

St. Mary Catholic School

"Home of the Cougars"

2017-2018 Parent/Student Handbook

***1152 Seminole Drive
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NCLB Blue Ribbon School of Excellence***

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to St. Mary's Catholic School! We are happy to have you as members of our school family. As always, we are committed to providing an excellent curriculum and education along with guiding each student to find his/her talents and gifts and to learn to treat others with dignity and respect. Pope John Paul II said that "Christianity is an attitude of amazement at the dignity of the human person." It is my hope that we can instill this powerful message into the hearts of our students.

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

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

Sincerely,

Sandy Basinger, Principal

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RIGHT TO AMEND HANDBOOK

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

OUR COMMITMENT TO PARENTS

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

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

DIOCESAN SCHOOLS MISSION STATEMENT

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

ST. MARY SCHOOL MISSION AND BELIEFS STATEMENT

St. Mary's School, animated by the Spirit of Jesus, is committed to the Catholic education of children, Pre-K through Grade 8. We provide a welcoming community where students come for spiritual, academic, physical and personal growth, in a Christ-centered and family-centered environment starting students on a life-long quest for excellence, justice, peace and service to others.

The following ten belief statements reflect the philosophy from which we teach and operate our school.

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

PARENTS AS PARTNERS

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

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

We also ask that parents be responsible for the following:

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

PARENT ORGANIZATIONS

HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

All parents are members of the Home and School Association which meets four times a year, usually in September, November, February and May. Meetings are held to give updates on the school and to disseminate important information to parents. Every family is encouraged to be represented at the meetings.

HOME AND SCHOOL ADVISORY BOARD

The Home and School Board is a policy making organization. Its role is to advise and support the administration in the work of the school. The Board meets monthly regarding current issues concerning St. Mary School.

SCHOOL FINANCE COMMITTEE

The School Finance Committee advises the administration concerning financial matters of the school. They also review the monthly financial statements to ensure fiscal responsibility and accountability.

ACCREDITATION AND AWARDS

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

A

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

CURRICULUM

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

Religion - Catholic doctrine and tradition, Bible study, Social Justice, preparation for the reception of the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation.

K-8 students will attend mass on Wednesdays unless a Holy Day falls on another day. Students will then attend mass on the Holy Day. PreK students will attend mass with buddies on occasion.

Students in Grades 5 and 8 will be given the ACRE (Assessment of Catechesis of Religious Education) Test in February.

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

Mathematics - Mathematics Skills, Pre-Algebra, and Algebra I.

Students in Grade 8 who are in advanced math qualify for a high school credit in Algebra I.

Physical Education - Physical fitness programs appropriate for each grade.

Spanish –Grades K-5 Basic Spanish vocabulary

Grades 6-8 Vocabulary, common expressions, grammar, conversation, and culture.

Students in Grade 8 who have successfully completed the year may qualify for a high school credit in Spanish I.

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

Science - General Sciences, Laboratory Experiences, Science Research.

Fine Arts - Music, Art, Performing Arts, and Band.

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

REPORT CARDS

Report cards are issued after each twelve-week grading period. Students in grades 1-8 receive report cards every twelve weeks or three times each year. Students in grades Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten receive developmental report cards twice a year, once in January and again at the end of the school year. Report cards will not be given to parents before the assigned date. Parents are encouraged to confer with teachers by appointment whenever the need arises. Communication between parents and teachers is essential for the success of the child.

GRADING SCALE

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

A = 90 – 100	1= Satisfactory
B = 89—80	2 = Needs Improvement
C = 79—70	3= Unsatisfactory
D = 69 – 60	
F = 59 or below	

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

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

ACADEMIC PROBATION

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

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

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

ALTAR SERVERS

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

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

The school office is open daily during school hours. All parents, volunteers, and visitors must check in at the school office and get a name tag to enter the school grounds for any reason.

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

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

OFFICE RECORDS

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

SCHOOL/OFFICE HOURS

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

Students in grades PreK through 1 grade may be escorted to class by a parent/guardian. After the first two weeks of class, students should be allowed to enter the classroom and unpack their backpacks and get ready for class on their own. This practice allows the student to become self-sufficient, self-confident, and independent. The rules about unpacking backpacks also applies to older siblings.

TRANSFER/WITHDRAWAL OF STUDENTS

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

ADMISSIONS INFORMATION

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

AGE CRITERIA

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

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

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

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

DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Documentation for admission includes the following:

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

HEALTH RECORDS/IMMUNIZATIONS

All students must be in compliance with Brevard County Health Department regulations before they can enter the school. A health certificate, which includes an immunization certificate for the prevention of communicable diseases as required by the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services must be presented and verified before the child is admitted to class. Every child entering St. Mary School for the first time must present to the school office a certification of immunization or a medical exemption. Parents are urged to proceed immediately to complete the immunization of their children so that their children will not be denied entrance to school. Religious Exemptions for Immunizations are no longer accepted by Diocese of Orlando Catholic Schools. St. Mary School will only accept a Medical Exemption for Immunizations from families who elect not to have their child(ren) immunized.

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

Florida Compulsory Immunization Law also requires that all students entering seventh grade to have been immunized for Hepatitis B, measles, and have received a tetanus-diphtheria booster in the last five years. These immunizations may be obtained at a doctor's office or at the County Health Department. Certification forms are available through the County Health Department and must be signed by a doctor or authorized County Health Department official.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

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

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

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

MORNING DROP-OFF

Parents of PreK and Kindergarten students may park in the north parking lot between the Early Childhood Center and the Pastoral Center. Parents of students in Grades 1-8 may also park in that lot if they need to walk to their child's classroom. Car line begins at the entrance to the church parking lot off of the street next to the Rockledge Plaza. No one can enter the car line in the morning from the north parking lot. Under no circumstances should drivers leave their cars unattended in the car line. Please park in the north lot if you need to leave your vehicle to get a child.

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

AFTERNOON PICK-UP

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

EARLY DEPARTURE

When a child departs school early due to an appointment or illness, the parent must come to the front office and sign the child out. Adults may be asked for identification if not known to the school personnel. Only adults who have been authorized to pick up children will be permitted to sign a student out.

CHANGES IN PICK-UP PLANS

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

STORM DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

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

ATHLETICS

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

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

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

ELIGIBILITY (includes Athletics, Band, Choir, and Drama)

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

STUDENT ABSENCE ON GAME DAY

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

ATTENDANCE

The Diocesan Office of Schools, in compliance with State Law, establishes the required number of school days for students to be 181 for 2017-2018. Regular attendance is the actual attendance of a student during the entire school day. **If a child is not in school, the parent should notify the school daily before 8:30 A.M.** Any student missing half or more of the school day is considered absent for that day.

- Parents should contact the school to verify the child's absence by email, written note, phone call, or text message. Each teacher sends a list of absences to the school office daily. Office staff will call home if parents have not called the office to verify the absence and whereabouts of the child.
- In cases of excessive absence, the principal shall decide what action to take in regard to promotion. Excessive absences undermine the academic success of the students and should be considered important.

Any student who accumulates more than 13 days absence in a trimester, without medical or other valid written excuse, may require a report to the Florida Department of Children and Families. This is the law regarding truancy of students. Please make sure that your child's attendance is in accord with the law.

MAKE UP WORK WHEN ABSENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

TARDINESS (See ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION – School Office/Hours)

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

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

B

BEHAVIOR POLICY

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

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

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

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

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

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

ELEMENTARY GRADES (PREK – 5) CONDUCT POLICY

The goal of the conduct policy at the elementary level is to use positive feedback and acknowledgement when students follow the school rules and corrective feedback and consequences when students do not follow the rules. When students fail to follow school rules the following steps are implemented:

1. **Warning**—Student receives a warning and they are given a yellow card
2. **Classroom Time Out**—If a student violates a rule the second time in a day, the student receives an orange card and is directed to sit at a time out place designated in the classroom for a specified period of time. When the time out is over the student will return to their regular seat.
3. **Home Contact**—a third rules infraction will receive a blue card and the student is required to go to a designated classroom and fill out a form on the reason they received a blue card. The form is signed by the teacher and the child takes the form home to be signed by the parent and returned the next day. If the form is not returned the next day the parent will be notified. A classroom conference with the teacher may be required.
4. **Office Referral**—if a student receives a red card for a fourth infraction, the teacher completes an office referral form and the student is sent to the office. A school administrator will call the parent to inform them. A second or third referral can result in a suspension.

MIDDLE GRADES (6-8) CONDUCT POLICY

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

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

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

Types of Behavior Not Accepted at St. Mary School:

- a) possession or use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco or weapons*
- b) stealing

- c) possession of items which could harm themselves or others, such as knives, matches, etc.
- d) use of bad, abusive or disrespectful language, or any behavior degrading to human dignity
- e) disrespect toward a teacher, an aide, office personnel, a bus driver, a visitor, a volunteer or a fellow student
- f) defiance or argumentativeness
- g) destruction of property
- h) fighting
- i) disrupting regular school routine
- j) leaving school grounds
- k) throwing rocks or any harmful objects
- l) gum chewing at any time on the school grounds
- m) cheating or helping others to cheat
- n) premature boy/girl relationships or public displays of affection
- o) bringing novelty items to school without the teacher's permission (This would include but is not limited to: hand held computer games, toys, sports cards, CDs, radios, CD players, etc.)
- p) running or bike riding in the breezeways. Skateboards are forbidden.
- q) excessive or extreme use of make-up; dyed hair, or a hairstyle that is a distraction to the learning process in the opinion of the administration

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

Off Campus Conduct

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

BICYCLES

Bicycles are parked in the bicycle racks provided on the north side of the school office. Children must park bicycles in the allotted area and must not ride them again until school is dismissed. **All students who ride bicycles to and from school must wear a bicycle helmet when riding their bike as directed by Florida State Law.** Bicycles on school grounds must be locked. **NO ONE SHALL RIDE BICYCLES ON SIDEWALKS AROUND THE SCHOOL.**

BIRTHDAYS

Students may bring treats to share with the class on his or her birthday. Birthday party invitations may be distributed at the school under the following conditions:

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

BULLYING

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

- A. **Physical** – hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing, pulling, taking and/or damaging personal belongings, extorting money, blocking or impeding student movement, unwelcome physical contact, hazing
- B. **Verbal** – taunting, malicious teasing, insulting, name calling, making threats
- C. **Emotional/Psychological** – spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships, coercion, blackmailing, or engaging in social exclusion/shunning, extortion, terrorizing or intimidating
- D. **Cyberbullying** – the use of information and communication technologies such as e-mail, cell phone text messages, instant messaging, defamatory personal websites, and other social media

websites to support repeated, deliberate, and hostile behavior by and individual or a group, that intends to threaten or harm another person or which substantially disrupts or interferes with the operation of a school or an individual student's ability to receive an education

- E. **Sexual** – sexual harassment and abuse involving physical contact, sexting, unwanted touching, inappropriate social networking

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

C

CARE OF PROPERTY, BOOKS AND MATERIALS

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

CATHOLIC IDENTITY

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

CELL PHONE/ELECTRONIC DEVICE USE

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

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

Electronic Readers: The same restrictions apply to MP3 players, IPOD's, DVD Players and other similar electronic devices. (See Acceptable Use Policy for more detailed information). St. Mary's School also has an electronic policy for students who bring a Kindle, Nook, or any other device that will be used for reading only. The student is not allowed to activate the Internet or use the device to play video games, check e-mail, etc. **If a parent wants a child to use a Kindle, Nook, etc. for reading purposes only, then they need to sign the permission policy that is available in the front office.**

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

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

CHAPERONES (Also see Field Trips)

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

CHEATING (See Academic Dishonesty)

CHILD CUSTODY

Access to the child, student records, and other confidential information shall be granted to parents and legal guardians unless otherwise stated in legal court documents. It is required that the custodial parent provide the principal with an official updated copy of the custody order. Before accepting a student for admission, school personnel must verify that the person enrolling the child is the legal parent/guardian.

CHILD WELFARE

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

CLINIC

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

MEDICATION AND POLICY ON SICKNESS

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

1. Fever (**students should be without fever for 24 hours before returning to school**)
2. Vomiting
3. Highly communicable infections such as conjunctivitis (pink eye), chicken pox, strep, staph, head lice, mononucleosis, etc.
4. Any condition requiring extraordinary medical care (anything beyond the simple supervision of taking oral medication)
5. Any condition that would severely disrupt the educational process

Parents of any student who needs medication must fill out the medication form in the school office, and must inform the office of any ongoing medical conditions that could require emergency care. St. Mary School follows the Diocesan Policy on distribution of medication, which is Florida School Law, State Statute #232.46 1.b. 1&2:

1. "For each prescribed medication, the student's parent or guardian shall provide to the school principal a written statement which shall grant to the principal or his/her designee permission to assist in the administration of such medication and which shall explain the necessity for such medication to be provided during the school day, including any occasion when the student is away from school property on official school business. The school principal or his/her designee shall assist the student in the administration of such medication."
2. "Each prescribed medication to be administered by school personnel shall be received and stored in its original container. When the medication is not in use, it shall be stored in its original container in a secure fashion under lock and key in a location designated by the principal".

This law applies to prescription medication and over the counter medication, such as Tylenol, aspirin, cold medication, cough drops, etc. By law, medication brought to school must come in its original bottle, with a signed permission form from parent (and doctor if prescription), and should have the child's name and dosage taped to it. Permission forms are available in the office. It is advisable to take one with you when taking the child to the doctor.

CONCERNS, QUESTIONS AND COMPLAINTS PROTOCOL

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

CONDUCT OF PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

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

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

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

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

CONFERENCES

At St. Mary's school we recognize the importance of parents and teachers working together. Parent teacher conferences are an important tool in this process. Conferences are arranged during the 1st and 2nd trimesters to give parents of students in grades PreK-8 an opportunity to meet with their child's teacher/teachers to discuss their child's progress.

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

At various times during the school year it may become necessary for parents to schedule a conference with a teacher outside of these scheduled conferences. Recognizing that the teacher is most knowledgeable in the day to day classroom activities, the procedure for conferences should be as follows:

- Step 1: Parents meet with the teacher to discuss classroom difficulties or behaviors. Conferences can be arranged by calling the school office or contacting the teacher directly. Teachers may also request conferences with parents by contacting the parent through home phone or e-mail.
- Step 2: If after discussion with the classroom teacher differences cannot be resolved, then the parents may request a conference with a member of the school administration.

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

D

DETENTION

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

DROPPED OFF ITEMS

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

E

E-MAIL AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

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

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

Engagement in e-mail, IM, texting, or online blogs such as Facebook, Twitter, etc. may result in disciplinary actions if the content of the student's blog, etc. includes defamatory comments regarding the school, the faculty, other students or the parish.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS DUE TO WEATHER

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

EMERGENCY DRILLS

FIRE DRILLS

State law requires that fire drills be held monthly. During the fire drills, students and teachers should follow these steps:

1. Rise in silence when the alarm sounds.
2. Walk out of the classroom in single file line.
3. Teachers will close doors and turn off lights.
4. Walk to the assigned place quickly, in single file at all times, and in silence.
5. Stand in area assigned to the classroom until the all-clear alarm sounds.
6. Return to building quietly when signal is given.

LOCK-DOWN DRILLS

Lockdown drills are held three times per year. The procedures are as follows:

1. Listen for the code words.
2. Remain in the room, and sit on the floor as far away as possible from doors and windows.
3. All doors are to be locked and will remain locked until the all clear announcement is made.

EXTENDED CARE

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

After School Care is available on school days until 6:00 p.m. Aftercare is an extension of the school day, and all students in Aftercare must abide by the same rules and regulations that they would during the school day. Aftercare is also available on early dismissal days and during teacher in-service days when staff is available. Responsible persons are in charge of children in After School Care, under the direction of the Principal. Closing time is always 6:00 p.m. Parents who pick up their children after 6:00 p.m. will be

charged an additional \$20.00 per hour the first time this occurs. If a child is not picked up by closing time a second time the parent will be asked to find other arrangements for after school care.

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

F

FIELD TRIPS

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

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

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

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

TUITION AND FEES

Families are given tuition categories and a list of fees that are due at the time of registration. Families must meet the requirements for each category in order to receive either the Category 1, Category 2, or Category 3 tuition rate. **REGISTRATION FEES ARE NON-REFUNDABLE.**

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

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

Tuition Payment Options:

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

- Pay in full by July 1st, or
- Pay ½ annual tuition by July 1st and the remainder by November 1st, or
- Enroll in the FACTS Tuition Management Service. Payments begin in July of each year.
- The registration fee for students is due upon registration

- All registration Fees are NON-REFUNDABLE.
- There will be a returned check fee (issued by the bank) for all checks made payable to St. Mary School that do not clear the bank.
- Families that have two checks returned for insufficient funds during the year will no longer be allowed to write checks to the school. Payments will be needed in cash or money order.

FACTS Tuition Management Service Overview

- Pay tuition over 10, 11 or 12 months via automatic deduction.
- Enroll online from www.stmarys-school.org and bring your enrollment form to the school office
- If a family wishes to delay payments they must contact the front office for approval.

Withdrawal Policy

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

FINGERPRINTING

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

H

HOMEWORK

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

- Grades K-2 10-30 minutes
- Grades 3-5 20-40 minutes
- Grades 6-8 60-90 minutes

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

If a child is absent, parents may contact the school office early in the school day and request homework assignments. The school secretary will request that the student’s teacher submit all homework assignments to the office before the end of the school day. Parents may pick up the homework in the

school office between 2:30 and 3:00 p.m. or can request that another child in the family be given the homework.

HOME AND SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

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

HONOR ROLL

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

First Honors

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

Second Honors

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

Seventh and eighth grade students who are on the First Honors honor roll for all three trimesters of a school year will be eligible for the Overall Excellence Award at the end of the school year. Eighth grade students who are on First or Second Honors for all three trimesters will receive an Honor cord to wear at graduation and will be deemed an Honor Graduate.

All students in grades 4-8 who are on the First or Second Honor roll for all three trimesters of a school year may be eligible for an Honor Roll award.



INSURANCE

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



LIBRARY

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

LOST AND FOUND

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

LUNCH PROGRAM

Saint Mary's School offers a hot lunch program daily. Meals are prepared in the Parish Hall by employees of A+ Fiesta Catering School Lunch program.

Students may also choose to bring their lunch each day. Milk, juice, or water are available for purchase by all students. Any parent who brings a lunch for a child during the school day must bring the lunch to the main office. The office staff will call the student to the office to pick up the lunch.

Due to lack of space in the cafeteria area, parent visitation with students during lunch is discouraged.

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

M

MASS

All students will attend school Mass each Wednesday morning. Students are encouraged to bring food items to take to the altar during the Presentation of the Gifts. All food items will go to Helping Hands to help feed the needy. All students in grades K-8 attend the liturgy weekly. Students in grades PreK3 and PreK4 attend occasionally. Parents are always welcome to attend these celebrations. During the week in which a Holy Day occurs, we will attend Mass on the Holy Day and not attend Mass on Friday.

N

NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY

The National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) is sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Principals and was established to recognize outstanding middle school students. NJHS is open to all 6th, 7th and 8th grade students after the 1st Trimester grades have been published. . Members of NJHS participate in service projects that benefit their school and community.

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

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

NOVELTIES AND TOYS

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

NUT DAYS

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

On NUT days, students may NOT wear:

- *any shoes other than athletic shoes – no flip-flop sandals, open back shoes, tennis shoes that convert to roller skates, cloth-like shoes, slippers, boots, etc.
- *tight yoga pants unless student is wearing a long t-shirt that goes down to the top of the leg
- *tank tops
- *T-shirts with inappropriate writing
- *biker shorts
- *pajama pants
- *make-up or nail polish
- *short shorts or skirts
- *baggy pants pulled down around the hips (boys)
- *any low cut jeans, skirts, and shorts or ripped jeans
- *low cut or excessively tight shirts
- *shirts that are too short and expose the stomach area
- *no sweat pants except for St. Mary's uniform sweat pants

Good Rule: If you think you shouldn't wear it, you shouldn't.

P

PARENT-TEACHER COOPERATION

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

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

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

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

PARTIES AT SCHOOL

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

PHOTOGRAPHY

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

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

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

PERMANENT RECORDS

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

PLAYGROUND

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

PROMOTION POLICY AND RETENTION POLICY

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

R

RELEASE OF STUDENTS

Parents are not to pick children up for appointments directly from the playground or classroom but from the office only, where the child will be called and signed out. Teachers will only release a student after being instructed by the office to do so.

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

RADON INSPECTION

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

RELEASE OF STUDENT TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

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

REGISTRATION

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

S

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

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

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

SCHOOL PROPERTY

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

SCOUT UNIFORMS

Scout uniforms may be worn on scheduled meeting days.

SEARCH OF STUDENTS AND THEIR PROPERTY

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

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

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

STANDARDIZED TESTING

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

STANDARDIZED TESTING IN THE DIOCESE OF ORLANDO

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

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

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

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

STUDENT ACTIVITIES (dependent on participation and mentors)

Boys and Girls Basketball	Cheerleading
Flag Football	Spelling Bee
Volleyball	Soccer
Altar Servers	Middle School Chorus
Drama Club	Elementary Choir
Band-Advanced and Beginning	Drama Club
National Junior Honor Society (6, 7, and 8)	
Science Research	
Craft Club	Lego Club
Robotics League	
Young Tech Explorers Club	

TELEPHONE

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

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

TEXTBOOKS

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

U (see Uniform Policy Addendum)

V

VISITORS

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

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

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

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

UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS FOR BOYS AND GIRLS GRADES PREK - 8

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

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

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

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

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

GROOMING/HAIR POLICY

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

ALL STUDENTS:

- Hair should be neatly groomed and combed away from the face so as not to cover the face
- No hair dyeing, including (but not limited to) chunking, tips, streaking, etc.
- No shaved or intentionally bald heads
- No designs are to be shaved into hair
- No extreme styles, including (but not limited to) skater cuts, spiked hair, or tails

BOYS:

- Natural hair length must not extend more than halfway over the ears (earlobes must be visible), must not extend below the eyebrows, and must not extend below the top of the collar of a properly worn and buttoned uniform shirt
- Sideburns are not permitted
- Male students should be clean shaven every day
- For very curly hair, the length must not exceed two inches from the scalp

GIRLS:

- Conservative hair clips are allowed for the purpose of keeping hair out of the face; excessive ribbons, bandanas, etc., are not permitted

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

JEWELRY

- Jewelry should be minimal, discreet and should not distract from the uniform.
- Jewelry should be limited to one watch, one ring, one bracelet and simple pendants on a narrow gold or silver chain.
- Students may not wear oversized necklaces, puka beads, dangling or oversized earrings, large hoop earrings (larger than the size of a quarter), bracelets or anklets made of rubber, plastic, string or other kinds of jewelry as determined by the administration.
- Necklaces must be worn inside the shirt.
- Boys are not permitted to wear earrings.
- Visible tattoos are prohibited (unless in accordance with the child's religious tradition, i.e., Hindu)

MAKEUP/NAIL POLISH

- No makeup – this includes foundations, powder, eyeliner, eye shadow, mascara, lip gloss, etc.
- Fingernail polish is not permitted
- No artificial fingernails, tips or designs on nails are permitted

UNIFORM GUIDELINES

Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten

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

Girls--Grades 1-5

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

Girls--Grades 6-8

- SKIRTS or SKORTS– St. Mary’s plaid or khaki Walking shorts – Khaki or Navy Blue
- Skirts, skorts, or shorts should be of an appropriate length. The skirt length will reach from the waist to a point just above the knees that is no more than 2 inches above the top of the kneecap.
- WHITE or ROYAL BLUE COLLARED PULLOVER KNIT SHIRT with St. Mary’s silk screen emblem
- BLACK or WHITE ATHLETIC SHOES (**minimal trim**)
- White or black crew or ankle socks (**socks must be clearly visible above the top of the shoe**)
- Tights/leggings are permitted for girls on cold days and should be solid navy blue or black (to be worn under the skirt or skort only).
- Navy Blue sweatshirt, sweater, or jacket with St. Mary’s logo for cold weather
- **Optional: Navy Blue St. Mary’s sweatpants for cold weather**

Boys --Grades 1-5

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

Boys—Grades 6-8

- DRESS NAVY OR KHAKI SHORTS OR DRESS NAVY OR KHAKI PANTS (must not be oversized and hang below the waist or below the knee)
- WHITE or ROYAL BLUE COLLARED PULLOVER KNIT SHIRT with St. Mary’s silk screen emblem
- BLACK or BROWN BELT – **No belts with designs (like skater belts)**
- BLACK or WHITE ATHLETIC SHOES (**minimal trim**)
- Gray, silver, blue, or brown shoes are not acceptable, and students will be asked to purchase another pair of shoes if they do not comply with the dress code guidelines

- High top shoes are permitted but must follow color and trim guideline
- High tops can be worn this year IF the socks can be seen at least an inch above the shoe top. If the socks cannot be seen an inch above the shoe top, then the student will not be allowed to wear the high tops.
- Shoes must be properly tied with laces showing – laces must match the color of the shoe
- WHITE OR BLACK CREW OR ANKLE SOCKS (**socks must be clearly visible above the top of the shoe, including high top shoes**)
- Navy Blue sweatshirt or jacket with St. Mary's logo for cold weather
- **Optional: Navy Blue St. Mary's sweatpants for cold weather**

OUTER GARMENTS FOR COLD WEATHER

- When cold weather occurs, only St. Mary's School sweatshirts, sweaters, or jackets are permitted as outer wear. Students may not wear any other coat or jacket. Please purchase one sweatshirt or jacket so that your child has the appropriate outerwear when the weather gets cold.

PE UNIFORM

Girls-Grades 1-5

- NAVY P.E. SHORTS with St. Mary's emblem

Girls-Grades 6-8

- NAVY P.E. SHORTS with St. Mary's emblem
- PE T-shirts with St. Mary's emblem

Boys Grades 1-8

- PE T-shirts with St. Mary's emblem

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

