complete details.

**Sportsmanship:** The principle of good sportsmanship is paramount in athletic competition. Coaches, student athletes, parents, nor fans should be permitted to heckle, jeer, demean, or ridicule any team member, opposing team member, or official.

It is the responsibility of the coach to prevent and prohibit any unsportsmanlike conduct of players, parents, and staff members. Inappropriate behavior by coaches, student athletes, or parents may result in suspension from future athletic contests. If you are interested in coaching, please contact the Athletic Director.

**Dallas Parochial League:** St. Mark Catholic School is a participating member of the Dallas Parochial League. Through the DPL, a variety of sports and divisions are offered for grades 5-8. Refer to the [Dallas Parochial League Handbook](#) for complete details.

## EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

St. Mark Catholic School is proudly represented in various sports, academic competition programs, and Student Council. Since these groups carry the name of St. Mark Catholic School, all participants are expected to display, in appearance, speech, and actions, the high standards and philosophies indicative of the school they represent. If deemed necessary by the school administration, disciplinary procedures will be applied to severe neglect of this standard.

We strive to develop the whole child, therefore, we encourage students to participate in a variety of organizations including student government, religious, service, scholastic, as well as other extracurricular organizations. Opportunities to participate in various extracurricular activities will be communicated through Ren Web or the weekly newsletter when the appropriate information is provided to the school.

**Student Council:** Students in the Middle School (Grades 7-8) are eligible to participate in the intra-curricular program called Student Council. St. Mark Student Council is a leadership and service organization that promotes school morale and community. Eighth grade students are eligible to be officers and both seventh and eighth grade students may serve as homebase representatives if they meet and maintain the academic and conduct expectations stated below:

- Members will be expected to maintain good grades (76 or above), throughout the entire year, in each academic subject at report card release time. Failure to uphold these requirements will result in a removal from the Student Council for the remainder of the year.
- Members will be expected to maintain good conduct grades (S or above), throughout the entire year. Failure to uphold these requirements will result in a removal from the Student Council for the remainder of the year.
- Members who receive 2 or more detentions, and/or an In/Out of School Suspension at any point in the year are no longer eligible to participate in the Student Council. Members will be dismissed from serving on the student council immediately.
- Members will be expected to attend all Student Council meetings. Meetings are held on Tuesdays each month before school from 7:15-7:45. A list of dates will be provided once elected. Students must be

dropped off promptly at 7:10 AM by the 3rd grade doors. If a student is late or is absent for three meetings, they will be removed from Student Council. An email sent before the meeting with a reason as to why a member was absent can excuse them from missing a meeting.

- Members will be expected to exhibit appropriate behavior and positive attitudes when performing all duties.
- Members will be required to attend all school events outside of school hours. These dates will be sent home at the beginning of the school year. It is the members' responsibility to inform parents of any and all events student council is required to attend. Students who miss 2 mandatory events will be removed from Student Council. An email from a member's parent or guardian prior to the event with a reason as to why the member is absent can excuse them from the event.
- Members will be expected to be role models and ambassadors for St. Mark.
- Members will not receive service hours for Student Council events unless specifically told by Student Council Moderators.
- Members are expected to be in full uniform and uphold the school uniform policy. Members who receive more than 3 uniform infractions will be removed from Student Council

Student Council Members should refer to the St. Mark Student Council Constitution as their organization handbook. This can be found in the Student Council Google Classroom that all members are part of.

**National Junior Honor Society:** Students in the 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade are eligible to apply for the National Junior Honor Society. Candidate's eligibility for selection to this chapter are as follows:

- a. Candidates must be in the second semester of sixth grade or members of the seventh or eighth grade class.
- b. To be eligible for selection to membership in this chapter, the candidate must have been enrolled for a period equivalent to one semester at St. Mark Catholic School.
- c. Candidates eligible for election to the chapter must have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.75 on a 4.0 scale, must have a conduct grade higher than S on all prior grading reports, less than 2 detentions, and no suspensions.

Upon meeting the grade level, enrollment, conduct, and GPA standards, candidates shall then be considered based on their service, leadership, character, and citizenship.

Members are expected to maintain good grades (76 or above) in each academic subject at report card release time. Failure to do so will result in removal from NJHS.

Members are expected to maintain good conduct grades (S or above), throughout the entire school year. Students will be removed from NJHS immediately for the following conduct infractions:

- 1) Receives 2 or more detentions (immediate removal from NJHS)
- 2) Receives an in-school or out-of-school suspension (immediate removal from NJHS)
- 3) Receives a conduct grade lower than a S at the end of a grading period (removal from NJHS at the end of the grading period)

The advisor(s) and principal will meet to discuss the removal of any member of the NJHS.

Members are expected to attend all NJHS meetings. If a member is absent or is late for 3 meetings, they will be removed from NJHS. An email sent prior to a reason as to why the member will be absent can excuse the member from missing the meeting.

Regular meetings of this chapter shall be monthly, except for December, January and February. December, January, and February meetings will be reserved to meet with the officers. The officers will meet the Tuesday

prior to the monthly meeting. Special meetings can be called by the president with approval of the adviser. The schedule for the meetings will be emailed and posted the 1<sup>st</sup> week of the 2026-2027 school year.

Members will be required to volunteer for school events outside of the school day. These events will be sent home at the beginning of the 2026-2027 school year. It is the student's responsibility to inform the parents of any and all events that NJHS is required to attend.

Members are expected to be role models and ambassadors for St. Mark.

Members who volunteer for school events outside of the school day will receive service hours for those events. It is the responsibility of the member to have either moderator sign their service sheet.

**Participants Only:** The school athletic policy states that "siblings may not attend practice." The same regulation applies to all Extra-Curricular Activities. The supervisors and sponsors of such activities must be able to remain focused and disciplined for supervision without distractions. Alternative arrangements for siblings must be made for the student participant to attend the activity. The school will not be liable for any injury to siblings or other spectators during practices or any Extra Curriculars.

**Academic and Conduct Qualifications for Participation:** We expect students to maintain academic and general conduct standards in keeping with the St. Mark Catholic School Parent-Student Handbook and the teachings of the Catholic Church. The following qualification procedure is intended to apply to all extracurricular activities, outside of the Student Council but including cheerleading and academic contests. When certain academic and general conduct standards are not met, certain consequences are applied to extracurricular activities and academic contests. However, the intent is to encourage students to re-qualify for such activities after a reasonable amount of time. Parent and students' cooperative implementation of this procedure is expected.

**Qualification:** A student will be considered *ELIGIBLE* to participate in extracurricular activities, including pep rallies and academic contests, at St. Mark Catholic School if their most recent academic report matches the following criteria. The same criteria are applicable if a student is playing as part of another Diocesan school team which has different criteria. Both criteria below must be met.

1. A 76% or above average in each academic subject, and
2. A *Satisfactory* grade or better in general conduct. See page 21/22 of the Parent-Student Handbook to review conduct grade policy.

**Procedure:** When report cards are issued all students not meeting the above qualifications (even those who do not receive a warning notice) will be considered *INELIGIBLE* to participate for a two-week period should he/she:

1. Receive below a 76% average in any academic subject.
2. A general conduct grade below *Satisfactory*. See page 21/22 of the Parent-Student Handbook to review conduct grade policy.

**Re-qualification:** After a two-week period, from the date of the issued report card, parents or students may request a review of the student's grades and general conduct marks. Requests must be made in writing to the assistant principal. If a student's grades, in all subjects, and general conduct marks comply with qualification standards, he/she will be eligible to re-enter activities. If not, the student's participation will continue to be suspended for another two-week period, and the process for re-qualification will begin again.

**Exception:** If a student receives two detentions or one in or out-of-school within a quarter, that student could become immediately considered *INELIGIBLE* for extra-curricular activities for the remainder of the quarter. Administration has the final say in eligibility.

**Absence from school:** A student is not eligible to participate in extra- or intra-curricular activities on the day of absence, including sports and after-school clubs.

Students who are unable to participate in P.E. or recess during a school day may not participate in school sponsored after school athletic practices or games.

## TECHNOLOGY and ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

**Technology Plan:** St. Mark Catholic School has implemented a technology plan to prepare its students to meet the challenges of a technologically advanced society. The school provides access to educational software, as well as the Internet for research and communication. This access enriches the student's educational instruction. There are regulations governing the use of the school computer networks.

**Privileges:** The use of technology is a privilege, not a right. Inappropriate use of the network may result in the revocation of user privileges on the network and termination of that user's account. User's access may be terminated at the discretion of the administration and faculty. The school administration will decide on which operations are inappropriate, and the school administration will decide when to terminate a user's account. Any unauthorized recordings will result in a technology violation. While attending St. Mark Catholic School, student Google accounts are owned by the school and can be deleted at any time. These accounts will be deleted upon Graduation.

The school network utilizes filtering software which objectionable materials can sometimes circumvent. If this happens, the student must report the situation to the teacher immediately. Violation of the policies and procedures of the St. Mark Catholic School Acceptable Use Policy will result in disciplinary action administered according to the nature of the violation including loss of technology privileges, detention, suspension, or expulsion. It is highly recommended that parents utilize the monitoring system after school hours-contact Jose Marquez for more information.

Violation of the policies and procedures of the St. Mark Catholic School Acceptable Use Policy run continuously for the year and are reset at the quarter. A violation will result in disciplinary action administered according to the nature of the violation including loss of technology privileges, detention, suspension, or expulsion.

- 1<sup>st</sup> time- 7 AM detention, parents notified.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> time- 7 AM detention, loss of technology privileges, mandatory meeting with parents.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> time- Loss of technology privileges, additional consequences decided by administration.

**A Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA)** form must be signed by parents before a child may use the computer and the Internet. Under federal law, the operators of educational applications and services used at the school must notify you, as your child's parent, and obtain your consent before collecting limited personal information from children under the age of 13. Generally, this information is limited to first and last name, a username, and email address. These web-based tools and applications are used to assist your child in learning. A list of the applications and web-based services our school uses, or may choose to use, is included with the parental consent form that is part of your child's on-line registration form.

An **Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)** must be signed by each parent and student before a child may use the computer and the Internet. This AUP form is part of your child's on-line registration form. An additional AUP for Chromebook use must be signed by each parent and student before a child may use their school Chromebook. This form will be managed by the Language Arts teacher.

**Technology Acceptable Use Agreement:**

*Adapted from NCEA's From the Chalkboard to the Chatroom.*

As a user of technology, I agree to follow the rules and code of ethics in all of my work with all technology while attending St. Mark Catholic School:

1. I recognize that all technology users have the same right to use the equipment; therefore, I will not use the technology resources for non-academic purposes. I will not waste or take supplies such as paper, printer cartridges, and etc. that are provided by the school. When I am in the computer lab, I will talk softly and work in ways that will not disturb other users. I will keep my computer work area clean and will not eat or drink in the computer lab.
2. I recognize that software is protected by copyright laws; therefore, I will not make unauthorized copies of software and I will not give, lend, or sell copies of software to others. I understand that I will not be allowed to bring software applications, games, or CD-ROMs from home to be used on school equipment without proof of licensure and prior approval of appropriate school personnel.
3. I recognize that the work of all users is valuable; therefore, I will protect the privacy of others by not trying to learn their password; I will not copy, change, read, or use files from another user without prior permission from that user; I will not attempt to gain unauthorized access to system programs for computer equipment; I will not use technology systems to disturb or harass other users or use inappropriate language in my communications.
4. I will honor my school's procedures for the storage of information. I realize that after prior notice has been given to me, files may be deleted from the system to protect the integrity of the network or because of space limitations on the computer's hard drive.
5. Each student who receives Internet access will be instructed in the proper use of the network. The use of the Internet must be in support of education and research consistent with the educational objectives of the school. Students using network or computing resources must comply with the appropriate rules for that network or resource.
6. As a user of a network, I will not use social media for personal use. In addition, I will not reveal my personal information, home address, or personal phone number or those of students, teachers, or other staff members. Transmission of any material in violation of any U.S. or state regulation is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to: copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, or material protected by trade secret. The use of school computers and networking resources for commercial activities is not permitted. Their use for product advertisement or political lobbying is also prohibited.
7. Parents must realize that their students may encounter material on a network/bulletin board that they do not consider appropriate (vulgar jokes, statements of belief that some might consider immoral, etc.) The student is responsible for not pursuing material that could be considered offensive and notifying the teacher immediately.
8. The use of technology is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in the cancellation of these privileges. Vandalism or intentional modification of system settings will result in cancellation of privileges and/or school disciplinary action. The school reserves the right to seek financial restitution for any damage caused by a student or other user. The system administrators will deem what is inappropriate use, and their decision is final.

The administration, faculty, and staff of the school may request that the system administrator deny, revoke, or suspend specific user privileges. Violations of the rules and code of ethics described above will be dealt with seriously.

### **Prohibited Usage:**

Includes but is not limited to the following:

- Accessing Internet resources for non-academic purposes.
- Users will not be allowed to email if not related to schoolwork.
- Engaging in any illegal activity.
- Using iPad or Chromebook without teacher permission or at prohibited times.
- Students may only sign on to their Chromebook using their Gmail accounts. Students may only use their school Gmail accounts for classroom assignments. Private email/google accounts are not allowed on their school Chromebook.
- Chromebooks will be enrolled in our domain. While enrolled at St. Mark, only the St. Mark account will be enabled on the device. Upon leaving the school, contact the Technology Dept. to release the domain on the device.
- Installing unlicensed, copyrighted software or extensions on St. Mark Catholic School computers or Chromebooks.
- Installing apps requiring money to be held in accounts is prohibited. St. Mark Catholic School is not responsible for any money lost.
- Deleting or altering programs, system or data files without permission.
- Revealing personal addresses or phone numbers or those of other users.
- Using the network in ways that would cause disruption of network use by others.
- Damaging computers, computer systems or computer networks or engaging in other acts of vandalism. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user or any other agencies or networks that are connected to the system. This includes, but is not limited to, the introduction of computer viruses, switching cables, altering the computer settings, and forceful use of computer components.
- Transmitting material in violation of any state or national regulations. This includes but is not limited to: copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, or material protected by trade secret.
- Use for commercial activities, use for product advertisement, political lobbying, or financial gain of the user.
- Use of the internet to post unfavorable or derogatory remarks about any member of the St. Mark community, both at school and/or away from school.

### **Security:**

To protect the integrity of a computer system involving many users, St. Mark Catholic School users are not permitted to:

- Reveal your password to another user.
- Use another user's password to gain access to the network or Internet.
- Trespass into another user's files (with or without student's permission)

Security on any computer system is a high priority, especially when the system supports multiple users. If you think there is a security problem with a computer, contact your teacher immediately. Do not demonstrate the problem to other users.

### **Technology Concerns:**

- **Social Media sites and/or Blogs:** Engagement in online posts/blogs such as, but not limited to, Facebook®, etc. may result in disciplinary actions (including expulsion) if the content of the student's or

parent's post/blog includes defamatory comments, photos, or captions regarding the school, the faculty, other students, or the parish.

- **Instagram®, Snap Chat, TikTok, or any other site:** Photos and captions on a student or parent's account that depict the school, the faculty, other students, or the parish in a defamatory way may result in disciplinary action.
- **Sexting:** Students involved in possession or transmission of inappropriate photos on their cell phones or other electronic devices face suspension and/or expulsion.
- **Texting:** Students should at no time be involved in texting during the course of the school day. Students involved in texting at school face detention, suspension and/or expulsion.
- **Virtual Reality Sites:** Virtual Reality Sites such as, but not limited to, [www.there.com](http://www.there.com)® and [www.secondlife.com](http://www.secondlife.com)®, etc. pose a developmental and moral risk to the life of a student. Parents are cautioned to be aware of the online sites visited by their children, knowing that often predators are not living in a neighborhood, but within the home via a computer. Students whose avatars depict other students, teachers, or parish staff in a defamatory light face detention, suspension, or expulsion.

**Liability:** St. Mark Catholic School will not be held responsible for any damages users suffer through the use of the Internet. This includes but is not limited to loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, or service interruptions caused by the system's own negligence or users' errors or omissions. Use of the information obtained from the Internet is at the users' own risk. St. Mark Catholic School specifically disclaims any responsibility for the accuracy of information obtained through its service. All users need to consider the source of any information they obtain and consider how valid that information may be.

Middle School students are required to have their Chromebooks, charged, in class every day. If the Chromebook breaks, the student must inform the IT Director, and we will have it repaired. The school has a small number of loaner Chromebooks that they will loan out for brief periods of time (2-3 weeks). Loaner Chromebooks are only authorized to be utilized by the IT Director and may not be taken from the IT room without permission. Any damage to loaner Chromebooks will be addressed by the IT Director.

Parents can monitor their child's technology access on their chrome books outside of the school day. If you would like this access, please contact our IT Director, Jose Marquez at [Jose.marquez@stmcs.net](mailto:Jose.marquez@stmcs.net). A beginning of the year email will be sent out from the IT Director regarding setting up the Go Guardian parent app.

## PUBLICATIONS and VIDEO CONSENT RELEASE AGREEMENT

From time to time, the school will publish student and/or parent names, photos, videos, works, verbal statements and/or other media containing parent or student likenesses, with or without identifying the parent or student for editorial, advertising, news, or any other purpose including the school's weekly parent communications, and the school's website and social media sites. The school may alter or copyright the same without restriction.

You and your child(ren) agree that no monetary consideration shall be paid. Irrevocable and unrestricted consent and release have been given without coercion or duress. This agreement is binding upon heirs and/or future legal representatives, and the name, photo, video, work and/or statement may be used in current and subsequent years in any manner or medium. If the student and parent/guardian wish to rescind this agreement, they may do so at any time with written notice. (St. Mark Catholic School has no control of media use of pictures/statements which are taken without permission.)

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**After School Program:** St. Mark Catholic School offers an after-school care program from dismissal until 6:00 PM for an additional fee. See the [After School Program Handbook](#) on our website for details.

**Cell Phones:** Cell phones are not allowed at school. If a student needs a cell phone after school, he/she should bring the cell phone to the office upon arrival in the morning and leave the cell phone in the office or with an administrator in off position for the day and return at dismissal to pick up the phone. Students are not allowed to use cell phones during school or on the St. Mark campus in clubs, activities, or at the after-school program. Students are not allowed to film/record/take pictures of St. Mark staff member or fellow St. Mark students without explicit permission from the St. Mark staff. If a student is in possession of a cell phone during the school day, the cell phone will be confiscated and given to administration. The phone may be picked up from administration by the parent/guardian after dismissal. If a second violation occurs, there will be a \$25 fee assessed to the student/family and parents/guardians must meet with the principal. If there is a special circumstance, please contact the administration to discuss.

In order to maintain an effective learning environment and minimize classroom disruptions, students are not permitted to receive personal phone calls or messages during the school day. Knowing that situations may arise where urgent contact is necessary and in that instance, parents/guardians may contact the school office if there is an urgent or emergency situation that requires immediate communication with their child and the office staff will relay the message to the student.

**Child Abuse Laws:** In accordance with the law of the State of Texas and the policy of the Diocese of Dallas, faculty and staff members of St. Mark Catholic School are required to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. Diocesan Safe Environment Program policy states, from the Texas

Family Code:

"If a professional has cause to believe that a child has been or may be abused or neglected, the professional shall make a report not later than the 48th hour after the professional first suspects that the child has been or may be abused or neglected."

**Crisis Plan & Emergency Drills:** We value the safety of our children and staff. During the course of the school year, safety rules will be reviewed regularly. Crisis drills (fire, tornado, lock down, evacuate, shelter, secure, hold) will be held regularly to develop safety practices that will help children move quickly and orderly to assigned areas should an emergency occur. In the event a crisis occurs, parents will be notified through text/e-mail via FACTS®.

St. Mark Catholic School facilities are monitored by security cameras 24 hours/ day, 365 days/year.

**Drugs, Alcohol, & any Controlled Substance:** Students who possess drugs and/or alcohol and/or any controlled substance at school or at any school function face suspension and/or expulsion.

**Tobacco:** Students who possess tobacco in any form at school or at any school activity/function face suspension and/or expulsion.

**Field Trips:** It is a privilege for our students to travel to various sites to learn and experience education in a different setting. When they travel off campus, the expectation is for students to exhibit respect to people and property, to use their manners, and to make mature choices in their actions to both adults and fellow students. Basically, the same conduct that is expected of them on our campus according to the behavior standards.

Grades 6, 7, & 8 - If a student receives more than 2 detentions or an in/out of school suspension throughout the year, participation in field trips will be considered on an individual basis by administration but could result in the loss of field trip privileges, including but not limited to grade-level field trips, Pines, High School visits, and off-campus service projects.

Grades 1-5 – The privilege to attend off-campus activities will be determined on an individual basis dependent upon a student's behavior sheets. If a student receives either an in/out of school suspension throughout the year, participation in future field trips or off-campus activities will be decided by the administration.

If any student receives either an in-school or out-of-school suspension throughout the year, participation in school-related activities, including field trips will be decided by the administration.

1. Field trips are designed to correlate with teaching units and to achieve curricular goals.
2. There are no "traditional" field trips. Class participation in a particular field trip over consecutive years does not mean that this trip has become a school tradition.
3. Individual teachers, in consultation with the Administration, reserve the right to restrict or deny student participation on any field trip due to, but not limited to, poor academic performance and/or poor conduct choices.
4. A written **official permission slip**, signed by the parent, is required before a child will be permitted to attend a field trip activity. Verbal permission **cannot** be accepted.
5. A **telephone call** will **not** be accepted in lieu of the proper field trip permission slip.
6. Parents may refuse to permit their child from participating in a field trip by stating so on the proper form. Students who do not attend a field trip will stay at home and may be counted absent.
7. Students who are participating in the field trip must ride the bus to and from the field trip with their class.
8. All monies collected for the field trip are **non-refundable** and due before leaving for the field trip.
9. Cell phones and smart watches are not allowed on field trips unless approved by the teacher and/or administration.
10. Parents who chaperone a field trip may not bring siblings on the field trip.
11. All chaperones must be 25 years of age or older.
12. **Due to confidentiality and privacy issues, unauthorized recordings or pictures are not allowed to be taken by chaperones or students.**
13. Dress code for field trips must follow the lead teacher's specifications. No other clothing will be allowed.
14. Field trip chaperones must meet with the teacher before and after the field trip for discussion of expectations and evaluation of field trip.

**Gum:** Students are not allowed to chew gum while on the school campus at any time. This includes before, during, and after school. Disciplinary action will occur for students who are chewing gum.

**Home and School Association:** The purpose of this organization is to maintain a close and harmonious relationship between the home and school so that parents and teachers may cooperate in the education of the children of St. Mark Catholic School. H.S.A. arranges most of the parent volunteer opportunities, through P.A.W.S.

Membership in this organization is open to all parents/guardians of children attending St. Mark Catholic School and is strongly encouraged. Written communication about H.S.A. is included in the Friday "Weekly Bulletin." Visit [www.stmcs.net](http://www.stmcs.net) for more detailed information.

**Home-School Communication:** All grade levels use either a behavior sheet and/or FACTS® Family Portal for communication with home. Students in grades 3-8 maintain a St. Mark assignment planner. Parents are asked to read these items so they can stay informed of school information and happenings.

FACTS® Family Portal is a private and secure website set up for our school to allow you to see complete information specific to your child. You can view your child's grades, attendance, homework, class lists, as well as other useful school information. You can also communicate with teachers and other school staff online whenever necessary. Parents may not contact a teacher at home or on their personal phone numbers.

**The weekly school newsletter is the official communication of the school.**

Family information obtained from the school directory may not be used for business communication.

Parents should regularly check FACTS® Family Portal and review all graded and returned papers to keep themselves informed of their child's progress. Graded papers are returned weekly.

To access FACTS® Family Portal, go to the [link](#) on school website or log into Family Portal using the following link- <https://logins2.renweb.com/logins/ParentsWeb-Login.aspx>  
Our school district code is STMCS-TX

#### School Section

click on "Directory" and utilize the sort features to customize the desired report

#### Student Section

- click on Student in far-left column to expand menu.
- select grades, homework, schedule, etc. as desired.

#### Family Section

- click on Family in far-left column
- click on Family Home
  - drop down button in the middle has the names of all family members.
  - click on the pencil icon in each section to make edits (updated phone or email, etc)
- New Sibling Applications / Re-Enrollment
  - click on "Apply/Enroll" for options.

#### Financial Section

- click on this section to access financial accounts in FACTS.
- Prepay balances – cafeteria.
- Balances
  - payment plan – tuition – click here to see future draft dates.
  - incidental expenses – after school care expense, invoiced items such as field trip,
- Financial Links
  - link to Grant & Aid Application

In order to insure that clear communication from school reaches home in a timely manner, St. Mark Catholic School sends a Friday Bulletin. Efforts are made to not inundate parents with numerous emails during the week, but from time to time, FACTS® Family Portal emails may be necessary.

Parent Information Nights are held during the second week of the school year for teachers to share expectations and procedures with parents.

Parent-Teacher Conferences are held in the Fall. If you would like a teacher conference at any other time, please contact the teacher directly.

**Items Brought To School:** Only items on the school supply list or items requested and/or approved by teachers should be brought to school. This includes but is not limited to all electronic devices. Items specifically prohibited at school include laser pointers and recording devices. St. Mark Catholic School is not responsible for loss or damage to any items brought to school by a student.

**Library:** The school has a well-equipped library center. Students are encouraged to use the library for curricular enrichment and pleasure reading. The Librarian is available most mornings at 7:30am for suggestions and help. The following rules are to be observed:

1. Borrowed books are to be returned on time and in good condition.
2. Books damaged or lost must be paid for by the student before any other materials may be checked out.
3. Students who have lost or damaged books do not receive progress reports or report cards until their account is cleared.

#### Check-Out Policy-

- Students in grades TK-2nd may check out one book per week.
- Students in grades 3rd-5th may check out two books per week.
- Students in grades 6th-8th may check out three books per week.

It is the student's responsibility to see that his/her books are returned. If a student is absent, they do not need to pay a fine, provided they return the book the day they return to school as most books have a wait list. Books must be returned in order for a student to check out another book. If a student has 2 or 3 books checked out and returns one book, then they may check out a new book.

Damaged/Lost Book Policy- Because students share library books with other students, they are encouraged to be good stewards of library materials. Please help your child find a safe place for his/her library book and make sure they hold them carefully, use paper bookmarks, and keep them away from food, water, young siblings, pets, and the elements.

Lost or damaged books must be paid for (cost to be determined) before another book may be checked out. A book is considered lost when it is one month overdue. Money paid for a lost book will be refunded if the book is returned undamaged within a month. However, the overdue fine will be subtracted from the amount refunded. After a month, no refunds will be given. At this point, the book can be kept by the student or donated to the library.

**Lockers:** Lockers should be kept orderly and cleaned periodically. Locker areas should be neat at all times. St. Mark Catholic School is the co-tenant of lockers and desks and reserves the right to inspect and search any locker at any time on suspicion of a threat to the health, welfare, and safety of the school. A student assigned a locker has exclusive use but not proprietary rights versus the school. Any property, money, and other valuables left in a locker or storage space is the responsibility of the student to whom the locker or storage space is assigned.

**Lost and Found:** Any items found in the school building or on the school grounds should be given to the school receptionist to be placed in the Lost and Found basket. Items placed in the Lost and Found remain there for one month. After one month, items are donated to charity. It is VERY IMPORTANT to clearly mark all items so that they can be returned to the owner.

Students who lose a library book, textbook or workbook must pay the replacement cost of the book to receive a new copy.

**Non-School Sponsored Activities:** It is not the role of the school to act as an agent for delivery of birthday or other party invitations or notices of a personal nature. This holds true even if the entire class or grade level are to be included in the event. These notices will not be sent via our school communication system, through the individual classroom teacher, nor may students and/or parents personally deliver such notices or invitations at the school or at school related events. Additionally, all arrangements, including transportation of students, for parties and social events must be made outside the parameters of the school day and the school facilities. Lockers and classrooms may not be decorated.

St. Mark Catholic School is not responsible for supervising, controlling access to, or monitoring behavior at any event that is not school sponsored.

**Open Carry Law:** Federal and State laws prohibit weapons on the premises of a school (concealed or otherwise).

**Outside Food:** Outside food brought by students to share with the class for birthdays or other special occasions is not permitted. Students may bring non-food items as an alternative for the entire class. However, we do recognize that outside food is brought into the school on special occasions such as Christmas and Valentine class parties.

- All food must have a nutritional label and must be void of nuts or nut products. Please note that even though food should not contain nuts, the possibility of outside cross-contamination may exist.
- All food brought into the school to be shared with other students must have prior approval by the school nurse. A minimum of 5 days' notice is required.

### **Parent Teacher Conferences:**

- School-wide Parent Teacher Conferences are scheduled in the Fall of each year. Spring conferences are scheduled by the teachers and/or parents on an individual, as needed basis.
- Requests for individual or team conferences may be made throughout the year as the need arises by parents or school staff by contacting the teachers directly.
- Teachers are available for conferences during planning/conference periods within the school day or before or after school.
- All conferences must be requested on an appointment basis. Impromptu conferences at meetings, school events, in the hallway, etc. are not only inappropriate, but are less than conducive to constructive discussion about the student's needs.
- Requests for conferences, either initiated by the teacher or the parent, should be made in writing or by telephone request. The actual conferences, however, should take place in person.
- Contact teachers through the school. Teachers should not be contacted at home. Never call a teacher on his/her personal phone number. Every effort will be made, on the part of the teacher, to return phone messages and emails within 24 hours.
- Requests to meet with Administration during their open hours can be made by the front office.

**Safe Environment Program:** The Catholic Community of St. Mark the Evangelist has implemented the Safe Environment Program in order to:

- Provide a safe and secure environment for the children, youth, senior citizens, and developmentally disabled people of the parish.
- Reduce the possibility of false accusations against clergy, employees, or volunteers.
- Assist the Diocese in evaluating a person's suitability to work with children, youth, senior citizens, or developmentally disabled people.
- Satisfy the concerns of parents and staff members with a screening process.
- Provide a system to respond to the victims and their families, as well as the accused, and
- Reduce the risk exposure of the parish and the Catholic Diocese of Dallas.

The three components of the Safe Environment Program include Screening, Training, and Supervision. All volunteers must participate in and complete the three components of the program before offering their volunteer services in the school or parish. Notification of training sessions will be announced via parish and/or school communications, i.e. school letters or parish bulletins. It is the goal for **all** school parents to complete this process prior to each school year so they can volunteer at St. Mark.

Please contact Alison Hughes at 972-423-7926 or visit <https://www.stmcs.net/safe-environment-training> for the steps to complete the Safe Environment training process.

**Note:** If the Safe Environment training is not completed within the given time frame, parents/grandparents will not be allowed to volunteer in any capacity for the entire school year.

**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. School textbooks used by the student must have a proper book cover, either paper or cloth. No writing in textbooks is permitted. The student will pay a fine or replacement for damaged or lost texts before any transcripts are presented. Damaged or lost textbook costs are determined by the market price of a replacement book.

**School Supplies:** Parents will be notified which supplies must be purchased from the school. Reimbursement is expected for damaged textbooks. Backpacks with wheels are prohibited. All school supplies, including but not limited to pencil bags, PE bags, technology devices, and notebooks, must not be defaced in any manner. Only student names for identification are permitted.

**Search & Seizure:** The school is co-tenant of individual student lockers and desks. Without prior notification to students or parents, upon cause deemed reasonable by the Administrator, in his/her sole discretion, the Administrator or his/her representative may conduct a search and inspection of any area of the school and all personal effects, lockers, baggage, and/or other student property. This includes cell phones and other electronic devices. The Administrator or his/her representative may seize and retain any illegal or unauthorized *item* discovered on school premises or in the possession of a student, whether discovered because of the search and inspection or otherwise. Any substances or items confiscated by the school may be turned over to the proper authorities. These searches may be conducted from time to time without prior announcement and with the aid of the Plano police if necessary.

**Service Projects:** The purpose of the stewardship program for students is to provide students with the opportunity to make a difference in our Church and surrounding communities through various service projects. Projects are done monthly and align with Catholic Social Teachings. Students in grades seven and eight must

earn 5 service hours per semester per year plus 5 service hours in the summers prior to entering seventh and eighth grade.

**Smoking/Tobacco:** St. Mark Catholic School is a smoke-free building; therefore, smoking is prohibited in the building and anywhere on campus. This policy includes smoking in his/her car if it is parked on school property and the use of e-cigarettes. Students who possess cigarettes, e-cigarettes, or any tobacco products at school or at any school function face suspension and/or expulsion.

**St. Mark Logo and Image:** St. Mark maintains specific logo and image guidelines. Individuals or groups wishing to use the school logo, the school's name, the school mascot, the "Lions" name, or to represent the school through written, digital or video formats in any way for any reason, must first receive permission from the school. This includes, but is not limited to, apparel of any kind, flyers, brochures, signage, programs, websites, videos, and social media pages. Please contact the Director of Marketing and Communications at 972-578-0610 for the official artwork files and permission to use them, as well as the guidelines for all applications.

**School Directory Information:** St. Mark families have access to our community family information through Facts Family Portal (aka Renweb) which includes parent and student names, phone numbers, and addresses. This directory is compiled for the personal use of St. Mark families only. It may not be sold or used for mailing lists or solicitation purposes of advertising personal businesses or promoting outside businesses.

**Visitors:** All visitors are required to enter and exit through the main door. Cafeteria backdoors are not to be used during the school day, even for our lunch visitors. For safety and security reasons, each person is required to check in at the office, with identification, when he/she enters the building for any reason. Visitors will be asked to show identification in the form of a driver's license or other government-issued identification. All visitors and/or volunteers are required to wear a designated badge that will be printed from the front office at the time of check in. Visitors and/or volunteers are to check out at the time of departure through the front office.

Parents who volunteer to serve lunch or who volunteer in another capacity in the school **may not drop into a classroom to see their child** during the day. This is an interruption to the teacher and to the educational process. No pictures or recordings may be taken while volunteering.

**Volunteers:** There are many volunteer opportunities through our PAWS Program (Parents Assisting With Students).

**Confidentiality & Professionalism:** A volunteer operates in a position of trust. Personal information pertaining to students must be kept confidential. Children's actions, responses, progress or problems at school are not for sharing in the community. Conversations between parents, teachers and students in the school are confidential. Volunteers should not discuss these conversations outside of school. Refer any concerns to the Administration.

While in service as a volunteer, the volunteer must maintain a high level of professionalism and certain boundaries. A volunteer should not discuss questions or concerns about their own child with teachers. Please set up a conference time for this discussion. A volunteer may not talk with students about their behavior towards their own child. Refer any concerns to the Administration.

**Volunteer Dress:** St. Mark Catholic School has very detailed expectations for student dress. Although volunteers do not have a dress code requirement, it is expected that volunteers reflect the image of St. Mark Catholic School and wear modest clothing while working in the school or during school activities. This includes a moderate length for skirts and dresses, conservative blouses and tops.

**Responsibility:** The Administration of St. Mark Catholic School is accountable for facilitating, monitoring, evaluating and providing continuity for the success of the volunteer program. The staff is committed to welcoming volunteers, informing them about their tasks, encouraging their initiatives and celebrating their efforts. Volunteers are expected to adhere to school rules and procedures, perform assigned tasks to the best of their ability, work cooperatively with all staff, and seek clarification when necessary.

**Cell Phones:** Please refrain from cell phone use while on volunteer duty. While volunteering, no picture taking of students, the school, or school events are allowed.

**Child Abuse:** St. Mark Catholic School abides by the Child Abuse Prevention, Adoption, and Family Services Act. This law mandates that all cases of suspected abuse and/or neglect be reported to Child Protective Services.

All volunteers are required to complete and be cleared through the Diocesan-mandated Safe Environment Program. .

**Water Bottles:** Students have the option of bringing a refillable water bottle to school each day.

Please note the following guidelines:

1. Water bottle must have a leak-proof cap that remains attached while drinking (please do not send one that requires the lid/cap to be removed for drinking).
2. Water bottle should be made of an unbreakable material such as plastic or stainless steel and be of an appropriate size (not more than 1 Liter). Bottle must not exhibit inappropriate graphics.
3. Lid should be easily removable for refill purposes. Please be sure your child can effectively remove/replace the lid on his/her own when refilling the bottle at the water fountain.
4. When not in use, bottle should be kept under the student's desk or in his/her backpack and should be taken home each day for cleaning/sterilizing.
5. Water bottles may only contain water (other beverages are not permitted).

### **General Diocesan Catholic School Policies:**

Catholic schools within The Roman Catholic Diocese of Dallas (the "Diocese") are an extension of the religious ministry of the Diocese and, in the case of parochial schools, of the parish to which they are attached. To help schools fulfill this important role, the Diocese has promulgated certain policies for implementation in every school within the Diocese. Accordingly, the policies contained below amend and replace any local school policies which apply to the same subject matter thereof.

### **EXPULSION FOR DISCIPLINARY REASONS**

Orderly school administration is essential to fulfilling the core mission of Catholic schools. Even a single failure by a member of the school community to uphold the standards of behavior to which all community members agree when a student is enrolled can cause irreparable harm. Thus, while in many cases expulsion is reserved for very serious or persistent misconduct, a school may properly determine that a single instance of on- or off-campus misconduct requires separation of a student from the school community. Misconduct committed by a member of the school community other than a student (including parents, guardians or other family members) can also significantly hinder a school's ability to perform its essential task of educating students. As a result, misconduct committed by a person connected to the school through a student (including parents, guardians or other family members) may result in the expulsion of the student from the school when, in his or her sole discretion, the chief administrator determines that such action is appropriate. Provided that any applicable school and diocesan policies have been substantially followed, the decision to expel a student rests in the sole discretion of the chief administrator of a school.

## **.1 Procedure for Expulsion**

Circumstances giving rise to expulsion can arise and unfold quickly. The chief administrator's primary duty in such situations is to protect the school community. No student or family has any right to the application of a particular procedure before or in connection with the expulsion of a student. Nevertheless, the following process can serve as a general guideline when, in the chief administrator's discretion, circumstances warrant:

- When practical, the pastor of a parochial elementary school and the chief administrator of a diocesan school should be apprised of the circumstances of a potential expulsion before the decision to expel is implemented.
- When circumstances permit, before the decision to expel is implemented, the student's parents should be advised of the potential for expulsion and a summary of the grounds for expulsion.
- The student and his or her parents should be invited to a conference with the school's chief administrator. In parish schools, the local pastor should be advised of the scheduled conference. In diocesan schools, the chief administrator should be advised of the scheduled conference. At the chief administrator's discretion, this conference may be held before or after the decision to expel is implemented.
- The final decision to expel a student rests with the school's chief administrator and will not be reviewed except to ensure compliance with any applicable pre-expulsion procedures. In parochial elementary schools, the pastor should be consulted. In diocesan schools, the chief administrator should be consulted.

## **.2 General Grounds for Expulsion**

Any instance or course of misconduct may, at the sole discretion of the school's chief administrator, be sufficient grounds for expulsion. In many cases, it is appropriate to attempt to correct the problem behavior through less severe disciplinary measures. In other cases, however, the school's chief administrator may determine that expulsion is the appropriate sanction for misconduct that has not previously resulted in probation, suspension, or other discipline.

Examples of such severe misconduct include but are not limited to:

- a) Actions gravely detrimental to the moral and spiritual welfare of other students;
- b) Incurable or disruptive behavior which impedes the progress of the rest of the class;
- c) Assault, battery, or any threat of force or violence—whether intended in jest or not—directed toward any school personnel, students, member of the school community, or other person on school property or during school-related activities;
- d) Habitual or persistent violation of school regulations;
- e) Possessing, selling, giving away, using, or being under the influence of alcohol and drugs and/or hazardous substances on campus, at school functions, or at a time and place that directly involves the school or the welfare of members of the school community;
- f) The on-campus use, sale, distribution, or possession of a substance intended or commonly used to mimic a narcotic, controlled substance, or alcoholic beverage;
- g) Use or possession of firearms or other potentially harmful objects or weapons;
- h) Gang-related conduct or activity including but not limited to, symbols, graffiti, apparel, colors, hazing/initiations, and hand signals commonly associated with gangs;
- i) Theft, extortion, arson;
- j) Habitual truancy; (See Policy 5123)
- k) Malicious damage or destruction of real or personal property at school;
- l) Hazing;
- m) Serious bullying and/or harassment;
- n) Conduct which may damage the reputation of the school or parish;
- o) Transmission of nude or otherwise inappropriate images of any student or person who

appears to be a minor child; and

p) Use of social media in such a manner as constitutes bullying or online harassment or which causes another student or member of the school community to fear for the safety of any member of the school community.

Additionally, off-campus misconduct may result in expulsion, especially when it is related in some way to the school community because it is directed towards a member of the school community, directly or indirectly involves multiple members of the school community, or may negatively impact the school's reputation in the community.

### **.3 Grounds for Expulsion Related to Alcohol and Drug Abuse**

The promotion and the safeguarding of student health (physically, mentally, and emotionally) are a concern to our schools. The use, misuse, and/or abuse of alcohol, drugs, and hazardous substances cause grave problems in the areas of student health and student stability. Many incidents of scholastic failure, school dropout, violence, tension, and suicide can be traced to alcohol and drug abuse.

Therefore, the following general school policy is set forth:

a) Possessing, selling, giving away, using, or being under the influence of alcohol and drugs and/or hazardous substances on campus, at school functions, or at a time and place that directly involves the school or the welfare of members of the school community constitute grounds for expulsion.

b) Notwithstanding section 5177.3(a) above, when the school's chief administrator, in consultation with appropriate school or other personnel, believes it is appropriate, students who are involved in the use or abuse of alcohol or controlled substances should be provided with information regarding available substance abuse counseling and treatment resources. Additionally, the chief administrator or appropriate school personnel should, when practical, notify a student's parents or other guardian or conservator when use or abuse of alcohol and/or other controlled substances is reasonably suspected. The school should, when possible, refer the student and his/her parents, guardian, or conservator to resources known to the school for medical and/or psychiatric care, mental health and substance abuse counseling, and/or substance abuse recovery programs.

### **.4 Tuition and Fees**

Prepaid tuition and fees are not refunded if a student is expelled. If a student is expelled before tuition or fees would ordinarily come due, the family of an expelled student shall be excused from further payment.

## **TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT**

A student's enrollment may be terminated in accordance with the policies set forth in this Handbook. If a school decides to terminate enrollment in light of parent or guardian behavior, a discipline situation, or as a way to help a student avoid embarrassment or unnecessary hardship, the school has an obligation to inform other Diocesan schools about the termination action.

The local chief administrator, in consultation with the Superintendent, will determine what information is pertinent to a situation and ensure that information is shared with any receiving Diocesan schools.

Parents should be made aware that termination as a result of financial issues, legal issues, moral turpitude, or other serious reason can and will be shared with other diocesan schools, and may also be shared with non-diocesan schools if permitted by law.

## **EXIT POLICY ON GROUNDS OF PARENTAL BEHAVIOR**

All members of the school community, including parents, guardians and family members, are expected to comply with all school rules and policies while on campus and in communications with the school, be respectful, cooperate with the school with respect to all decisions affecting the student, and avoid behavior which disrupts the orderly administration of the school. A community member's failure to meet these expectations jeopardizes school administration, requires the school to expend limited resources to address inappropriate and unnecessary behavior, and detracts from the school's core mission and, as a result, may jeopardize a student's continued participation in the school community. At the chief administrator's sole discretion, the failure of a student's parents, guardians, or other family members to comply with these expectations, separate and apart from the student's conduct, may result in suspension or expulsion of the student. Except in cases of severe misconduct which may jeopardize the safety or security of another member of the school community, the chief administrator should provide one written warning to the parent involved before suspending or expelling a student for parental misconduct.

### **Parental Disclosure of Student Information**

To honor the partnership between the School and families, it is essential that parents/guardians provide school personnel with thorough and accurate information that may be relevant to their student's success and that could impact the safety and/or integrity of the learning environment for other students in the school community, including but not limited to, any information regarding disciplinary and/or criminal history or action. Parents/Guardians are required to disclose such information at the time of application to the School and this duty continues as long as the student is enrolled. Failure to disclose such information at the time of application or at any time the student is enrolled at the school may result in dismissal of the student

#### **1. PARENTAL ACCESS TO STUDENT RECORDS**

Parents will be allowed to inspect and review their student's education records, at a date and time convenient to the school, unless a court has ordered otherwise. Records will always be reviewed in the presence of school personnel appointed by the chief administrator. The school may provide copies of the records and, if it does so, may charge a fee.

In the event a court order is in place which limits a parent's access to a student's educational records, or which otherwise limits the contact a parent may have with the school regarding the student, the family must provide a complete, final, signed copy of the order to the school when the student is enrolled. If such a court order is issued after a student has enrolled, the family must provide a complete, final, signed copy of the order to the school as soon as it is signed by the judge.

The school will, when and to the extent reasonably possible, honor restrictions on access to educational records imposed by such an order. However, school personnel are not family lawyers, and it is not the school's responsibility to enforce court orders. **See below for additional information regarding reimbursement of the school's costs and attorneys' fees for involvement in family custody disputes.**

Schools will generally not release a student's records to third parties without the written consent of a student's parent or legally responsible adult. As an exception to this rule, a school may disclose student records to or for:

- i. School officials with legitimate educational interest;
- ii. Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- iii. Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;

- iv. Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- v. Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- vi. Accrediting organizations;
- vii. To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- viii. Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- ix. State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

If a specific reason exists to further limit access to a student's educational records, the student's parent or legally responsible adult must provide a specific, written request that explains the basis for the additional restriction to the school's chief administrator. The chief administrator, in his or her sole discretion, will determine whether implementing special procedures for a student's records is appropriate and reasonably feasible on a case-by-case basis.

## 2. CUSTODY AND FAMILY LAW ISSUES

The Diocese and its schools understand that many families within the school community are affected by custody and other related legal disputes. The Diocese and its schools work to balance sensitivity to difficult family situations and the interests of safety and orderly school administration. Involving school personnel in family and custody diverts finite school resources from the school's primary function. As a result, it is important that families within the school community who are affected by custody and other related legal disputes read and understand the following policies and procedures.

Generally, a child's biological or adoptive parents have equal rights to custody of and visitation with the child unless and until a court orders otherwise. When this arrangement has been changed by court order, it is the responsibility of the affected student's family to provide the school with a complete, final, signed copy of the relevant order and to point out to the school any relevant portions of the order. Unless and until a student's family does so, the school may assume that both of a child's biological or adoptive parents have equal rights to custody of and visitation with the student.

It is the responsibility of the parents, not the school, to ensure that the school is promptly provided with any relevant original or amended custody orders. Schools will take reasonably practical steps to facilitate compliance with relevant family court orders. However, it is the responsibility of the family, and not the school, to enforce family court orders regarding a student. School personnel are not family law attorneys and are not responsible for interpreting or enforcing custody or other family court orders.

**Attorneys representing parents in custody disputes should not contact school personnel directly, including to request the production of documents and execution of supporting affidavits for use in litigation. Parents may obtain contact information for diocesan legal counsel from the school and should provide this information to the parents' attorneys if school involvement in a custody dispute is requested. Additionally, if the school is required to engage counsel to participate in witness interviews, depositions, and/or trial preparation involving attendance of a school employee, with respect to a legal matter involving the student, the parents of the affected student are jointly and severally liable to the school for all costs and attorneys' fees associated therewith. If the school is required to engage counsel to interpret or otherwise advise the school regarding a custody or other family court order or dispute, the parents of the affected student are jointly and severally liable to the school for all costs and attorneys' fees associated therewith. As an exception to this general rule,**

upon request by either parent, the school will generally, at the chief administrator's sole discretion, provide one copy of a student's central file (e.g., attendance records, report cards, enrollment documents, etc....) with a supporting business records affidavit to both parents or their attorneys free of charge.

Diocesan schools are private property and are not open to the public. Additionally, it is detrimental to the well-being of the affected students and to the school community as a whole when family disputes are brought onto school property. Parents are expected to do everything possible to avoid parental confrontations or arguments on school grounds. The chief administrator of the school or his or her designee has full discretion to exclude any person from the school when, in his or her sole discretion, doing so is necessary or appropriate. School personnel may contact law enforcement for assistance when doing so is necessary to enforce this discretion. If a parent who is prohibited by court order from coming to or near the school attempts to enter the school, the school may call the police and/or seek other appropriate recourse.

If school personnel believe that the behavior of a parent or other legally responsible adult presents an imminent threat of harm to a student, the school may refuse to release the student to the parent or other legally responsible adult or take such other steps, including but not limited to contacting law enforcement or the student's emergency contact, as the school deems necessary.

### 3. REPORTS TO AND COOPERATION WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT

#### a. Reports to Law Enforcement

Texas law requires the principal of a private school, or his or her designee, to notify law enforcement if the principal has reasonable grounds to believe that certain crimes listed in section 37.015 of the Texas Education Code. The notice provided to the police must include the name and address of each student the person believes may have participated in the activity and must also be provided to each employee of the school who has regular conduct with a student whose conduct is the subject of the notice. It is the policy of the Diocese of Dallas and its schools to comply with this statutory requirement.

#### b. Cooperation with Law Enforcement and Child Abuse Investigations

Texas law requires schools to make students available for interviews by child protective workers in connection with an investigation into suspected child abuse. The child protective worker may or may not allow a school representative to witness the interview. Diocese of Dallas schools will cooperate with such interview requests.

From time to time, law enforcement officers also seek to interview students while at school in connection with an allegation or suspicion that the student has committed a crime. When faced with such a request, school personnel will refer the requesting officer to the school's chief administrator or his or her designee. The chief administrator or designee will request additional information regarding the nature of the interview requested and the allegations or suspicions relating to the student. The chief administrator or designee will, if the crime is not serious and contemporaneous or imminent, also request that the interview be delayed until the student's parent or other legally responsible adult is present. School personnel will then notify the student's parent, other legally responsible adult, or emergency contact as soon as possible.

If the officer refuses to delay the interview until the student's parent or other legally responsible adult arrives, the chief administrator or designee will request to be present during the interview. **However, if the officer refuses to allow the chief administrator to be present and refuses to delay the interview,**

**school personnel will not physically prevent the officer from conducting the interview, and the parent or other legally responsible adult signing below agrees that the school is under no duty to do so.**

#### **4. PARENTAL COOPERATION AND BEHAVIOR**

All members of the school community, including parents, guardians, and family members, are expected to comply with all school rules and policies while on campus and in communications with the school, be respectful, cooperate with the school with respect to all decisions affecting the student, and avoid behavior which disrupts the orderly administration of the school. A community member's failure to meet these expectations jeopardizes school administration, requires the school to expend limited resources to address inappropriate and unnecessary behavior, and detracts from the school's core mission and, as a result, may jeopardize a student's continued participation in the school community. At the school's sole discretion, the failure of a student's parents or other family members to comply with these expectations, separate and apart from the student's conduct, may result in suspension or expulsion of the student.

#### **5. REIMBURSEMENT FOR SCHOOL COSTS AND ATTORNEY'S FEES**

The Diocese of Dallas and its schools recognize the financial sacrifice many of its families make to participate in the school community. Out of respect for this sacrifice and in recognition of the school's responsibility to wisely steward financial resources for the benefit of all members of the school community, the Diocese and its schools have implemented the following policy:

From time to time, a school is required to retain outside legal counsel to respond to parent requests or demands, requests or subpoenas for testimony or documents in legal proceedings to which the school is not a party, or to address other issues affecting or involving only one or a few students or families. In such situations, the school is typically required to expend finite financial resources to address an issue which otherwise affects only a very small portion of the school community. To ensure that the school community at large is not adversely impacted in such situations, the school will, when the chief administrator in his or her sole discretion deems it appropriate, require the family or families involved to reimburse the school for attorney's fees, costs of court, and other expenses incurred (including, without limitation, the cost to secure substitute staff when school personnel are subpoenaed to testify in court proceedings).

**Accordingly, each person who acknowledges his or her agreement to the contents of this Handbook, either by written or electronic signature or by enrolling a student in a school within the Diocese of Dallas, agrees that, in the School's absolute and sole discretion, he or she shall indemnify and reimburse the School, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Dallas, and their respective officers, employees, agents, and representatives ("Indemnitees") on demand from and for any and all attorney's fees and related costs including without limitation the cost of responding to requests for documents or other records or information arising from, in connection with, or related to 1) a violation of any provision of this Handbook, 2) any request or demand made upon the School which pertains to a legal proceeding to which the School is not a party, 3) threatening or harassing communications directed to any Indemnitee, or 4) threatened or actual litigation against any Indemnitee which does not result in a final and appealable judgment adverse to the Indemnitee.**

## TRAFFIC PATTERNS and POLICIES

**Safety Regulations:** The following regulations were made for your child's safety and for an organized pattern of traffic before and after school. The main objective of the traffic pattern is to maintain a consistent flow of traffic in one direction.

1. Please do not arrive before 3:10pm to not block the rectory, church parking, or Plano streets.
2. Follow the traffic directions given by the teachers on duty and the directional arrows and designated flow of traffic.
3. Please drive as slow as possible for the safety of all.
4. Do not pull out of the line of traffic to pass other cars in line.
5. Do not cut in front of any cars already in line. Proceed to the back of the line.
6. Blocking the center lane on Alma Dr. is against city ordinance.
7. Drivers need to stay in their cars. Students will not be released to cross the flow of traffic to get to a car in other areas of the parking lot.
8. Parents are not permitted to walk up to the doors to pick up their children.
9. Parking spaces adjacent to all school buildings, gyms, and the athletic field are not available during arrival and dismissal. If parents need to enter the school or Early Childhood building during the school day, they may park in spaces not adjacent to the buildings.
10. Please do not park and come into the school minutes before dismissal.
11. Children must enter and leave cars on the right side of the car only.
12. School staff will not buckle or unbuckle students from vehicles.
13. Students will not be allowed to re-enter the school building after they have been officially dismissed at 3:30 P.M. If students need to come back to get books, assignments etc. re-entry may only take place after dismissal is finished at 3:50PM.
14. Any students not picked up by 3:50PM will be walked to the After-School Program.
15. Parking across the street from the school campus and having students cross the street is prohibited.

**Cell Phone Use** - While driving in carpool lanes, we ask that you not be on your cell phones. All roads around St. Mark are school zones and any use of cellular devices is prohibited. When you turn in, please carry forward the same attention to the safety of our children and do not be on your phone. We appreciate your cooperation for the safety of all children.

**Arrival & Dismissal Procedures:** For dismissal, cars should have a sign with the student's first and last name printed in black marker with letters at least 2 inches tall clearly displayed in the front windshield on the passenger's side of the car. For safety reasons, parents are not to walk up and get their children.

### **Area A:**

This is the point of arrival for any students 7:15am-7:35am and dismissal for **carpools**. Cars should enter the driveway #2 off Alma (closest to the flagpole); proceed around the flagpole and continue along the north side of the cafetorium entrance. Once students have been picked up at curbside, continue the route out through Exit #2 or Exit #1 if the traffic flow allows.

### **Area B:**

This is the point of arrival for any students 7:40am – 7:55am and dismissal for **single families of PK-5<sup>th</sup> grade** (meaning those who are not in carpools or with middle school students). Cars should enter driveway #2 off Alma, #3 or #4 off 15<sup>th</sup> street, proceed through the church and ASP parking lot, curve around in the lot parallel to the building and pick up at curbside. Politely take turns from all entrances forming the line closest to the school. Once students have been picked up at curbside, exit safely.

**IMPORTANT Information:** If you arrive before 3:10 PM cars stay in a single file line, to the far right, parked north of the rectory garage. After 3:10 PM as you pull forward, stay in a single file line, to the right of the red “fire lane” line. Eventually that lane widens around the island of parked teacher cars allowing two pick-up lines to form, one for ECE (right lane) and one for elementary school (left lane). Students will not be dismissed without a family name sign prominently visible to the staff.

- For safety reasons, please do not block or go past the rectory garage before 3:10 PM. Just in case an emergency happens, we need to keep the areas in front of the school buildings open for emergency response teams. It also creates a bottleneck preventing cars from getting through and our Pastors from entering/exiting their garage. Thank you for your cooperation.

### **Area C:**

This is the point of arrival for any students 7:40am – 7:55am. This is the point of **dismissal for middle school students and siblings of middle school students**. Cars should enter driveway #5 or #6 off Alma that is near to the playground. Cars alternate lining up from both lines #5 and #6 to form one line for pick up. Proceed past the gym and around the parking lot to the field. Continue the route and leave through Exit #5. You must take a right turn exiting to Alma Drive.

See following page for traffic pattern flow

4 Traffic Pattern: Arrival & Dismissal



