



## **Student Handbook 2026-2027**

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# Electronic Student Handbook 2026-2027

Changes and additions from last year are in red

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# **Welcome to Saint Mary Catholic Community School!**

We are happy that you have chosen to become a member of our school family. May your school year be a memorable one, blessed with growth in faith, knowledge, and love.

## **Purpose of the Electronic Handbook**

The Saint Mary Catholic Community School Parent/Student Handbook is used to answer any questions you may have regarding the general philosophy of our school, as well as to acquaint you with the policies, rules, and procedures that will be followed. The regulations cited are general guidelines and are not all-inclusive. Interpretation of all rules and regulations are subject to the discretion of the school administration. Each teacher will provide additional information regarding policies, rules, and procedures specific to their grade level. Read all materials thoroughly and reference them throughout the year as needed. Acceptance and adherence to the school's policies do not create a contractual relationship. Please note that all items in red reflect a change/addition to last year's handbook. If you have any further questions, please feel free to call the school office.

## **Mission and Philosophy Statements**

### **Mission Statement**

Saint Mary Catholic Community School is committed to the effective engagement of staff, students, parents, church, and community to provide a quality Catholic education in a safe and orderly environment. We hold high expectations that all students will be prepared to function successfully as productive, responsible, and caring Christian citizens in a diverse, global, technological society. The staff believes it is important . . .

- To create an atmosphere that promotes lifelong learning with consistently high achievement.
- To promote academic excellence through decision-making, communication skills, good citizenship and problem-solving skills for each student to become successful in contributing to society.
- To create an environment reflecting order, discipline, and respect for the purpose of establishing productive use of time and effort.
- To maintain an effective climate which encourages active participation from students, parents, and the community while raising the level of achievement in all states of elementary education as reflected in standardized and alternative assessments.
- To stimulate independent and responsible learners by using an array of teaching approaches including the latest technology.

## **Philosophy**

St. Mary Catholic Community School is a community where Christ is the center and where, through the collaborative efforts of all, a Catholic atmosphere is created and the students learn to integrate academic knowledge with the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. A major emphasis is devoted to providing for the uniqueness of each child-intellectually, emotionally, socially, physically, and above all, spiritually, in preparation for an active, Christian lifestyle. No discrimination in programs is made on the basis of race, origin, color, gender, or religion. St. Mary Catholic Community School maintains the philosophy that all children can learn when nurtured in ways which meet individual needs. To this end, the staff is dedicated. Their effort, combined with individual motivation and cooperation from the home, will result in the development of the unique potential of each student.

## **Personnel Mission**

Recognizing the need to adequately prepare students to be effective Christian citizens, the personnel of St. Mary Catholic Community School are committed to working collaboratively toward the establishment of a worship, service, and educational community where the development and enhancement of each student, both spiritually and intellectually, is the utmost priority. To help students grow toward self-actualization, programs will be utilized which will help them:

- **Strengthen Faith Life**
- **Understand and internalize Christian values**
- **Respect all life**
- **Develop a positive self-image**
- **Realize talents and abilities**
- **Master basic skills**
- **Express thoughts and ideas clearly**
- **Become independent thinkers**
- **Acquire a sensitivity to cultural diversity**
- **Experience a positive sense of community**
- **Use current best practices in our constantly evolving technological world**

The successful completion of these programs will result in each student becoming a life-long learner equipped with the skills necessary to become a confident and contributing member of our Church and of society.

## **Home and School Partnership**

The primary goal of the Catholic School is the development of the faith and morals of the students. The philosophy and policies contained in this handbook serve to uphold and foster this primary goal. However, this cannot be accomplished without the support of the parents. It is therefore of the utmost importance to maintain consistency between the home and school environment.

Parents who opt to send their children to a Catholic School must be able to see the importance of maintaining this consistency so that the values taught and promoted in school, and reflected in this handbook, are fostered in the home.

Parents who, by their actions, do not support the philosophy and policies contained herein are, in fact, inhibiting the school's ability to preserve the integrity of its mission. They will then be notified of the problem and informed that unless the situation is rectified within a specified period of time, the school reserves the right to remove the child from the school or refuse registration for the next school year.

### **Agreement**

Parents and students are required to sign a statement indicating that they have read and understand this handbook. This statement can be found on the last page of the handbook, which is to be signed and returned to school by the date indicated on the agreement.

### **Amendments to the Handbook**

The Principal and Pastor retain the right to amend the handbook for just cause at any time throughout the school year.

### **Organization**

**Pastor-** Saint Mary's School is an integral part of the ministry of Saint Mary's Church and operates under the governance of the Saint Mary's Pastor in collaboration with the Saint Mary's Parish Pastoral Council and the Saint Mary's Parish Finance Council.

**Principal-** The Principal is the school's educational leader, responsible for all aspects of school administration, including the supervision and evaluation of the faculty. The Principal is the decision-maker in ordinary school matters. All school-related matters will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The Principal may confer with appropriate parties, which may include, but is not limited to, faculty members, parish leadership, health-care professionals, law enforcement, and/or legal professionals. The Principal will make a prudential judgment based on any or all of these considerations. The Principal serves as liaison between the school, the parish, and the local community.

**Assistant Principal-** The assistant principal has a wide variety of duties that include student discipline, staff supervision, oversight of the curriculum, textbook orders, state compliance, and more.

**Dean of Students-** The Dean of Students is primarily responsible for discipline of students. Other duties include monitoring the physical building and assisting in maintaining a safe environment.

**Faculty-** The faculty is responsible for the daily academic instruction of the student, the grading and evaluation of scholastic achievement, and the maintenance and promotion of discipline and growth patterns.

**Business Manager-** The Business Manager of Saint Mary's Church supports the principal in the administration of the school's financial affairs, insuring compliance with financial policies and practices of Saint Mary's Church and the Diocese of Gary.

**Faith Formation Coordinator-** The Faith Formation coordinator of Saint Mary's Church serves as a resource to the principal and faculty in their effort to nurture faith formation.

**Staff-** The staff serves the school community by providing support services that include student health care, communication, record-keeping, maintenance, food service, and teacher assistance.

**Parents-** Parents are the primary educators of their children, often the single most important influence on a child's values and attitudes. It is understood that parents enrolling their children in Saint Mary's School will cooperate with the school in the religious, moral, intellectual and social development of their children.

**Students-** The students are responsible for putting forth their best effort towards their academic education and spiritual growth. This involves setting high expectations, being responsible, working hard, and behaving in a manner that represents the Catholic faith by showing kindness and respect towards others.

### **Safe Environment**

St. Mary Catholic Community School is committed to providing a safe environment for all students.

### **Virtus Training**

All parents are required to be Virtus Trained. A list will be generated and maintained in our FACTS system.

### **Background Checks**

Every single parent and staff member must undergo a background check. All who wish to enter the school to interact with students, volunteer, attend field trips, etc. must receive a background check each year.

## **Admission Procedures**

### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

St. Mary Catholic Community School does not discriminate on the basis of religion, race, color, sex, sexual orientation, handicap, age, ancestry, and/or national origin. St. Mary's will make every possible effort to accept and educate students with differing abilities and needs. The list below represents a diocesan-wide policy:

### **Enrollment of Non-Citizens**

Catholic schools shall admit a non-citizen of the United States provided that the student meets all other admissions requirements. Current, relevant federal and state laws will be followed when admitting non-citizens. The Office of Catholic Schools shall be contacted for assistance.

### **Enrollment of Students whose Parents/Guardians are not Married**

Catholic schools shall admit students whose parents are not married (including parents who are divorced/remarried) provided that the student meets all other admissions criteria. Catholic schools shall abide by the court decision regarding the student's custody, exposure to and communication with each parent. Copies of any active court orders should be requested from parents and kept on file at the school.

## **Enrollment of Students with Parents/Guardians who are Homosexual, Bisexual or Transgendered**

Catholic schools shall admit students whose parents/guardians are homosexual, bisexual or transgendered provided that the student meets all other admissions criteria.

## **New Student Application**

New students who wish to enter the St. Mary Catholic Community School must complete an online application and present a birth certificate, baptismal certificate, a copy of the last report card, a copy of the most recent standardized test results, and a copy of the school health form. Readiness tests will be administered to new students entering grades K-8 as determined necessary by the administration. Readiness test results will aid in the decision for acceptance. Students entering grades 6-8 and parents will meet with the principal to determine if the student and St. Mary Catholic Community School will be compatible.

## **General Registration**

Registration for St. Mary Catholic Community School will take place during the month of February for returning students. A non-refundable registration fee will be charged per family. A kindergarten readiness test will be administered prior to acceptance into the program. Class assignments usually will be sent electronically the Friday before school begins. A Parent/Student Handbook will be provided online at the beginning of each school year. Parents are asked to read the handbook with their children at home so as to familiarize themselves with the general rules and policies governing the school.

## **Kindergarten Registration**

St. Mary Catholic Community School offers a Full-Day Kindergarten Program. All students seeking entry must have reached the age of five by September 1st. For new students, kindergarten readiness testing will be done to determine whether or not the student is ready for kindergarten.

## **Pre-K Registration**

A junior pre-k program for three-year-olds, who are free of diapers and are in total control of bodily functions, and a pre-school program for four-year-olds and five-year-olds missing the kindergarten entry date are also available. A birth certificate and baptismal certificate must be presented at the time of application. A physical examination form as well as documentation of state-mandated immunizations must be completed by the family doctor and turned in to the school office.

## **Priority Policy**

The following will be used to determine admission to St. Mary's School by order of preference listed below:

- Applicants who are active members to St. Mary's Parish.
- Applicants who are active members to their respective Catholic parishes.
- Non-affiliated Catholic and Non-Catholic applicants new to Saint Mary Catholic Community School.

- **Student Transfers**

Parents wishing to transfer their children from St. Mary's must submit an official withdrawal form. It is the responsibility of the parent to notify the School Office when a transfer is to take place. An official transcript of records will be sent to the new school directly from St. Mary's office upon receipt of a Release of Information Form from the new school.

## **School Tuition Policy**

All St. Mary Catholic Community School families must sign an Enrollment Agreement and a FACTS management registration form. FACTS has been contracted to administer the collection of all tuition for St. Mary's families under the direction of the Business Manager. Families can elect to pay their tuition in 10 monthly installments (August – May), semi-annually (August and January) or annually (August). Payments can be made via auto-debit (1<sup>st</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> of month). A late payment fee of \$25.00 will be applied if a payment is not received within 10 days of the due date. Other fees for failed/NSF payments will apply as warranted. Please visit the FACTS management website for further information regarding your account.

**Delinquent Tuition:** If your tuition account is delinquent, report cards will be held, access to FACTS will be suspended and students may be excluded from class. Please contact the Business Manager at 219-249-1218 to discuss financial arrangements should special circumstances arise.

**Service Hours:** All parents (or legal guardians) are obligated to complete twelve (12) hours of service at any of the Home & School Association fundraisers during the school year. If service hours are not completed, a service hour fee will be billed in April (\$100.00 per incomplete hour). Children may not accompany parents while completing service hours. It is our hope that parents will choose to work the service hours rather than simply pay the fee. This is not only necessary for the financial well-being of our school but an important aspect of our community building process and community culture.

## **Academic Policies**

### **Expectations**

St. Mary Catholic Community School assumes that all students will come to school with a serious intention to learn and expects them to be responsible for such. Students are expected to listen attentively to their instructors, follow directions carefully, participate in class discussion, and complete classroom and homework assignments on time. Parents will be kept informed as to whether their child is fulfilling these academic expectations. Those students who fail to put forth academic effort will be subject to expulsion or refused enrollment for the following school year.

## Curriculum

St. Mary Catholic Community School is fully accredited by the State of Indiana and follows the state and diocesan curriculum for all grade levels. The curriculum will be created in accordance with the guidelines of the Diocese of Gary and the State of Indiana.

## Report Cards

Report cards are given out by the schools within the Diocese of Gary four times a year. Grades are a reflection of the work a student has accomplished in a particular subject area. They are a combination of written and oral work, classroom participation, homework, effort, and test scores. The Grading Scale is as follows:

|                  |                  |                  |                  |                     |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| <b>A+ = 99.5</b> | <b>B+ = 91.5</b> | <b>C+ = 83.5</b> | <b>D+ = 73.5</b> | <b>F = 0- 69.49</b> |
| <b>A = 93.5</b>  | <b>B = 85.5</b>  | <b>C = 75.5</b>  | <b>D = 70.5</b>  |                     |
| <b>A- = 92.5</b> | <b>B- = 84.5</b> | <b>C- = 74.5</b> | <b>D- = 69.5</b> |                     |

|                       |                      |               |
|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| * = Adjusted program  | + = Area of strength | I = Improving |
| N = Needs improvement | NA = Not assessed    |               |

## Subject Subheadings

In addition to grades for particular subjects, students will also be graded on completing assignments, effort, and conduct. Electronic reporting of student progress will be available on-line. Parents and students will be given individual access codes in order to obtain this information. These reports will be made available in an attempt to keep both the pupil and the parent fully aware of the student's current academic and behavioral status. (See school calendar for reporting dates.)

## Promotion and Retention

All students are expected to meet the minimum requirement for each grade level to merit promotion. These requirements are the successful completion of a standardized test and the maintenance of at least a 1.00 (D) grade point average (Religion, Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies). Failure of students to meet these requirements will result in retention. *The final decision as to whether or not a child is retained regardless of grade average will be made by the classroom teacher(s) and the principal. This decision will be made with the best interest of the student in mind.* Parents will be notified no later than the beginning of the *fourth* quarter if retention is a *likely* possibility for their child. Students in grades three through eight will take the Indiana Learning Evaluation Assessment Readiness Network (I-LEARN) exams. This test is scheduled for a window of time each spring. Parents are not to plan vacations or daytime appointments during these weeks of school. Students in grade two will take the I-Read3 test in third grade. This test will be a determining factor for promotion to fourth grade.

## Accelerated Program

St. Mary's School "Accelerated Program" is designed to meet the needs of students who require additional challenges in the areas of math and science at the Jr. High level.

In the spring of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade year, students will be selected as candidates for the program. The determination is based on the following criteria:

1. *Teacher recommendation.*
2. *High ability functioning as indicated through grades and performance on the 6<sup>th</sup> grade comprehensive final exam test and state standardized test scores (they can do the work).*
3. *Natural ability (the work comes easy to them).*
4. *It is clear cut that their ability and knowledge is beyond that of their peers as indicated by performance on the IOWA algebra aptitude test. (They need additional challenges above the norm).*
5. *6<sup>th</sup> grade final exam administered at the end of the summer.*

Curriculum Outline:

### 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

Pre-Algebra (taken with 7<sup>th</sup> grade class)

### 7<sup>th</sup> Grade

Algebra I (taken with 8<sup>th</sup> grade class)

Eighth grade Science (taken with 8<sup>th</sup> grade class)

### 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

\*Honors Geometry

\*Honors Biology

\*These classes are taken at Crown Point High School or at Andrean High School at the end of the school day. Participants will attend St. Mary's for approximately 3/4 of the school day and then finish the school day at CPHS or Andrean. St. Mary's schedule will be arranged so that a minimum amount of class time (other than math and science) will be missed by the participants. Transportation to and from CPHS will be arranged by the parents of the participants. Optional transportation to and from Andrean will be provided by Andrean with a minimal cost to the participating family.

In order for students to remain in the Accelerated Program, we require that they maintain an 3.5 GPA in all of their classes.

## Seventh Grade Math Placement

At St. Mary School, in seventh grade, there are two math classes. One class is a traditional seventh grade class. The text is a standard seventh grade textbook and the Indiana standards for seventh grade are taught. Students who successfully complete this course will be ready for the spring seventh grade Indiana standardized test. Most students in the state of Indiana take this course in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. In eighth grade, this class will use an

eighth grade pre-algebra text. The other 7<sup>th</sup> grade class “honors math” is a pre-algebra class, designed to prepare students to take algebra in eighth grade. Placement in the pre-algebra class is based on qualifying in the four areas listed below:

1. B average or better in sixth grade math
2. Standardized test scores
3. Results on a test of basic skills
4. Results on a test of algebra readiness
5. Teacher recommendation

Our goal is to place each student at a level where he/she will be challenged and successful.

## Graduation

Upon satisfactory completion of the required courses of study of the State of Indiana and the Diocese of Gary, each eighth-grade student will receive a diploma certifying graduation from St. Mary Catholic Community School. All tuition and fees must be paid in full before the graduation ceremony.

## Homework

Homework is an integral part of student life and a serious responsibility. It is assigned as a means to help pupils review, drill comprehend, and enrich subject matter taught in the classroom. **Only neat and complete classwork and homework will be accepted by the teachers.** The quantity of the homework given will be dependent upon the age, needs, and ability of each child. Students are expected to complete homework assignments at home and not in school during other class periods or in the morning before class begins. Anyone caught copying homework papers from another student will receive an automatic zero for the assignment. Furthermore, any student rendering their paper for copying will likewise receive a zero. Students generally have time in class to begin their homework assignments. This is important in the event that a student needs additional help from the instructor in order to complete the assignment properly. Homework will be completed at home in addition to completing any assignments not finished during the school day. Parents are asked to check the teacher’s communication for daily homework. It is the responsibility of the student to return completed homework to the teacher. The junior high school (grades 6-8) has adopted a “Zero Tolerance” policy for late assignments. No late assignments will be accepted after the due date.

All parents are encouraged to check FACTS on a regular basis to monitor student progress. Parents who notice areas of concern regarding their child’s grades are strongly encouraged to reach out to the teacher in communication and request a conference if need be in a timely fashion.

Parents may request homework for students who are absent on the first day that they are absent. This request must be made by the parent by 10:00 AM if homework is to be picked up the same afternoon. The homework will be sent to the office by the teacher by 2:00 PM.

## **Special Needs**

Students experiencing difficulty with the academic program can receive individual attention. Adjusted programs may be implemented after assessment in the classroom to help the student as recommended by the Student Assistance Team. The Student Assistance Team consists of the principal, resource teacher, and a group of teachers who will review the child's permanent file, interview individuals directly involved with the child's progress, and assist in the development of an RTI program appropriate adjustments for that particular student, which may lead to special education testing through the Crown Point Schools and possibly an IEP, Service Plan or 504 contract.

## **Conferences**

Conferences may be requested throughout the school year to apprise parents of their child's progress. These conferences are not to take place during the hours that school is in session, as teachers and students work on a planned schedule and cannot be interrupted.

**This is especially true of unannounced morning conferences where the teacher must be attentive to the orderly start of the school day.** When the need for a conference is initiated by a parent, it is necessary to email the teacher.

## **Parent/Teacher Communication**

Good parent/teacher communication is vital. Parents who have questions or concerns are encouraged to reach out to teachers via email, note, or teacher's preferred method of communication. Several teachers use the "Remind," "Class Dojo," text system or similar. Parents are asked to have reasonable expectations regarding communication and respect teachers' home time with their family.

## **Honor Roll**

Recognizing student achievement is important at St. Mary Catholic Community School. Therefore, students in Grades Five through Eight will be eligible for either the A or B Honor Roll.

To qualify for the A Honor Roll, students must have attained all A's.

To qualify for the B Honor Roll, students must have attained all A's and B's.

## **Physical Education**

All students in Grades Kindergarten through Eighth are required by the State of Indiana to participate in Physical Education. If there is a reason that a child cannot participate in the program, a note must be sent to the office with a doctor's exemption form specifying the reason. A copy of this note must also be given to the Physical Education teacher.

One parental note will be accepted as an excused physical education exclusion per semester. The parental excuse can be effective for up to one week. Any illness/injury requiring more than a week of non-participation (or if the parental note was already used for the semester) will require a note from the physician who is treating the child. This exclusion is effective for as long as the doctor recommends. Upon being cleared for participation after a doctor's note, the child must bring in a release from the physician before they are allowed to participate in physical education again. (The number of physician's exclusions is not limited.) Exclusion in physical education also means exclusion in sports.

## **Technology**

All students in grades K through 8 will participate in a technology class. Computer and software literacy is expected of all graduates.

## **Music**

Music is an important part of our curriculum and our expression of faith. Students are expected to participate in the classroom, at mass, and at all performances. Grades in music class will include points for participation both in class and at performances.

## **Special Education Services**

Limited Special Education Services such as speech therapy or services for students with learning disabilities are available to St. Mary Catholic Community School students by the Crown Point Community Schools. To initiate these services, a request must be made to the principal will address the concerns the RTI Committee and Resource Teacher.

## **Behavior Policies**

### **Expectations**

St. Mary Catholic Community School expects each student to behave in a courteous, honest, and respectful manner to teachers, fellow students, staff, and visitors to our building. Furthermore, these same expectations will be carried into the community and at home as each St. Mary's student is a representative of the school. Cases will be dealt with on an individual basis and could include the involvement of professionals such as child psychologists, law enforcement, school safety specialists, counselors, or others as deemed appropriate. All decisions will be made with children's best interest in mind. Administration reserves the right to speak with students when needed for cases of discipline without prior parent permission. Enrollment at St. Mary's School implies trust that situations will be handled in a timely manner with the student's dignity in mind.

Generally, classroom teachers will handle disciplinary matters as they occur in a way they feel is effective for their particular grade. Each teacher will provide parents and students with a copy of their classroom rules and regulations early in the school year. When students fail to respond to warnings given by the teacher to correct their behavior, consequences will be assigned appropriate to the offense. In some instances, detention time may be given.

### **General School -Wide Rules**

1. Speak and act kindly to one another - treat others as you would like to be treated.
2. Listen to, and obey, all rules.
3. Adhere to the St. Mary's Pledge

## **Classroom Behavior**

All students deserve the right to an environment conducive to learning. Therefore, students are to abide by the general rules of order established for the classroom by their teacher. Failure to do so will result in an appropriate consequence, such as a detention, a Student/Principal Conference, a Student/ Principal/Parent Conference, suspension or expulsion. Students are reminded that they are never to engage in an action that is harmful to the safety of others, such as running in the hallways, pushing or shoving, pulling chairs from under people, etc. “We were only playing” will not be accepted as an excuse for violating this safety policy and avoiding corrective consequences. Students are not to bring items to school such as the following: water pistols, toy guns, firecrackers, matches, pocketknives, sharp instruments, or weapons of any sort, or anything that can be used or viewed as a weapon by another person. Electronic devices and cell phones will be brought to school at the risk of the owner. St. Mary’s will not be responsible for lost or broken devices or phones. Cell phones must be turned off and put away during the school day. Electronic devices and cell phones may not be used in a manner that is disruptive to the school environment. Teachers and the administration will determine with reasonable judgment, what defines “disruptive.” St. Mary’s School reserves the right to confiscate devices or phones from students when they are used inappropriately. Confiscated devices must be retrieved by the parent from the principal or assistant principal.

## **Playground Behavior**

Recess time is provided for the students each day. All students (K-6) are expected to participate. Parents are responsible for seeing to it that their children are properly clothed for weather conditions. Students are to respect the limits set for them by the teacher and playground supervisors. For the sake of safety, it is essential that playground supervisors be obeyed at all times.

**It was agreed upon by the faculty and the Advisory Council that 32 degrees (feels like temperature) is a reasonable temperature to allow students outside for recess.**

**PARENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR SEEING TO IT THAT THEIR CHILDREN ARE PROPERLY CLOTHED FOR WEATHER CONDITIONS SHOULD THEY BE ABLE TO GO OUTSIDE FOR RECESS.** Students are expected to interact well with their classmates. Rough play, fighting, arguing, using abusive language, and cheating at games is not acceptable behavior. Students are never to pick up and throw rocks, pebbles, snow, tire mulch, etc.

## **Off-Campus Behavior**

What happens outside of school sometimes carries over and affects the school environment. The administration of St. Mary’s reserves the right to discipline its students for off-campus behavior that is not in line with behavior expectations of its students during the course of the school day. This off-campus behavior includes, but is not limited to, cyber-bullying. This also includes the Crown Point Library. The administration reserves the right to discipline and suspend students from the public library as deemed appropriate.

## Public Displays of Affection

Being overly affectionate in school creates an environment that is not conducive to concentration and learning, therefore students should refrain from inappropriate touching or other behaviors on campus or at school related events & activities. Students are expected to show good taste and conduct themselves respectfully at all times. Inappropriate public displays of affection will not be tolerated. This behavior will result in a warning and/or other disciplinary actions.

## Anti-Bullying Policy

Bullying hurts your children! Bullying in any form will not be tolerated at St. Mary Catholic Community School. Adherence to this policy is mandatory for all school families. We are responsible to provide a safe, caring, Catholic, Christian environment for each student.

### Types of Bullying

There are many types of bullying that can take place in our school. The range of bullying tactics is quite expansive. It can range from a covert act of repeated exclusion to a public act of physical violence.

**Bullying is defined for Indiana schools in HEA 1423 IC 20-33-8-0.2 –**

“Bullying” means:

- Overt (intentional) unwanted, repeated acts or gestures including:
  - *Verbal or Written communication, or images* transmitted in any manner (including digitally or electronically)
  - *Physical acts* committed, *aggression*, or *any other behaviors* that are committed by a student or group of students against another student *with the intent to*
    - o **Harass, ridicule, humiliate, intimidate, or harm** the targeted student and
    - o Create for the targeted student **an objectively hostile school environment**

**St. Mary’s School further categorizes bullying as:**

**Type 1: Physical bullying – (personal)** These acts include hitting, spitting, pushing, biting, kicking, tripping someone on purpose, being excessively rough during “games” at recess and/or gym class. These acts include any unwelcome physical contact.

**Physical bullying – (property)** These acts include taking possessions away from other people, damaging other people’s personal property, hiding their books or book bag, knocking things off of people’s desks, stealing a person’s money or lunch, or any act of intimidation.

**Type 2: Verbal bullying** – These acts include teasing, name calling, making someone a target of jokes, constantly criticizing whatever a person does, verbal threats, spreading rumors about others, making derogatory remarks about an individual’s appearance, weight, disability, medical condition, culture, ethnicity, or color, degrading someone’s clothing, possessions, or grades, insulting a person, humiliating an individual, or harassment of any kind.

**Type 3: Psychological bullying (involving other students)** – These acts include any form of exclusion; gossiping about an individual, getting other students to “gang up” on an individual, gathering other students to come and laugh at someone, taking someone’s friends away to leave them alone, leaving individuals out repeatedly when picking a team, going along with any activity that hurts another person, and/or manipulating other people to act in agreement with you against another person.

**Type 4: Internet/Cyber Bullying** – The use of the internet to procure any of the above types of bullying via electronic formats such as instant messaging, e-mail, web pages, twitter, “facebook” accounts or any other e-format.

## **The Effects of Bullying on Students**

The effects can be demoralizing and humiliating and cause low self-esteem.

These effects can cause a chain reaction when the child becomes angry, hateful, and depressed and takes out his frustration on others. The student who is bullied can become a child who dreads school, is easily agitated, has frequent stomach aches, is unable to sleep at night, feels it is his own fault he is being bullied, or has recurrent nightmares. The bullied student lives in constant fear, may withdraw, may have falling grades, lose interest in schoolwork or activities, experience loss of appetite, exhibit physical ailments, may feel that “doing the right thing” gets him nowhere, may feel powerless and that they don’t matter, and some may seek revenge. These students have higher rates of depression, loneliness, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. Often, the emotional scars remain with them into adulthood. Our Pastor, Principal, faculty, and staff are dedicated to eradicating bullying from our school as we protect our children’s rights to a safe educational environment.

## **Education and Empowerment**

### **Ways to empower our students:**

#### **Students and Teachers**

It will be essential to teach the students to stand up for themselves and others. We will help them to understand that bullying is no reflection on their personal worth. We will provide them a safe haven whether it is a teacher at the school or another adult – all staff members are available to the students. As a school community dedicated to eradicating bullying from our environment, we must ensure confidentiality for reporting bullying. We will work to convince the students that reporting bullying is not tattling. All student reports are to be taken seriously and swift action will be taken on each report. The students will be shown that they will be backed by the school authorities who are serious about ending the bullying. Students are encouraged to report bullying directly to the teacher. This may come by way of verbal communication or written communication. Students reporting bullying may even remain anonymous by leaving the teacher an unsigned note. The bullying must be communicated in order for a teacher to help end it.

#### **Students and Bullies**

We will make all school families aware that bullying will not be tolerated regardless of who the student is or who the parents are. In order for our policy to be taken seriously, we will always follow through on all consequences. There will always be follow-up on student reports, and the students will be encouraged not to get physical or “bully back”. The students need to act bravely, walk away, and ignore the bully when an adult is not

present. All of our students will be encouraged to develop a larger network by joining social organizations, clubs, or sports teams.

### **Ways to empower our teachers:**

As a school community, no form of bullying will be tolerated by our teachers. We will provide training for the school staff in bullying prevention. Specific guidelines must be used so that there is continuity in dealing with bullies. Our teachers will report bullying to the principal immediately if they see anything or suspect anything. We will allow other adult personnel to have authority to establish a safe environment as well. Our teachers will be able to develop a means for reporting bullying without identifying the reporting student. All reports to parents will be taken seriously and the administration, teachers, and students will work together to address the problem. The Pastor and Principal will continue to support the teachers in their efforts to eradicate bullying. Parents'/Guardians' support will be mandatory

### **Our School Statement on Bullying**

We are a faith-based school community in which Jesus Christ is the model for all behavior. It is our ultimate goal to teach our children to act in ways that Jesus would. Parents are a child's first teachers and we are confident that their goals are shared by the faculty and staff of our school. It is everyone's responsibility to protect each student from the negative effects of bullying. No one in our school deserves to be bullied and this type of behavior will not be tolerated. We understand that conflict is an everyday occurrence in our school and the students must learn how to deal with each other effectively. Our teachers are able to discern between a mistake and a child who is truly sorry and an intentional act against another person with no remorse shown. In both instances, our teachers would discuss the reconciliation process so that all parties are able to cope with the situation. In a situation where the student intentionally and/or repeatedly bullies others with no remorse, then decisive action must be taken. Dependent upon the age and act of aggression, the teacher then would contact the offending student's parent for notification purposes. It would be time, then, for the parent to correct the child's behavior so that it is not repeated. The consequences of bullying would then be discussed at the discretion of the teacher and principal. The teacher would document the event and keep this confidential information in a special file. If the offending child does not correct this destructive behavior, the consequences, as described below, would be set in motion at the direction of the teacher and principal.

### **Consequences of Bullying**

Here is the anticipated sequence of consequences. However, depending upon the severity of the incident, the actual sequence will be determined by the teacher and the principal.

**First time:** the teacher is made aware of the situation. The teacher will speak to the children involved and keep a log of the incident.

**Second time:** the teacher will again speak with the students, document the incident, and send a note home to the parents of both students involved (to be signed and returned).

Parents are encouraged to respond by sharing their concerns. The offending student will miss recess (K-4) or serve a detention (5-8) and apologize as well.

**Third time:** the incident will be documented with a notice sent to the principal. Parents will be brought in for a meeting with the principal and teacher(s).

**Fourth time:** the offending student will serve an in-class suspension, documentation will be made and the parents and principal will be notified.

**Fifth time:** the offending student may serve an out of school suspension or face possible expulsion to be determined by the principal.

### **Personal Belongings**

The school provides coat racks, lockers, and desks to accommodate the personal belongings of the students. We cannot be responsible for items of considerable worth or excessive amounts of money that are brought to school by the students. Parents are urged to monitor what their children bring to school with them. Please note that glass containers are unsafe and must not be sent to school. The administration reserves the right to inspect all areas mentioned above at any time. Students are to keep their individual areas clean, neat, orderly, and free of any types of graffiti. Damage to school property or the property of another person must be reimbursed by the parent and the student(s) responsible will be subject to disciplinary action.

### **Drugs, Alcohol, and Weapons**

The use or possession of weapons, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, vaping products, look-a-likes of such, or substances injurious to the health of the students is forbidden on St. Mary Catholic Community School premises or at St. Mary's events, at home or away. A student found in possession of any of the above faces immediate suspension and probable expulsion from the school. A student who shows, through writing, drawing, or in conversation, a fascination with drugs or alcohol will be warned and a parent conference will be initiated to prevent difficulties.

### **Disciplinary Consequences**

Conflict resolution techniques are taught at each grade level. When students are unable to resolve conflicts peacefully among themselves, they are to notify a staff member or supervisor for assistance. Failure to do so will result in one or more of the following consequences, depending upon the behavioral status of the student(s) and the circumstances of the incident:

- a one hour detention;
- suspension of recess privileges for a specified period of time;
- student/principal conference;
- student/principal/parent conference;
- in-class suspension;
- home suspension for a specified number of days;
- expulsion

Serious offenses include lying, cheating, stealing, forgery, gambling, using abusive or obscene language, writing or drawing obscenities, bringing obscene materials to school, vandalism, hitting, fighting, and possession or use of alcohol or drugs, look-a-likes, or substances injurious to the health of students. A student guilty of such an offense is liable to any one of the previously mentioned consequences. During a period of out of school suspension (OSS), a student will not be allowed to return to school for a specified number of days. In-School Suspensions (ISS) will take place in a designated room in

which the student will be monitored. During this time of ISS or OSS, 50% credit will be given and all assigned class work. All work must be completed. Texts and quizzes should be administered by the classroom teacher upon return to class after serving their suspension for full credit.

In addition, the student will not be allowed to participate or be present at any extracurricular activities on the day of the suspension. If the suspension occurs on a Friday, the student is to be excluded from Saturday games/activities. If improvement is not made, further steps may need to be taken.

### **Expulsion**

Students who are persistently disruptive and who continually disregard school rules, policies, and philosophy will be expelled. Parents who are persistently disruptive and who continually disregard school rules, policies, and philosophy will be cause for their children(s) expulsion. This extends to Facebook and other forms of social media.

### **Refused Entry**

Parents who are persistently disruptive and who continually disregard school rules and policies will lose building access privileges.

## **Spiritual Activities**

Saint Mary's Catholic Community School welcomes children of all faith traditions. It is understood that the school curriculum includes Sacramental Preparation (Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation). However, CELEBRATION of the sacraments is limited to those children who are members of the Roman Catholic Faith. Children who are members of other faith traditions do not receive sacraments.

### **Mass**

Each week, all students and teachers participate in the celebration of the Eucharist. In addition, opportunities are provided for special school Masses and Prayer Services throughout the year. Students should quietly enter the church on mass days showing reverence.

### **Sacramental Preparation**

Sacramental preparation is one of the primary duties of our school.

Students in Grade Two will be prepared for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

**Grade Three will be prepared for the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist.**

Students in Grade Eight will be prepared for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Throughout the year, special meetings will be held for the parents of children in these grades. These meetings are mandatory and will provide much vital information regarding how parents share in the responsibility for preparing children for the reception of the sacraments. A sacramental preparation fee will be assessed for each child in the programs. **Families with children in the upper grades who have not yet received their sacraments, often because they are new to St. Mary's, are encouraged to contact our Faith Formation Director, Mrs. Cathy Scolaro.**

## **Religion Classes and Prayer**

Each school day begins with the students and faculty joining in prayer. Religious instruction holds a prominent place in the daily schedule. The purpose of this instruction is to foster the knowledge and practice of the faith. Parental interest and participation in this instruction is encouraged. Through religious experiences, it is hoped that our students will come to a personal knowledge of Jesus and learn to actively participate in the faith which unites our community. Students and parents are invited to send a special intention to be included in the morning prayer. These should be submitted in writing the day before or at by 7:20 AM at the latest.

## **Proper Decorum**

All students, faculty, and staff members shall stand respectfully for prayers, pledge of allegiance, and St. Mary pledge at the appropriate times.

## **Service Hours**

Service to our fellow man is living life as Jesus called us to live. Students in grades 7 and 8 will work a minimum of four service hours per quarter. Students may elect to do additional hours for extra credit (up to four).

## **Mission Activities**

Throughout the year, students are asked to participate various projects and activities. These may include food drives, toy drives, and other opportunities to assist or raise funds for good causes. Parents are asked to discuss with their children what a reasonable donation for them should be. Programs such as these will hopefully encourage responsible stewardship in adult lives.

## **Extra-Curricular Activities Policy**

St. Mary Catholic Community School sponsors a number of extracurricular activities including sports, cheerleading, Chess Club, Choir, Student Council, yearbook, *Science Olympiad*, etc. Students must maintain average grades in academics and conduct to participate. Two D's or one F in any subject area, including conduct and effort, will make a student ineligible to participate in extra-curricular activities. Any student absent a half day or equivalent to three class periods may not participate in or attend any extra-curricular sponsored activities on that day of absence. All school rules apply at these extra-curricular events. Faculty members, sponsors, and chaperones with just cause have full authority to admit, refuse admission to, or dismiss any student from an event. If a doctor sends in a note to school to excuse a student from gym for any reason, that student **will not** be able to participate in outdoor recess nor any extra-curricular sport/physical activities, until such a time as released from their doctor. Activities taking place in individual homes, such as parties, are not school sponsored functions. Any problems arising at these events should be referred to individual parents and not to school authorities.

## Athletics

St. Mary's offers the following CYO sports for our students in grades 5 through 8:

Boys - Soccer, Basketball, Volleyball, Cross-Country, Track;

Girls- Soccer, Volleyball, Basketball, Cross-Country, Track, and Cheerleading.

Participation in these sports is not a student right, but a privilege earned through hard work in the classroom. Our students are expected to keep their grades at a certain level in order to be eligible to partake in CYO athletics and other school sponsored extra-curricular activities. **School athletics should take priority over travel or other teams as students are playing not only for themselves, but their SMS teammates and school pride.**

Student grades will be reviewed by the athletic director after each academic quarter. Any student receiving an F or two D's on a report card will be declared academically ineligible for the following quarter (about 9 weeks). Students who are ineligible may not participate (practice or game) with their team in any way during this period. A student may become eligible once again if necessary improvement is demonstrated on the next report card. The one exception to this rule is boys basketball. Students who are ineligible for quarter 2 (the season), may NOT return for the tournament. The athletic director will notify the parents of any changes in a child's eligibility status. Students who receive an F or two D's on the final report card of the school year (**Starting in the 4th Grade school year**) will be placed on academic probation at the start of the following school year. These students will subsequently have their grades checked 4½ weeks after school starts in August. Those who fail to show the necessary improvement at that point will be ineligible for the remainder of that quarter (the next 4½ weeks). Parents are asked to do their part by communicating with teachers and checking FACTS regularly in an attempt to keep their child(ren) on the right academic path. It is our hope that this policy will help our students continue to make academics their primary focus at St. Mary's.



### ***School Fight Song***

*Give a cheer, give a cheer,  
For the team that will appear  
In the colors that we love to see.  
They are true, they are true,  
To the white and to the blue,  
Loyal heroes of old SMS*

*So let's fight, team, fight,  
And because we have the might  
To fight on- we'll never say die!  
Don't give an inch to the very slightest pinch-  
That spells V-I-C-T-O-R-Y!!!*

### **School Dances**

The St. Mary Catholic Community School Student Council sponsors student dances for the Junior High. School Dances will be held throughout the school year at announced dates. Sixth, seventh and eighth grade students will be permitted to attend all dances. There will be an admission fee to help defray the cost of the DJ. All homerooms are required to have two parent chaperones in attendance in order for that homeroom to attend the dance. All students must submit permission slips from parents. All permission slips issued must be returned to the homeroom teacher. The school must be notified on or before the day of the dance if a student will not be attending the dance after the permission slip has been submitted. All students must arrive at the dance within one half hour of its start and should be picked up promptly at the end. All school rules of behavior apply at the dances. Extremes in dress should be avoided. Out-of-Uniform Day guidelines must be followed unless other guidelines are given.

## Uniform Dress Code Policy

“We are all one- United in Christ” is an important part of our school pledge. It signifies the unity that we all share in a common belief.

School uniforms are worn at St. Mary’s School. They are an outward sign of *unity* in our parish school; a sign that everyone is working together in the same place toward the same goals. The school uniform proclaims the identity of our Catholic school and all of its ideals.

### Dress Code Enforcement

Enforcement of our dress code must involve the total cooperation of students, parents, teachers, support staff, and administration. Students are expected to know and adhere to the dress code policy. Mrs. Arianne Wong, Mrs. Bea Kozlowski, and Mr. Brad Nieman will serve as Uniform Enforcement Officers. The principal may be called upon to resolve judgment calls. The administration’s judgment is final.

Parents should ensure students in ALL GRADES come to St. Mary Catholic Community School in complete uniform. The first, full week of school will be viewed as a “learning” experience. After that first week, consequences will be given for uniform infractions.

### CONSEQUENCES for being Out of Uniform:

1. Verbal warning by ANY staff member
2. Written out of uniform slip to be signed by parent and returned the next day
3. Written out of uniform slip to be signed by parent and returned the next day AND a writing assignment given as homework, due the next day
4. Written out of uniform slip to be signed by parent and returned the next day AND loss of next Wildcat Pride Day
5. Written out of uniform slip to be signed by parent and returned the next day AND an in-school suspension
6. Written out of uniform slip to be signed by parent and returned the next day AND an out of school suspension

### Uniform Availability

All Uniform items, except gym clothes, are available exclusively online at: **Tommy Hilfiger**. Shirts and pants purchased at stores other than Tommy Hilfiger MUST conform in color, style, pattern and fabric to the official uniforms sold at Tommy Hilfiger. No brand logos are allowed anywhere on the uniform. Items in doubt should be cleared through the school office before washing or being worn. Parents are also encouraged to visit our Used Uniform Sale at Book Bill Day.

## Boys' Attire

- **SHIRTS:** Light blue or white polo shirts; long or short sleeved. Shirts must be tucked in. Only top collar button may be open. Plain white short sleeve T-shirts only may be worn underneath. No long sleeve undershirts allowed. Shirts with crest purchased at Dennis are optional.
- **PANTS: Grades Jr.PK-5-** Navy blue uniform pants, pleated or plain front sized according to appropriate waist measurement and length. (No oversized, baggy, or flare legged are allowed or cargo pockets. Pants are to be worn at the natural waistline.)
- **PANTS: Grades 6-8-** Khaki uniform pants, pleated or plain front sized according to appropriate waist measurement and length. (No oversized, baggy, or flare legged are allowed or cargo pockets. Pants are to be worn at the natural waistline.)
- **BELT: Grades 2-8** Navy blue, dark brown, or black belt with a plain buckle.
- **SOCKS:** Plain white, black, or navy-blue quarter length or crew-length socks. No-show socks are not permitted. Socks must cover the entire ankle bone. No brand logos are permitted on socks. Socks may not be rolled to cover logos.

## Girls' Attire

- **SHIRTS (all girls):** Light blue or white polo shirts; long or short sleeved. Shirts must be tucked in. Only top collar button may be open. Plain white short sleeve T-shirts only may be worn underneath. No long sleeve undershirts allowed. Shirts with crest purchased at Dennis are optional.

### BOTTOMS:

- **Jr.PK** – Plaid jumper. Navy blue jersey polo dress, navy blue pants, navy bermuda length shorts
- **PK** – Navy blue jersey polo dress, plaid jumper, navy blue pants, navy bermuda length shorts
- **Grades K-4 options:** Plaid Jumper, navy pants, or navy bermuda length shorts
- **Grade 5 options:** Plaid skirt, navy pants, or navy bermuda length shorts
- **Grades 6-8 options:** Plaid skirt, khaki pants, or khaki bermuda length shorts
- No oversized, baggy, or flare legged are allowed or cargo pockets. All bottoms are to be worn at the natural waistline.
- **LENGTH- Shorts must be bermuda length (fingertip length). Skirts must be fingertip length.**
- **BELT: Grades 2-8** Navy blue, dark brown, or black belt with a plain buckle.
- **SOCKS:** Plain white, black, or navy-blue quarter length, crew-length, knee high socks, or tights. No-show socks are not permitted. Socks must cover the entire ankle bone. No brand logos are permitted on socks. Socks may not be rolled to cover logos.
- **No leggings or footless tights may be worn underneath skirts. During cold months, leggings MAY be worn to school and taken off upon arrival.**
- **Shorts are acceptable in August, September, October, April, May, June.**

## Boys' and Girls' Options

- **Jr.PK-8** - Navy blue button cardigans with navy blue buttons may be worn with the uniform.
- **Jr. PK-5** - Gray quarter-zip sweatshirt with St. Mary's Crest purchased from Tommy Hilfiger.
- **Grades 6-8** - Navy quarter-zip sweatshirt with Saint Mary's Crest purchased from Tommy Hilfiger.
  - A uniform shirt with exposed collar must be worn underneath.
  - No other sweatshirts or sweaters may be worn over the uniform.
  - *Scout uniforms may be worn with the approval of the scout leaders and administration.*

## School Shoes

Solid colored (black, white, navy blue, or dark brown), soft-soled, dress-casual shoes or low-top or high-top sneakers are acceptable footwear. Shoes must fit properly. Laces must be tied and match the shoe color. Laces/shoe strings may not be tied or laced around the ankle or up the calf.

- There should be no contrasting colors (on side or back logo), striping, flashing lights, wheels, glitter finish, or designs on the sneakers. Soles of sneakers must match the color of the shoe.
- No platform shoes, heels, boots, Crocs, moccasins, sling-back or sandals. No Converse canvas shoes (with the stripe around the lower part of the shoe).
- **During cold months, boots MAY be worn to school and changed upon arrival.**

## Gym Uniforms

Adding names or initials to gym uniforms in space provided is optional.

- Official navy-blue gym shorts or navy-blue uniform Wildcat sweats purchased at [Classic Designs online](#).
- Gray tee-shirt and gray crew neck sweatshirt with logo purchased at [Classic Designs](#).
- Crew-length or quarter length socks. Socks must be solid white, black, navy. No logos.
- Any color athletic shoes (low or high top). No lights or wheels.

[Gym uniforms from Dennis are obsolete and may no longer be worn.](#)

**All students will wear their gym uniforms all day on gym days. Students will not be required to change clothes.**

**If using a NUT card on a gym day, clothing and shoes must be athletic.**

## **\*General Appearance**

### **Clothing and Hygiene**

Parents should ensure that the student's appearance and hygiene is always neat and clean at school. Teachers may need to address these issues with parents if the student's clothing is frequently soiled or if the student does not look or smell clean. Excessive perfume, cologne, or other body sprays should not be worn as they may trigger adverse reactions from students with asthma or allergies. Spraying perfume, cologne, or body sprays in the classrooms or other common areas is not permitted.

### **Growing Bodies**

We ask that parents/guardians be aware of the possible need for clothing alterations throughout the school year to accommodate growing bodies. Students should comply with all uniform guidelines from the start of the school year until the last day.

### **Make-Up**

**Make-up is not to be worn.** Only clear nail polish is acceptable. No artificial shellac, gel polish, or French manicures are allowed. Students will be asked to remove any make-up or non-conforming nail polish noticed by a teacher. No glitter body-powder, **mascara**, fake eyelashes, or lip-gloss is allowed. **Vaseline or other substances used to enhance or alter a student's natural appearance are not permitted.**

### **Jewelry**

- **No excessive jewelry is permitted.** Limit: Two bracelets per wrist. Bracelets may not be more than ½ inch in diameter, and Scrunchies may not be worn as bracelets.
- Ears may be double-pierced at most. Earrings may not be longer/larger than ½ inch. Boys may not wear earrings *or gages*. No student may wear jewelry in ear cartilage, eyebrows, or in any other body-pierced site.

### **Hair**

- Boys must be clean-shaven. No facial hair is allowed.
- Boys' hair must be clean and neatly styled, above the collar and above the eyebrows. Boys may not have "hockey hair," "tails," mohawks, or designs shaved into the hair.
- No fad or extreme hairstyles are allowed for either boys or girls.
- It is unacceptable for girls or boys to have highly contrasting or extreme and distracting permanent hair coloring or "bleaching."
- "Highlighting" must be subtle and "look natural" **as determined by the administration.**
- No temporary or spray hair coloring.
- Hair bows and headbands must be navy blue, white, gray, black, yellow, or uniform plaid. No glittery or flashy bows will be permitted. Hair bows should be of moderate size. No logos allowed on headbands.
- Sunglasses, hats or bandanas are not to be worn in the building.

### **Body Markings**

No tattoos, permanent or otherwise. Students may not write or draw on their bodies with pen or marker etc.

## **Out of Uniform/Jeans Days**

Certain days throughout the school year will be designated as “Out of Uniform Days.” The dress code for these days is as follows:

### **Boys**

- Casual or cargo pants worn at the student’s natural waistline.
- Blue jeans and jean bermuda-length shorts worn at the student’s natural waistline.
- Tops must be free of any offensive writing and/or designs. No sleeveless shirts are allowed.
- Plain white T-shirts must be worn under any sport jersey. These may be long or short sleeved.
- Sweatpants or athletic bermuda-length shorts
- Socks and closed back and closed toed shoes. No boots.

### **Girls**

- Casual or cargo pants worn at the student’s natural waistline.
- Blue jeans and jean bermuda-length shorts worn at the student’s natural waistline
- Skirts, casual dresses, and jumpers
- Capris
- Tops must be free of any offensive writing and/or designs. No sleeveless shirts are allowed.
- Plain white T-shirts must be worn under any sport jersey. These may be long or short sleeved.
- Sweatpants or athletic bermuda-length shorts
- Socks and closed back and closed toed shoes. **Ugg boots are allowed.**

**Note:** The following items of apparel are not appropriate for “Out of Uniform Days”: yoga pants, leggings, jeggings, exceptionally tight jeans or shorts, shorts, skirts, or dresses less than fingertip length, spandex, mini-skirts, crop tops, tank-tops, sheer tops, spaghetti-straps, halters, plunging necklines, bib-overalls. No jeans or other clothing with rips or holes. Patches underneath rips do not make the pants permissible.

**If an Out of Uniform Day is on a gym day, clothing and shoes must be athletic.**

## **Wildcat Pride Days**

Certain days will be designated as “Wildcat Pride Day.” The purpose of these days is not necessarily to be out of uniform but to show school spirit and “Wildcat Pride” in St. Mary’s School. The dress code for these days is the same as Out of Uniform/Jeans Days as read above. The only difference is the top worn **MUST** display school spirit. “The Shirt,” items bought from the Athletic Department sales, and any other Wildcat tops are

allowed. Wildcat logos must be the branded and official St. Mary's Wildcat image. Knockoffs, bootleg, **imitation**, or any Wildcat logo that does not match the official logo on page 24 of the Student Handbook will be banned.

**If a Wildcat Pride Day is on a gym day, bottoms and shoes must be athletic and worn with a Wildcat top.**

### **Field Trip Attire**

Students represent St. Mary's School when they are on school field trips. If students are allowed to be out-of-uniform on field trips, they must follow the out-of-uniform guidelines listed above.

\*As trends come and go, this handbook attempts to address those items of clothing which are acceptable or not acceptable. Do not assume that items that are not specifically listed can be worn. When in doubt call or stop by the office and ask.

## **Health Services**

The school nurse will maintain health records and administer vision and hearing tests at regular intervals as mandated by the State of Indiana, along with routine height and weight measurements. Regular dental and physical check-ups are the responsibility of the parents and should not be made during school hours.

### **Health Care Plans**

For each student with chronic health issues, the school nurse will work with the physician to develop an individualized health plan which incorporates the services required to be provided in the management and treatment plan. The school nurse shall perform the tasks necessary to assist a student in carrying out the student's individualized health plan unless otherwise agreed upon by the nurse, administration, and parents. For the safety of all children, parents are required to fully cooperate with the school nurse, disclose all pertinent health information, and allow direct communication between the school nurse and the student's health care providers.

### **Illness**

Students are **not** to be sent to school ill (i.e. temperature above normal). Temperature must be within normal limits (97.6F - 99.6F) without medication for 24 hours prior to being sent to school. Students must not be in school if they are vomiting, have diarrhea, a rash of undetermined origin. Students must also be free from vomiting, diarrhea, and rash for 24 hours prior to returning to school. In the event that a student becomes ill at school or an accident takes place, parents will be notified immediately. For this reason, an **EMERGENCY FORM** indicating pertinent information regarding your child's health and listing phone numbers of where you can be reached during school hours will be kept on file in the Nurse's Office. Any change in data should be reported **IMMEDIATELY** so as to insure the health and welfare of your child at all times.

### **Accidents**

If a minor accident occurs at school, first aid will be administered without the permission of parent or other authorized person. In the event of a serious accident, emergency first aid will be administered immediately. The family doctor or paramedics will be contacted to insure the health and safety of the child as deemed necessary by the school nurse. The parents or other authorized persons designated on the student's Emergency Form will be contacted.

### **Medication**

Employees of the school (i.e., school nurse, principal, school personnel) may administer medications including legend drugs, injectable insulin, or blood glucose test by finger prick only if **written permission is obtained from the physician and parent or guardian**. The school will provide this form. A new permission form must be obtained at the start of each new school year. This administrative regulation is in compliance with the policy IC 34-4-16.5-3.5. Oral medication, including all cough drops, will be administered between the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. No exceptions. The parent or guardian of the student must provide medication. Medication must be in the **original container** for any over the counter medications and in the **original pharmacy bottle** for any prescribed medication. All medications must be labeled and are to be brought to the Nurse's office before school begins. Students may not have medication in their possession while on school premises, without written permission of the parent or guardian, written authorization of the student's physician and agreement signed by the student. This permission and agreement form is kept in the Nurse's office. The school principal or designee is authorized, at his or her discretion, to remove any medication temporarily from the possession of any student, and to keep the medication for the student in an appropriate place, at any time when, in the judgment of the school administrator, possession or use of the medication in the school by the student is inappropriate or is interfering with school functions, regardless of whether the student has the required parental permission and a proper prescription of the medication.

### **Communicable Disease**

Any student who contracts a communicable disease (e.g. lice, scabies, measles, mumps, fifth disease, chicken pox, mononucleosis, impetigo, pink eye, etc.) may be removed from the school by the nurse or school administration until the contagion passes. A doctor's permission, or that of the school nurse, is necessary for reinstatement to the classroom.

### **Immunizations**

All students are to be properly immunized according to Indiana State Board of Health guidelines. No student shall be permitted to attend school for more than 20 days beyond the opening date of the school year without furnishing a physician's certificate of having received the proper immunization.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) is **a process of developing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.** It equips individuals with the abilities to navigate social situations, build healthy relationships, and make positive choices that contribute to their well-being and success.

St. Mary's School is committed to supporting the social and emotional needs of its students, helping them navigate an increasingly complex world. These efforts will be guided by a Catholic perspective, ensuring that faith remains central to the approach.

### **Principal / Assistant Principal Mailboxes**

Located just outside the school office, the Principal and Assistant Principal each have their own mailbox. While these mailboxes are often filled with fun drawings and thoughtful notes from students, they also serve an important purpose.

Students are always welcome to use this space to share concerns, ask questions, or express how they're feeling in a safe and respectful way. This option is available to all students at any time, and every message is read with care.

### **Student Reporting System**

"Can We Talk?" is a reporting app which allows all students (grades 3 through 8) to electronically submit tips, concerns, or reports of incidents to the school counselor and dean of students. This provides a secure and confidential way for students to share information without fear of embarrassment or retaliation. This reporting system is designed to help students seek help for themselves (or others) with respect to failing grades, conflict with classmates, family issues, coping issues, family illness/death, thoughts of self-harm, and bullying, etc. It was launched in the spring of 2025 and in a short time proved to be a valuable tool in assisting students with their various needs.

### **Targeted Assemblies**

Some of our school assemblies are designed to provide cultural enrichment, while others focus on uplifting and educational programs that support students' social and emotional development.

### **SEL Assessment**

We are in the process of vetting a program called "7 Mindsets." It has been used for several years at the Big Shoulders schools in Chicago. If adopted, St. Mary's would be the first school in the diocese to launch this program. More information will be shared and discussed with the School Advisory Council in the fall of 2025.

## **Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Team**

The St. Mary Catholic Community School Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Team works collaboratively to identify and support students who may need additional academic, behavioral, social, or emotional assistance. The team consists of the school counselor, principal, assistant principal, resource teacher, and dean. The MTSS Team reviews student needs and available data, collaborates with teachers and families, recommends appropriate interventions and supports, and monitors student progress to determine whether those interventions are effective. The goal of the MTSS process is to provide students with timely, targeted support that helps them grow academically, socially, and behaviorally and experience success at St. Mary.

## **School Counselor**

### **Overview:**

The School Counselor supports the academic, social-emotional, and behavioral development of students in grades K through 8. This role is dedicated to fostering a safe, supportive, and inclusive school environment by collaborating with staff and families, and implementing programs that promote mental wellness and personal growth.

When a student's needs extend beyond the scope of school-based counseling, particularly when more intensive or ongoing therapeutic services are needed, the school counselor will recommend that the student and family seek support through the school's outside counseling provider (Crown Counseling) or another appropriate mental health professional.

### **Key Responsibilities:**

#### **Mental Health & Wellness Support**

- Provide short-term, developmentally appropriate individual and group counseling for students experiencing emotional, behavioral, or mental health challenges.
- Conduct preliminary mental health screenings and risk assessments to identify students in need of further support or referrals to outside providers on an "as needed" basis.
- Develop and implement mental health awareness programs and resources for students, staff, and families.
- Serve as a liaison between the school and community mental health agencies.
- Monitor and support students with chronic stress, anxiety, grief, trauma, or other mental health-related concerns.

- Implement self-regulation and coping skills training through small groups, workshops, and class visits.
- Promote mindfulness, grounding strategies, and other wellness practices as part of daily school life.
- Maintain up-to-date knowledge of child and adolescent mental health trends, community resources, and best practices through ongoing professional development.
- Assist in identifying and addressing systemic or environmental stressors (e.g., family change, academic pressure, **friendship issues**) that impact student well-being.

### **Social-Emotional & Interpersonal Development**

- Facilitate social skills groups and workshops focused on empathy, communication, emotional regulation, and resilience.
- Address and mediate interpersonal conflicts, including common issues among students such as exclusion, relational aggression, peer pressure, and reputation-based drama.
- Encourage healthy peer relationships through small groups and restorative practices.
- Guide students in managing transitions, including entering kindergarten, moving between grade levels, and preparing for high school.
- Support administration in conflict resolution between student or groups.

### **Confidentiality & Ethics**

- Uphold strict confidentiality and adhere to ethical standards in all counseling interactions, while complying with school policies and mandated reporting requirements.
- Provide a safe, nonjudgmental space for students to express themselves and seek help.
- Educate students and staff about appropriate boundaries, confidentiality, and trust-building.

### **Faith-Based Integration**

- Support the mission and values of the Catholic Church and model Christian values in all interactions with students, families, and staff.
- Integrate Catholic teachings and faith-based perspectives into counseling services, when appropriate.
- Assist in guiding students toward moral decision-making rooted in Catholic values.

## **Collaboration & Prevention**

- Consult regularly with teachers, dean, administrators, and parents to monitor student progress and provide guidance on behavioral, emotional, or social concerns.
- Participate in school-wide programs focused on kindness, inclusion, and character education.
- Provide informational sessions to staff and families on relevant topics such as anxiety, screen time, or self-esteem.

## **Documentation & Compliance**

- Maintain accurate and confidential records of counseling sessions, referrals, and communications.
- Comply with federal, state, and diocesan regulations regarding student welfare and safety.

## **Safety**

### **Safety Compliance**

St. Mary's School is committed to safety. An extensive safety plan is in place and reviewed regularly. The school conducts monthly and annual fire drills, tornado drills, lockdown drills, and earthquake drills. St. Mary's is in complete compliance with all local and state regulations. We have a good working relationship with Crown Point Mayor's Office, Crown Point Schools security staff, Trinity Lutheran School, Crown Point Police and Fire Departments. All staff members have been trained in CPR. Numerous defibrillators can be found around the campus and church. High-definition cameras inside and outside of the building monitor 24/7. All visitors are required to check in at the office prior to entering the classroom wings.

Per Indiana Code 20-20-40 it is required that the following statement be added to our handbook: As part of the emergency procedures in place in our school, no student will be restrained and/or placed in seclusion by staff unless the student's behavior poses an imminent risk of injury to him/herself or others. However, significant violations of the law including assaults on students and staff will be reported to the police. As soon as possible after any such use of restraint or seclusion, the parents or guardian will be informed when any of these actions have incurred and will be provided with a detailed account of the incident including the circumstances that led to the use of restraint or seclusion.

Behavioral interventions for children must ensure all children are treated with dignity and respect. This environment should allow all children to be free from physical or mental abuse, aversive behavioral interventions that compromise health and safety, and any physical seclusion or restraint imposed solely for purpose of discipline or convenience.

**Fire and Tornado Drills**

In accordance with state regulations, fire drills, tornado drills, earthquake drills, and lock-down drills will be held once monthly/as necessary, even during the winter months. Students are expected to maintain silence during the drills so that special instructions can be heard during a drill or an actual emergency.

**Campus Evacuation/Reunification**

Should an event take place that requires evacuation of the campus (such as a gas leak), students will be taken to a reunification site. This site is Trinity Lutheran Church located on the corner of Joliet St. and Indiana Ave. The agreement that we have with Trinity Lutheran is reciprocal. Parents will be notified via our FACTS system.

**School Safety**

School safety evolves over time based on local and national best practices. St. Mary Catholic Community School is committed to providing the safest environment possible and has an excellent ongoing relationship with the Crown Point Police Department, the Crown Point Fire Department, the Crown Point Public Schools, the Lake County Sheriff's Department, and is a member of the Crown Point City Safety Committee and the Lake County Safety Committee. All specific questions regarding safety policies and procedures may be directed to Principal, Tom Ruiz.

**Staff Safety Training**

St. Mary's has adopted the ALICE safety model. More than ten members of the staff are ALICE certified instructors, and the entire staff follows ALICE protocols. Safety policies and procedures are discussed and practiced frequently including at all faculty meetings.

**Safety Committee**

For many years, St. Mary Catholic Community School has maintained an active School Safety Committee dedicated to promoting and continually improving the safety and security of our students, faculty, staff, and visitors. The committee consists of members of the school administration, teachers, school staff, and parish staff who work collaboratively to review safety procedures, identify potential concerns, evaluate emergency preparedness, and recommend improvements to school safety practices and protocols. The committee meets regularly and remains committed to providing a safe, secure, and welcoming environment for the entire St. Mary community.

**Visitor Sign-in**

All visitors are required to sign-in using our RAPTOR system located in the main office. An ID must be produced the first time using the system. All visitors must wear a photo name tag while in the building and turn it in on the way out of the building.

**School Resource Officer**

Beginning in 2025, St. Mary Catholic Community School has employed a School Resource Officer (SRO) as an important part of our ongoing commitment to student and

school safety. The SRO provides a visible and reassuring presence throughout the school and at designated school events. Responsibilities include overseeing morning drop-off and student entry into the building, monitoring visitors, conducting routine exterior door checks, providing a security presence during school Masses, attending various after-hours school events, and maintaining a regular presence throughout the building and school grounds. The School Resource Officer works closely with school administration and staff to help maintain a safe, secure, and welcoming environment for our students, families, faculty, and staff.

## **General Policies**

### **School Day**

1. The school day begins each morning at 7:30 a.m. and ends each afternoon at 2:30 p.m.
2. When arriving in the morning, students are required to report directly to the classroom.
3. A warning bell rings at 7:25 a.m. to alert students that school is about to start.
4. Students who are not in their rooms at 7:35 a.m. are tardy and will be marked so on their permanent record.
5. Students are not permitted to enter the building and should not arrive before 7:00 a.m. Students are required to leave for home immediately after school. Parents are to pick up their children by 2:30 p.m. Playground equipment is off limits after school hours. Any activity taking place after school hours on the school premises must be supervised by an adult with the permission of the Principal.
6. All students in grades 1-8 attend all-school mass. Students at St. Mary's should attend mass faithfully. Mass is not optional.

## Parking Lot Procedures



### Drop Off Procedures

All vehicles dropping students off should enter St. Mary Catholic Community School grounds via the South Street entrance to Rosary Lane. Please use caution as cars enter from the east and the west. Two lines will form upon entering. Move to the shorter line when entering and remain in that line until cars merge to form one line. Courtesy to other drivers is our expectation. All students should be dropped off as the traffic stops between the Gym doors and the far cafeteria doors. All cars between these doors should release their children. The students should exit the car and proceed to the nearest door. Any person who wishes to accompany the students into the Main Office should park in the areas south of the flagpole. The parking spaces north of the flagpole are reserved for staff members. Please do not park in these spaces for access to the Kindergarten areas. It is important that those wishing to leave the line for this purpose do so only at the entrance to the parking lot. Please do not drive down the outgoing lane. Please drive slowly and carefully in the lot since many children may be out on the parking lot. NO TEXTING, or other distracting phone use while driving. All vehicles should exit the school grounds via Walnut Street on the west side of the parking lot. **This plan was created with the safety of all children in mind.**

### Pick Up Procedures

All vehicles should enter St. Mary Catholic Community School grounds via Rosary Lane. Cars may enter Rosary Lane making a double row. Cars will stop in the lane at the entrance to the parking lot. Teachers will be present to direct traffic along the front of the school, calling the family's name into the school so that the students can be sent out to the waiting cars. (Each family will receive two name signs for their cars for this purpose.) If you have an appointment with a teacher or someone in the main office, you will tell the teacher at the entrance to the lot and then you must park and come into the office. As in the morning at drop off, you simply drive along the front of the school to pick up your child. Any children still waiting in the school after all the cars are gone will be brought to the office to wait. After that point, the parent must then park and come into the office to sign the child out. No child will be left on the porch or on the playground. All cars will

then exit the parking lot using Walnut Street. Faculty members will be assigned to ensure the smooth flow of traffic. *Please do not come to the office shortly before dismissal and ask for students to be dismissed. Parents may not pick their children up via the church parking lot or in front of the church.* **This plan was created with the safety of all children in mind. All new parents or returning parents in need of a “refresher course” are encouraged to watch this Car Line Video:**

<https://youtu.be/claU5bnQK8Y>

**FOR THE SAFETY OF OUR CHILDREN, PLEASE DO NOT...**

- **-Drop off or pick up students via the church parking lot.**
- **-Bypass the car line, park, let your child out, and leave.**
- **-Stop short of the cars in front of you to pick up or drop off your child.**
- **-Enter via Walnut Street and merge into (cutting) the car line.**
- **-Block other drivers (preventing them from forming two lines in Rosary Lane).**
- **-Pick up your child at dismissal and veer out of the car line and cut through the parking lot.**

## **Absences**

Regular student attendance is essential to academic success **and is also an important component of Indiana's school accountability system.** The State of Indiana monitors chronic absenteeism and student attendance, including both excused and unexcused absences. Families are strongly encouraged to make regular and consistent school attendance a priority and to avoid unnecessary absences whenever possible.

Parents are to call the School Office before 8:00 a.m. to report absences. The student's name, grade, and reason for absence is to be given. Upon returning to school, the student must submit a parent's written excuse to the office to gain admittance to the class. Parents are responsible for seeing to it that make-up assignments are completed. Students must check with teachers upon returning to school regarding missing assignments to insure all work has been completed. **One day for make-up work is allowed for each day of absence.** Parents may call on their child's first day of absence to request homework. Please make your request before 10:00 a.m. That homework may then be picked up in the office after school ends. In accordance with Indiana State law, students absent for more than thirty days during the school term, without a physician's documentation, may be retained. **One day for make-up work is allowed for each day of absence.**

It is expected that any student who is too ill to attend classes is too ill to attend an extra-curricular event. Any student who has been absent a half day or the equivalent of three class periods may not participate in or attend any extracurricular activity that same day. Attendance at any school or C.Y.O. sponsored event to be held during the weekend should be approved by the Principal. If a doctor sends in a note to school to excuse a student from gym for any reason, that student **will not** be able to participate in outdoor recess nor any extra-curricular sport/physical activities, until such a time as released from their doctor. Each student, K-8, will be allowed 10 days absence per semester. Any absence that carries a physician's note of excuse is not counted in those 10 days per semester. A physician's note will be required after three (3) consecutive days of absence. Parents must have a conference with the teacher and/or principal after 10 days of absence. If a student is out of the building over three (3) hours of instructional time, then the student is marked absent for a half day.

When the student returns, a doctor's note must be presented to the office. An absentee slip will be issued from the office for the student to take to their homeroom teacher indicating if the absence is excused or unexcused. When return from excused absences include illness, doctor or dentist appointment, funeral of immediate family member, legislative page, or court appointment they must bring appropriate documentation.

**Any vacation days taken during the school year will be counted as part of the allowable 10 days per semester.**

If the student exceeds the maximum number of days per semester, there will be a loss of credit for each day beyond the 10 days allowed. Homework will not be given before an extended time out of school. Student who miss a total of 20 days or more will be likely candidates for retention. Students who miss a total of 30 days or more will likely not be allowed to return to St. Mary School the following school year. While we stress the importance of daily attendance, St. Mary's discourages parents from sending students to school who are ill. No special awards will be given to students with "perfect attendance."

Situations in which absences are deemed excessive by the administration will result in parent contact, possible student retention, and ultimately be reported to Child Protective Services, as required, under the category of "educational neglect."

### **Mandatory Unexcused Absence Reporting**

Per Indiana Law, students who receive 10 or more unexcused absences will be reported to Child Protective Services (Grades K-5) or Lake County Juvenile Court (Grades 6-8) for absence and educational neglect.

### **Tardiness**

**7:00 AM** Students may enter the building

**7:25 AM** The warning bell rings

**7:30 AM** The tardy bell rings

From 7:30 TO 7:35 (during announcements or WSMW) classroom teachers will mark absences and tardies.

After 7:35, tardies will be logged in the office as students enter the building late.

After tardy number three and four, detentions will be issued by the classroom teacher. Tardy number five will result in a parent conference with the principal. Students who accumulate 15 unexcused tardies in will be reported to Child Protective Services for educational neglect. The slate is wiped clean at the beginning of each quarter. Students who are deemed habitually tardy will be at risk of not being allowed to re-enroll for the following school year.

### **Phone**

The office phone is available for use by students only in the event of an emergency. Students will not be allowed to use the phone unless they have a written permission from their teacher. Students may not use the phone to get permission to go to someone's house after school or to change their afterschool plans. No calls are to be made to school or from school through the pay phone near the gym during school hours. Cell Phones must be put away in lockers or in backpacks and turned off during the school day. Students who are caught using cell phones during the school day will have them confiscated. Parents may pick up confiscated cell phones from the principal. No wearable devices (such as Apple Watches) may be worn during school hours.

### **Textbooks**

It is important that proper care be taken of all textbooks. Rental books are to be covered at all times. Students are never to mark books with pencils or pens. If a book is lost or damaged beyond repair, it must be paid for by the parent. Bookbags or backpacks for all students are encouraged so as to protect the books between home and school.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips are an integral part of the learning experience. At various times during the school year, these trips will be planned, with final approval given by the principal. A notice will be sent home detailing the excursion, along with a permission slip to be signed by the parent or guardian. No child will be allowed to go on any field trip without the written consent of the parents. Field trip money constitutes a commitment on the part of the parent and student to pay their share of the cost of the trip, and as such, cannot be refunded. Students who cannot behave responsibly will not be allowed to go on field trips without a parent. Younger siblings are not permitted to attend field trips with older brothers and sisters due to liability and insurance reasons. When space is limited, only a certain number of parents will be able to attend as chaperones. A rotation system will be used so that all parents may get the opportunity to serve as chaperones. A chaperone's purpose is to supervise the children to whom he/she is assigned. All guidelines set by the teacher(s) are to be followed. All chaperones must have gone through the Diocesan mandated VIRTUS training and be current in reading the required monthly bulletins and

current background check must be on file. Background checks must be turned in for processing 10 days prior to the field trip or other participation.

### **Assemblies**

Assemblies have a definite place in education as an instrument for the social growth of the student. They will be held at various times throughout the year to provide educational experiences for the student body, to explain policy, or to honor certain groups of students. Students are directly responsible to their teachers for their behavior.

### **Picture Day**

School pictures are taken annually in the fall. Students are REQUIRED to wear school uniforms for these pictures. N.U.T. cards may NOT be used on picture day. Purchasing school pictures is optional.

### **Cafeteria**

St. Mary Catholic Community School offers hot lunches to students on a daily basis. Students must place their order for a hot lunch in the morning. Those choosing not to purchase hot lunches may bring a cold lunch from home. (Fast foods are not permitted.) Milk is available to all students. The consumption of caffeinated drinks is prohibited. Students are assigned seats in the cafeteria and are to remain seated until their table is cleaned. Students are seated and orderly, and their tables are dismissed by the lunch personnel. Courtesy, respect, and dignified conduct are expected at all times. Students who are continually corrected will lose their cafeteria privileges. Proper table manners are mandatory.

All students are responsible for cleaning up after themselves, which includes wiping up spills and crumbs, throwing away garbage, and depositing trays in the proper area. No food or beverages are allowed outside of the cafeteria. Cafeteria workers and supervisors are to be obeyed at all times. Students not obeying cafeteria rules will be subject to disciplinary action.

### **Bus Transportation**

Bus transportation is available to eligible St. Mary Catholic Community School students through the Crown Point Community School Corporation.

Route information can be obtained by calling the Transportation department at 663-1465.

Bus riders are to abide by the Disciplinary Contract provided by Crown Point which specifies rules and regulations for bus behavior.

Consequences for rule infractions are specified in the contract. As misbehavior on the bus jeopardizes the privilege of all students to have access to bus transportation, additional consequences may be imposed, such as loss of bus privileges for a specified number of days, or total loss of bus transportation.

## **Appointments**

The school administration and the State Department of Instruction strongly recommend that all doctor appointments be scheduled at times other than a school day. Appointments scheduled during the school day will be a mark against perfect attendance.

## **School Visitors**

For the protection and security of the students in the school, it is required that any person entering the building during the school day come directly to the office before going to any other part of the school. The log kept in the office will be used in the case of emergency to check that all persons have exited the building. It is important that all guests sign in and out of the guest registry. Parents are asked not to interrupt teachers while class is in session or go directly to the classroom door to pick up a child. The only access to the school is through the doors near the Main Office.

## **Calendar**

Our yearly calendar may also be found on our website ([school/stmarycp.com](http://school/stmarycp.com)) and in our weekly Wildcat Newsletter.

## **Wildcat Newsletter**

The Wildcat Newsletter is our electronic newsletter. It will be sent via e-mail and text to all parents whose e-mail is registered with FACTS and will also be posted on electronically in FACTS by no later than 4:00 PM every Wednesday. All information to be included in the Wildcat must be sent to principal's designee no later than the end of the day on Monday.

## **Vacations**

A school calendar is published in the spring sent home in August and posted on our school website stating the days that school is not in session. It is strongly advised that family vacations be planned to coincide with these times so that students do not miss any instructional days. Teachers are not required to provide students with a complete listing of their assignments before the student leaves for a vacation. Parents are advised to contact the teacher one week prior to leaving on vacation to make homework arrangements. **One day for make-up work is allowed for each day of absence.**

## **Recess**

Recess is an important part of our school day. Students (and teachers) need time away from the classroom during the school day to become refreshed both physically and mentally. Students will be allowed outdoors for recess if the temperature is at or above 32 degrees (taking "feels like" factor into account).

## **Emergency Closings**

St. Mary School will generally be closed when the Crown Point Schools are closed, however the final decision regarding delays or closings is made by the principal. *Notification regarding Emergency Closings will be made via our FACTS phone system.* The phone capabilities of the office are limited. Do not call the office for this information.

## **Virtual Days**

A limited number of Virtual Days are permitted by the State Department of Education. Assignments will be communicated by the teachers and students are required to finish and turn in their assignments when school resumes. Those students who do not turn in assignments will lose credit for the assignments and be marked absent. Work on Virtual Days will be limited to a “reasonable” amount.

## **Late Start Days for Professional Development**

Beginning with the 2026–2027 school year, St. Mary Catholic Community School will implement regularly scheduled Professional Development Late-Start Days. These days will provide our faculty and staff with dedicated time for professional development, collaboration, curriculum planning, and continued school improvement. This practice is consistent with schedules already implemented by most other diocesan and area schools.

On designated Professional Development Late-Start Days, the school day for students will begin **two hours later than our normal schedule**. Students may begin entering the school building at **9:00 a.m.**, with classes beginning at **9:30 a.m.** Families should check the calendar for these monthly PD days.

We recognize that a change in the school schedule requires adjustment for families and appreciate their cooperation and understanding. These dedicated professional development opportunities will allow our teachers and staff to continue strengthening instruction and better serving the academic, spiritual, social, and emotional needs of our students.

## **Library**

The school library exists for the use of the students in order to provide for their personal growth and to promote an interest in and an appreciation of books. A weekly library time will be assigned to each grade. Students checking out books are directly responsible for their care and handling. Students are required to show all outside reading items to the librarian upon entry for approval to read in the library. This assures students are reading, level and content appropriate items. Books deemed “inappropriate” by the librarian will not be allowed. Fines will be issued for damaged and overdue books. Library privileges will be taken away from students who consistently keep books out longer than permitted, who fail to pay their fines, or are continually disruptive.

## **School Advisory Council**

The School Advisory Council is made up of parents, the Pastor, the Principal, and a faculty representative. The School Advisory Council meets once per month and acts as a consultant on school policies. The Council members serve for three-year staggered terms and new Council members are elected by the parish school families.

## Home and School Association

Our Home and School Association is an important link between parents and the school. Meetings are held periodically during the school year. Check the school calendar for the exact dates. The Home and School meetings are opportunities for parents to make suggestions to and ask questions of the administration of the school.

Parents are encouraged to join and participate in the activities planned by the Association. They are designed to help our children in some way, be it financially or in helping to develop a sense of school spirit and community. Help is always needed and appreciated. Show that you care - be an **ACTIVE** member of the Home and School Association. To information regarding event chairs and event links, please visit [stmarycp.org/school](http://stmarycp.org/school) and click on the parent portal. Current HSA officers are listed and past HSA officers are honored with special recognition.

## Class Lists

Class lists are determined by the school staff. Lists will be posted on Friday the week before school starts. Requests for specific teacher or classmates should not be made and will not be honored.

## Treats

All birthday treats to be distributed to the class must be store bought rather than homemade. Arrangements should be made with the teacher in advance. **NO NUTS ALLOWED.**

## Special Event Treats

On special reward days pizza or donuts may be served by school staff following established protocols. Parents may contact the teacher directly with questions or to make arrangements and receive prior approval.

## Device Policy

Students in K-8 grade are **required** to bring Chromebooks. Here is a list of items that these Chromebooks will be used for:

- Note taking, annotation
- Instant access to approved sites on the world wide web
- Electronic submission of writing assignments
- Paperless tests
- Online collaboration between students
- Viewing of assigned video clips
- Improved teacher/student communication
- Greater student ownership in grade reporting
- Digital projects

Please contact [rshupryt@stmarycp.org](mailto:rshupryt@stmarycp.org) for a copy of our latest device specs and requirements.

## **Acceptable Use Policy**

### **Internet Use Policy**

Freedom of expression, which encompasses the right to freedom of speech and the right to receive information, applies to minors as well as adults. In a free and democratic society, access to information is a fundamental right of citizenship.

Electronic information research skills are now fundamental to the preparation of citizens and future employees. Access to the Internet enables students to explore thousands of libraries, databases and other resources. St. Mary Catholic Community School expects that staff will blend thoughtful use of the Internet throughout the curriculum and will provide guidance and instruction to students in its use. As much as possible, access from school to Internet resources should be structured in ways that point students to those sites that have been evaluated prior to use. While students will be able to move beyond those resources to others that have not been previewed by staff, they shall be provided with guidelines and lists of resources particularly suited to learning objectives.

In keeping with the mission of St. Mary's Community Catholic School and to promote values for a lifetime the school will instruct about and guard against inappropriate, unethical, and illegal use of the Internet by the user (student, teacher, parent, volunteer, etc.) With access to computers and people all over the world also comes the availability of material that may be considered objectionable. St. Mary's Community Catholic School has taken precautions to restrict access to controversial materials. However, on a global network, it is impossible to control all materials, and an industrious user may discover controversial information. We at St. Mary's Community Catholic School firmly believe that the valuable information and interaction available on these worldwide networks far outweighs the probability that users may procure material that is not consistent with the educational goals of the school. It is up to the St. Mary's Community Catholic School user to use good judgement and citizenship and abide to all of these provisions, or his/her use of the Internet ready technology will be terminated for up to one calendar year.

Students are only permitted to use their St. Mary's generated G-Suite accounts distributed by their teachers. Please see the letter sent home at the beginning of the year that includes usernames and passwords. These accounts are accessible at all times by St. Mary's staff and should only be used for educational purposes.

**Acceptable Use-** The purpose of the Internet is to support research and education in and among academic institutions in the US by providing access to unique resources and the opportunity for collaborative work. The use of the school's Internet connection must be in support of education and research and consistent with the philosophy of St. Mary's Catholic Community School. Transmission of any material in violation of any US or state regulation is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to: copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, or material protected by trade. Use for commercial activities is generally not acceptable. St. Mary's Community Catholic School does not accept responsibility for a user's participation in activities involving money.

**Unacceptable Use-** The use of the Internet shall not frustrate the goal of achieving innovative educational excellence. Specifically, the following uses of school-provided Internet access are not permitted:

- a) to access, upload, download, or distribute inappropriate, obscene, or unacceptable material
- b) to post pictures, video, audio of others without consent.
- c) to access personal e-mail information.
- d) to access personal social networking sites like Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram, etc.
- e) to perform any transactions through online shopping.
- f) to transmit obscene, abusive, inappropriate, racially offensive, harassing, intimidating, or threatening language
- g) to violate any local, state, or federal statute
- h) to vandalize, damage, or disable the property of another individual or organization
- i) to access another individual's materials, information, or files without permission
- j) to violate copyright or otherwise use the intellectual property of another individual or organization without permission
- k) to conduct activity which may be construed as having a commercial or political purpose
- l) to gain access to another person's account and assigned password or otherwise attempt to login in violation of an individual participant's security
- m) to engage in behavior which may be deemed destructive to the computer network services, including overloading, spamming, hacking, spreading viruses, or physical vandalism

**Privileges-** The use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in a cancellation of those privileges. The administration, faculty, or staff of St. Mary Catholic Community School may request that a student's use of any school computer equipment be denied.

**Network Etiquette-** The student is expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. These include (but are not limited to) the following: Be polite. Do not get abusive in your messages to others. Use appropriate language. Do not swear, use vulgarities or any other inappropriate language. Illegal activities are strictly forbidden. Do not reveal your personal address or phone number or that of other students or colleagues. Any student who receives requests for unsolicited information will immediately report that to the supervising teacher. That teacher will report this incident to appropriate authorities. Note that electronic mail (e-mail) is not guaranteed to be private. People who operate the system do have access to all mail. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities may be reported to the authorities. All communications and information accessible via the network should be assumed to be private property, and should be cited properly when used in research, reports, presentations, etc.

**Warranties-** St. Mary Catholic Community School makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied for the service it is providing. St. Mary Catholic Community School will not be responsible for any damages incurred. This includes loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, mis-deliveries, or service interruptions caused by negligence or errors or missions. Use of any information obtained via the Internet is at user's risk. St. Mary Catholic Community School specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services.

**Security-** Security on any computer system is a high priority, especially when the system involves many users. Do not demonstrate the problem to other users. Do not use another individual's account. Attempts to do so will result in cancellation of user privileges. Any user identified as a security risk or having a history of problems with other computer systems may be denied access to the Internet.

**Vandalism-** Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of other users on the Internet, intentional modification of system settings or any of the above listed agencies or other networks that are connected to the Internet backbone. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses.

Vandalism 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.

### **Questions or Concerns**

Parents are encouraged to always contact the teacher first about difficulties or concerns regarding the classroom. A note sent with the student or a call to the office is needed to set up an appointment with the teacher. If after the teacher is contacted, the parents still have a concern, they should feel free to contact the Principal for an appointment to meet alone or with the teacher.

### **Final Note**

This handbook is provided in an attempt to make both parents and students aware of the basic rules and policies governing St. Mary Catholic Community School. The regulations cited are general guidelines and are not all inclusive. The school administration is the final arbitrator in the interpretation and enforcement of all regulations *and reserves the right to make amendments and changes as deemed necessary.*

## **Have a wonderful year!**



## **St. Mary Pledge**

May God bless:  
Our minds to think our best thoughts,  
Our lips to speak kindly to one another,  
Our hearts to feel compassion,  
And our hands to reach out to one another with compassion and care.

I promise always to do my best and to treat everyone with respect and kindness.  
I will follow the example of Jesus and his Mother Mary in all things.  
Today I will live what St. Mary teaches: We are all one- United in Christ!

The Student Handbook is posted on our school website. Every year the handbook is updated. Changes from the previous year's handbook are in red. Please take some time to review the handbook with your children and then sign and return this form. In addition to the handbook verification signature, we also require all parents and students to sign the Bullying Pledge, the Acceptable Use Policy, and the Media Release Permission form. Thank you.

## Please sign and return by Friday, August 21, 2026

### Handbook Signature Page

This is to verify that I have read the student handbook for St. Mary Catholic Community School and that I am aware of the rules and policies of the school. I will do my part to uphold these as a parent and assist my child(ren) in supporting them also.

|                           |             |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| _____                     | Date: _____ |
| Parent/Guardian Signature |             |
| _____                     | _____       |
| Student(s)                | Student(s)  |
| _____                     | _____       |
| Student(s)                | Student(s)  |

### Bullying Pledge

I/We, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of \_\_\_\_\_  
Agree to join together with the faculty and staff of St. Mary Catholic Community School as we eradicate bullying from our school. We are responsible to provide a safe, caring, Catholic, Christian Environment for each child. I/We understand that bullying has demoralizing effects on our students. Children who are bullied may have higher rates of depression, loneliness, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. These emotional scars often remain with bullied children into their adulthood. No one should have to endure this type of abuse, particularly at our school, as we are attempting to instill Christian values into each lesson. The types of bullying include physical, verbal, and psychological acts of aggression against an individual. I/We understand that however subtle an act may be, it can work powerfully against the self-esteem of a student. Bullying has a negative effect on our children and on our faith community. Reporting acts of bullying against a student is a moral obligation of each person affiliated with our school. Therefore, retaliation in any form against a staff member or student who exercises his/her right to make a report under this policy is strictly prohibited and will itself be cause for appropriate disciplinary action. We have carefully reviewed the Anti-Bullying Policy and as we (parent/ guardian and student) sign this pledge, we agree to the following terms: We will keep ourselves informed and aware of the school bullying policy. We will work in partnership to educate and empower ourselves against acts of bullying. We will keep the lines of communication open with each other. We will alert a faculty member immediately if any bullying occurs.

|                           |             |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| _____                     | Date: _____ |
| Parent/Guardian Signature |             |
| _____                     | _____       |
| Student(s)                | Student(s)  |
| _____                     | _____       |
| Student(s)                | Student(s)  |

## Google Workspace Consent

I understand that as a part of my student's use of web-based education tools, certain educational information will be stored in web-based services, such as Google Workspace, and may be accessible to a party other than my child and St. Mary Catholic Community School as a result of this online environment. In an effort to keep students safe, our school intends to limit such records to those applications necessary for educational services and school activities.

**I give permission for St. Mary Catholic Community School to create/maintain a Google Workspace for Education account for my child and for Google to collect, use, and disclose information about my child only for the purposes described in the notice below.**

Google's notice can be found at the following link:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VMi0u8t8900B0vDW5wDeX3526d4yI6l0HwuM4t3Wsg/edit?usp=sharing>

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## SAINT MARY SCHOOL MEDIA/ WSMW/ PRINT PICTURE/VIDEO PERMISSION

Our expectation is that you allow your child's photo/video image to be published on the St. Mary website, WSMW News Program, newspaper, social media, shared with the Big Shoulders Foundation for publication, or any other publication deemed reasonable by St. Mary Catholic Community School.

We as a school do want to celebrate your child and his/her work and accomplishments. We will NOT release any personally identifiable information such as, residential addresses, email address, phone numbers, etc.

If you, as the parent or guardian, wish to exclude your child from photos, you may do so at any time in writing by sending a letter to Mrs. Monica Kasper, and such request will take effect upon receipt.

### PLEASE CHECK AND SIGN:

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that my child's photo/video may be published unless I request otherwise.  
(initial)

**PRINT STUDENT NAME(S) :** \_\_\_\_\_

**PRINT NAME OF PARENT:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNATURE OF PARENT:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_