



St. Mary School Family Handbook

Preamble

Catholic schools serve a vital role in the Church's mission of providing young people with a strong formation in the Faith; they have a particular goal in helping Catholic children and young people grow in faithfulness and apostolic zeal. St. Mary School is open to all who wish to learn in a Catholic environment. By our works and example, we evangelize our students, their families, and the broader school community.

Since humankind is created in the image and likeness of God, all human activity is to image His likeness, and is to be undertaken in an honest and human way, always expressing the will of the Creator. Such activity includes work, sports, hobbies, social interactions and interpersonal relationships. Catholic schools, like all human activity in which the Church participates, should reflect the faith which the Church has received from her divine founder.

As a community whose primary mission is the teaching of the Faith, St. Mary School maintains an environment that is true to the teachings of the Church, and it is important that parents/guardians understand this and accept this. By choosing a Catholic school, parents/guardians recognize that they are enrolling their children in a school environment that is shaped by the teachings of the Catholic church and governed according to those religious beliefs. Parents/Guardians must accept that certain standards of behavior and comportment are expected, and are to support these standards and the mission of the school.

If parents/guardians or students oppose Church teaching publicly, or in a way that disrupts or interferes with the Church's teaching mission, they will be engaged pastorally in an attempt to resolve the differences by explaining the Church's teaching and the reasons for the teaching, and kindly encouraging the parent or student to respect such teaching. Parents/guardians are advised that continued opposition may result in disenrollment of the student from the school.

The purpose of this handbook is to make the experience of all members of the school community – students, parents, support staff, teachers, and administrators – one that reflects the values that are important to St. Mary School: Hearts with God, Minds at work and Lives of service. These three pillars of our school are the basis for this handbook. Hearts with God accentuates the relationship that we all have to honor, love and serve God. Minds at work reflects the efforts of the day to day activities that are the work of our school. Lives of service implies that we all have a relationship with one another, a relationship that is rooted in love and respect as well as a responsibility to help one another in justice and peace.

In a family, it is the responsibility of the parents – the first teachers of their children in the ways of faith – to guide their children and educate them in distinguishing right from wrong. So in the family of St. Mary School it is the role of the principal to make the final application and interpretation of this handbook in the interest of helping all to learn right



from wrong. At the discretion of the principal, guidelines may be added to this handbook for the well being of the family of St. Mary School.

At the conclusion of the three main sections of this handbook, there is a section of General Information where parents and students may find the answers to several concerns they might have regarding day-to-day issues.

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Part I – Hearts with God – the relationship between God and us, his children.

1. Prayer – Each school day should be permeated with prayer. It is the responsibility of the administration and/or teacher to direct this prayer in a meaningful way for the students. Students for their part are to be respectful of the moments of prayer by participating as fully and appropriately as possible.
2. Religious Services – All students, Catholics as well as non-Catholics, are required to attend all religious services. St. Mary School is respectful of the religious differences that exist among the families of our school. All parents and students must be respectful of the religious nature of the school and realize that participating in religious services is an integral part of the education of our students.

3. **Sacramental Preparation** – One of the more important obligations that we have as a community is to prepare our students for the reception of the sacraments of Penance, Communion and Confirmation; we do this according to the norms established by the Diocese of Camden and in conjunction with the local parishes. At the time of one's Baptism we are all initiated into the Christian faith and with our anointing at Baptism we are all called to be priests, prophets and kings. As priests we are all called to sacrifice; as prophets we are all called to proclaim God's love and as kings we are all called to lead people to God. The three sacraments that our students receive call them to deepen their commitments to these three callings. In Penance we come to the realization that we all are imperfect and must learn to ask for forgiveness. In communion we express our desire to be in union with our Christian brothers and sisters. Communion is our spiritual food for the journey that lies ahead of us. In confirmation we deepen our baptismal commitments and ask the assistance of the Holy Spirit to guide us as we proclaim the Gospel with our lives.
4. **Ministries** – All our students are invited to become more involved in their parishes. This can be done in several ways. Some students will become altar servers and help minister in our communal services. Some students may volunteer in their parishes to help those less fortunate. Some students may join the choir and use their voices to praise God. Some students may become lectors and proclaim God's Word at the various services that are available to them. From time to time during the school day, students may be asked to perform one or more of these ministries. If this entails leaving the school and missing class, students must make these arrangements through the main office of the school. Students who perform these ministries will not be penalized for any missed classwork or assignments.
5. **Religious Activities** – In order to deepen the religious knowledge and experience of our students, the school provides religious activities in which the students can engage. Some of the activities are obligatory and some are optional. Our purpose in offering these activities to our students is to let them know that there are many ways in which we can worship and honor God, his son, Jesus, and the mother of Jesus, St. Mary. These activities include (but are not limited to) the following: Retreat Days, Service Days, May Crowning, prayer services, Sacrament of Reconciliation, Stations of the Cross, Rosary, celebration of the Eucharist.

Part II – Minds to Work – The relationship we have with ourselves to use well the gifts God has given us.

1. **Academics** – the main purpose of St. Mary School is to educate children and adolescents in the ways of faith and to give them a firm academic preparation for their time in secondary school and in life. The curriculum, as well as the various activities of the school, is directed to these two purposes. The details of the course of study and various academic policies are located in **Appendix B**.



2. Homework - Homework is essential for the full scholastic development of the child. Study and reading assignments are just as important as written assignments. Students should take pride in their work and so all written homework is to be done neatly as it is a reflection of the student and his/her ability to follow directions. Homework is given to reinforce the skills taught in the classroom. This assigned work may be on a daily basis or in the form of long-range projects. In some cases, a student from the upper grades may have some research work that requires the use of one's local library or other resources. We ask parents to please cooperate with these out-of-class assignments. St. Mary School's website at www.smrschool.org should be checked daily for homework assignments.

The guidelines that the school follows regarding the amount of homework are: one-half hour for grades 1 and 2; one hour for grades 3 through 5; one and one-half hours for grades 6 through 8. Not all children will complete their homework in the allotted time. Some may take more time and others less. Students taking accelerated subjects (grades 5 - 8) can expect increased workload for their grade level. Suggested time guidelines for grades 3 - 8 do not include projects or long-term reports. Grades 3- 8 are required to use the regulation homework assignment book that can be purchased at the school supply store.

3. Attendance – If a student wishes to achieve his or her best it is important to attend school regularly. Through proper attendance the student learns the material presented in class and contributes to the educational process in the classroom. Students are givers as much as they are receivers in the activity of learning and so their presence is mutually beneficial.
 - a) Absences should be reported to the school nurse no later than 9:00 AM on the day of the absence.
 - b) A note explaining the absence should accompany the student on his/her return to school.
 - c) An extended absence of three days or more requires that a medical certificate be presented unless other arrangements have already been made (e.g. vacation).
 - d) Students are responsible for all classwork and homework they miss while absent.
 - e) Students who exceed ten (10) days absent are deemed to be excessively absent. Those students who are excessively absent merit the special attention of the principal who will work with the parents of the student to select a course of action that is in the best interest of the student and the school. Please see **Appendix G**.
 - f) A student who arrives after 7:50 AM is considered late to school and must register with his/her parent at the main office upon arrival.
 - g) Excessive lateness (except for lateness caused by the bus transportation company) will be a cause for discipline that will be determined by the principal based on the number and reasons for the



lateness. Excessive lateness is when a student is late more than five times per semester.

- h) Students who miss school due to vacations are responsible for any missed work. The individual student should make arrangements with his/her teacher to determine how and when missed work is to be made up when they return. No homework will be given to students in advance of a family vacation.
 - i) From time to time it may be necessary to dismiss a child during the school day to attend an appointment with a physician or other such professional. The student should bring a note to the main office explaining the need and circumstances for the early dismissal. When the parent arrives to pick up her/his child, the parent should report to the main office so that the child can be properly dismissed. Upon return to the school the parent and student should again report to the main office.
4. Activity Period – The Activity Period is a time for students to prepare adequately for the schoolwork they are about to undertake. Notes that need to be delivered to the Main Office or any monies that need to be collected should be given to the teacher at this time.
5. School Hours and Latch-key Program – The normal school day for students commences at 7:50 AM and goes until 2:20 PM. For their safety, students who arrive at school before 7:40 AM or remain at the school after 2:20 PM will be placed in the Latch-key Program. The school charges for this service and parents will be billed appropriately.
6. Auxiliary Services – Through the state of New Jersey and local school districts various services are offered to our students to augment their education. These services currently include the following: compensatory education for children who need help in reading, writing and math; English as a Second Language (ESL); home instruction for students who are unable to attend school because of an extended illness; the services of a Child Study Team who may help to diagnosis persistent problems/causes/prescriptions in learning, behavior, or other areas; speech therapy for those having speech problems.
- a. Services for these programs are provided upon parent consent and are delivered in the school. This basis for determining eligibility of students for these services is in accordance with New Jersey law.
 - b. The Title I Program is a federally funded program administered through the public schools system. It provides remediation in reading, writing and math based on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills scores and qualifying percentile as well as teacher recommendation.



7. Media Center – The school media center is a resource that is meant to augment the education in the classroom. While using the media center, students are asked to comply with the following rules:
 - a. Silence is to be observed in the media center at all times (unless otherwise directed by the teacher).
 - b. Books may be taken out for two weeks.
 - c. Each student is personally responsible for books signed out in his/her name.
 - d. Any student who damages or loses a book must make restitution.
 - e. There is a fine of \$.05 a school day for overdue books.
 - f. Reference books may not be taken out of the building at any time.

8. Conduct in the Classroom – The learning environment is where the student can best realize and achieve his/her potential. The student must work with the teacher as well as he or she can so that the student can benefit. The student is required to listen to the teacher and follow the teacher’s directions on class decorum. It is the obligation of the teacher to create a proper learning environment in which students learn and all students are respected. Teachers should ensure that students participate in a manner that enhances the learning experience. If students become distracted by objects in the classroom, the teacher may confiscate these objects and make arrangements for their return at a later date. All students have a right to learn and this will not be denied them by the actions of any other student.

9. Discipline – The main lesson we can teach one another is that there are consequences to our actions. That is the purpose of disciplining students. It is hoped that through discipline a student can become a better person. A student should always be willing to apologize for his/her actions when he/she acts inappropriately. A simple apology may sometimes be enough. However, as part of the education of the student and to help the student determine right from wrong, it may be necessary to discipline the student. Discipline can be as innocuous as a note or phone call to a parent or as severe as expulsion from St. Mary School.
 - a. It is the obligation of the administration and the teachers to keep parents informed of the progress of their children. If a student engages in any activity that requires disciplinary action, the parent will be informed.
 - b. After-school detentions are given for more serious or repeated offenses. After-school detention begins immediately after school is dismissed and concludes at 3:00 P.M. Parents will be notified at least one day in advance of any after-school detentions. Students who cannot be picked up at 3:00 P.M. will have to go to the Latch-Key program and parents will be charged accordingly.
 - c. The principal administers in-school suspension for grievous offenses. The details of the in-school suspension will be determined at the time of its application.
 - d. Out-of-school suspension is for very serious offenses. Examples include but are not limited to the following:

- i. Continued misconduct after repeated detentions have failed to bring about the change in behavior.
 - ii. Willful disobedience or open defiance of teacher's authority.
 - iii. Willful damage to school property by defacement or otherwise.
 - iv. Stealing.
 - v. Obscenity, profanity or vulgarity in word or act.
 - vi. Fighting in school, on the bus, or school property.
 - vii. Use or possession of drugs and alcohol, tobacco, matches, knives, weapons, drugs or drug paraphernalia.
 - e. Expulsion is an action taken in the most serious cases. The principal of the school and the pastor who is a member of the Board determine expulsion.
 - f. A parent of any student who damages school property shall be liable for damages in the amount of the damaged property.
10. Dress Code – A dress code enhances the educational experience of the students. It teaches the student about hygiene and respect for oneself. The dress code is not meant to be burdensome but liberating. It reflects the pride that we all have in our school. A dress code offers an opportunity for equality and camaraderie. Students should take pride in themselves and in their school. Dress codes, by their nature include many details. Those details are included in **Appendix D** of this handbook.
11. Medicine – New Jersey state law does **not** permit any kind of medication to be administered to any student that is not properly prescribed by a physician. If a child requires medication during the school day (prescription or non-prescription), a written note from the doctor, along with written permission from the parent must accompany the medication. The medication must be in the original container with explicit instructions as to the time and quantity to be given. All medication must be brought to and from school by the parent/guardian, properly labeled, and in the original pharmacy container. Medication will be dispensed by the school nurse and will be kept in the school clinic. Children are not permitted to carry medication on their person, in their book bags, or lunch boxes, or to keep medicine in their desks. If the school nurse is unavailable at the school, the principal will designate an individual to dispense the medicine. Cough drops are permitted in the classroom, with a note to the teacher.
12. Controlled Substances – The federal government and the state of New Jersey have placed controls on several substances that can be deleterious to the health of adults but most especially children (e.g. tobacco products, alcohol, narcotics). Any student of St. Mary School who distributes or uses a controlled substance will be liable, at a minimum, to suspension. If conditions warrant, the student risks expulsion. This includes use on campus and off campus. Because St. Mary School cares for our students as a mother cares for her son or daughter, we are concerned for the entire well being of the child, not just during the school day. Offenses of this kind necessitate that there be a meeting between the administration and the parents of



the child involved so that appropriate corrective action can be taken. The decision of the principal and pastor is final in all these matters.

Part III – Lives for Service – The relationships we have with others to make our world a better place.

1. Accidents and Incidents – St. Mary strives to provide a safe environment for each and every student. However, it is unrealistic to assume that accidents and incidents will not happen.
 - a. Emergency Card – Parents/Guardians must complete the online emergency form located on Renweb for each child that attends St. Mary School. The purpose of this information is to assist the school in determining how best to respond to the needs of the student. Parents/Guardians are responsible to make sure that the information on the emergency form is current
 - b. Medical History – The school nurse, with the help of parents/guardians, will ensure that an accurate medical record is maintained on each student.
 - c. Reporting – Students and parents/guardians are required to report all accidents, injuries and illnesses to the School Nurse or the principal.
 - d. Accident/Injury on School Premises – It is the responsibility of the principal or the school nurse how best to treat a student who has experienced an accident or injury on school property during the school day.
 - e. Notification – Parents/Guardians will be notified as soon as possible but no later than twenty-four (24) hours of any accidents or injuries that occur to St. Mary students.
2. Building Our Community – It is the responsibility of each student to see that he/she does his/her best to make St. Mary School a place that welcomes and accepts everyone. Jesus encourages us to love our neighbor as ourselves. This is a cornerstone of our school community. In light of this, bullying and other such behavior that makes fellow classmates feel unwelcomed or uncomfortable will not be tolerated. By state law, St. Mary School community has adopted a policy in dealing with incidents of bullying and intimidation. For the details of this policy, see **Appendix C** of this document.
3. Conduct in the Cafeteria – The cafeteria is a place where the community of St. Mary School is shaped. Students are required to use the cafeteria in a way that respects the rights of others. Students should observe good table manners, speak politely to others and be sure to clean up after themselves. Leaving the cafeteria for the classroom or the lavatories can only be done with the proper permission. For safety reasons, bottles, jars and cans cannot be brought into the cafeteria. For health reasons, students are not permitted to bring sugary food or drinks to lunch.



4. Conduct in the Corridors – The learning environment is a sacred space. While in the corridors of the school students are to heed the directions of their teachers and to make sure to do nothing that disturbs the learning going on in the classrooms.
5. Conduct in the Lavatories – Students can use the lavatories of the school with the permission of their teachers. Students should be respectful of these public spaces since members of the school community and our visitors use them. Every care should be taken to make sure that the lavatories remain safe and clean.
6. Conduct on the Playground – It is on the playground that students learn the principles of fairness and friendship. Students should treat others the way they wish to be treated. This means that students should not push, shove or roughhouse with one another. In whatever games students participate, rules should be applied fairly and students should participate honestly. Students should remain on the playground for the entire time allotted and must follow the directions of those who are in charge. The language that students use should encourage one another and build good relationships. In the interest of safety, students should not bring any sports equipment from home; they should use only the equipment provided by the school.
7. Care of School Property – Students are to be respectful of school property. Many people have given much so that our students can have a safe and beautiful environment. Using the facilities and objects of the school well is the best way to say thank you to our donors and benefactors. Students should make sure as best possible that those who come after them can enjoy the same benefits that they enjoyed. Accidents happen and students should accept responsibility for their actions. Should something break or become damaged, a student should report this as soon as possible so that the situation can be secured and appropriate replacements found. No student will be disciplined for unintended damage but they may be responsible for restitution.
8. Care of Personal Property – We must respect the private property of each member of the St. Mary School Community. Disturbing or taking another's property without permission is considered a serious offense. Teacher's desks, other student's desks, other student's possessions, lunches, pocketbooks, or book bags are to be respected as the person him/herself is to be respected. Treat others as you would like to be treated.
9. Respect and Courtesy – Teachers and students should treat each other with respect at all times. This respect and courtesy should be extended to all members of the St. Mary School Community.
10. Parent – Teacher Conferences – Conferences between parents and teachers are the best way to resolve any issues or concerns that may arise regarding the education of the student. The common bond in these encounters is the welfare of



the student and so the student is encouraged to be present at such a conference. Parents can request a conference by writing a note to the teacher asking for an appointment at the teacher's convenience. Teachers are not to be called to the phone or visited during school time unless it is an emergency. In such a case of emergency, the parent is to report to the school office first when entering the building and not to the teacher's classroom. If there is a need to have a conference with more than one teacher, an appointment will be scheduled for the parent when it is requested. Most teachers can be reached between 2:20 P.M. to 2:40 P.M. or through the school's web page.

11. School Bus Transportation – Through the state Department of Education, bus transportation is provided to those who live within a radius of the school determined by the state. The school bus is a place where each student should feel welcomed and safe. Any behavior that jeopardizes this condition will not be tolerated. All students who ride the bus should be respectful of the driver and the other students on the bus. Students may only ride on the bus to which they have been assigned. If a student loses the privilege of riding the school bus then parents must provide alternative transportation. See **Appendix E** for details regarding rules and regulations of school bus transportation.
12. Participation in Extra-curricular Activities – All students are encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities. These activities help **create a well-rounded** student and provide an opportunity to learn the values of leadership, cooperation, camaraderie and good sportsmanship. Different activities have different requirements and all students and parents should be aware of them before participating. Please see **Appendix F** for more details.
13. Student Passes – When a student is not in the classroom or not at a regularly scheduled activity such as lunch or recess, he or she must obtain a pass from the teacher stating the purpose and destination of his/her activity. We are concerned for the well being of each student and the school wants to be aware of his/her location at all times.

Part IV – General Guidelines for the well being of the community

1. Solicitation - The soliciting of articles, products and items by parents, students, and school personnel is prohibited other than those authorized by the principal.
2. Custody Issues - If there is a situation in the family that limits or forbids access to a child by the non-residing parent, the custodial parent needs to provide a copy of the court order to the main office.
3. Any notice given by school districts regarding cancellation of buses or delays affects our students using those buses. If our school is closed, you will receive notification through the Blackboard Connect Emergency Notification System via telephone, text



and email. Information will also be posted on the school Web site at www.smrschool.org.

4. Accessing personal student information - parents may access their child's grades through our school web site (www.smrschool.org) using the software program Renweb. Each parent is assigned a parent code and password for each child.
5. Lost and Found - All items found should be turned into the nurse's office. Students may claim lost articles during the activity period or after school. Any item not claimed within one month's time will be disposed of or given to charity. Parents are reminded to clearly mark sweaters, gloves, hats, ties, school supplies, lunch boxes, gym clothes, and any other articles the child may use in school. Valuable or precious items should not be brought to school. The administration and faculty cannot accept responsibility for loss or theft of such articles.
6. Communication – Weekly, an envelope will be sent home with the youngest (or only) child on Wednesday (if there is no school on a Monday, the communication envelope will be sent home on Thursday); this information is also posted on the school website. A monthly calendar will be posted on the school website on the first of each month. Events will be reported in order to keep you informed concerning points of interest. It is very important that all forms and notices sent home be read carefully and filled out. Promptness in returning forms is absolutely necessary. The weekly envelope is to be signed where indicated, by the child's parent/guardian, and returned the following day. Parents can contact the school office or principal through the school's web page.
7. Registration and Transfer Requests -_Parents must apply in person for registration. All children admitted to the first grade must be six years of age by October 1st of the school year in which they enroll. All children admitted to Kindergarten must be 5 years of age by October 1st of the school year in which they enroll. Children admitted to PreK 4 must be four years old by October 1st of the school year in which they enroll and those entering PreK 3 must be two and a half years old by October 1st of the school year in which they enroll. Parents should present a Baptismal Certificate (if available), Birth Certificate, and the required health records at the time of registration. A registration fee and an education fee per student are required as well. Upon request, a transfer may be obtained. A transfer/exit form must be completed prior to receiving a transfer. Tuition commitments are to be met prior to receiving a transfer.
8. Student Parties - For children's birthdays, parents should notify the teacher at least three days in advance. One approved treat (such as cupcakes, baked goods, cookies or popsicles) per child should be provided. Also, please send in napkins to accompany the treats. Treats will be distributed at lunchtime.
9. Tuition – St. Mary School depends on the timely payment of tuition so that it can meet its obligation to its teachers and the community at large. Each family is



required to join a payment program as specified by the School Board (currently the FACTS program). Information regarding this payment program can be obtained through the main office. Families who do not pay tuition in a timely manner jeopardize the continued presence of their children at the school. If a family has financial concerns, they should contact the principal immediately so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Financial assistance is available to qualifying families. Applications for tuition assistance are currently through FACTS.

10. Use of Electronic Devices During the School Day – Modern technology has offered us a plethora of electronic devices that both enhance and complicate our lives. When people use these devices to effectively communicate with one another, they are a blessing. When these devices become a distraction through inappropriate use, they are a hindrance. At St. Mary School we want to enhance the lives of our students but we also want to teach the appropriate and reasonable use of electronic devices. These devices cannot be used during class time unless the teacher so permits. Students are not permitted to use these devices during non-class time during the school day unless they have received permission from the principal or his/her delegate. All student cell phones are to be handed in to the teacher at the beginning of the school day. The teacher will return the cell phone at the end of the school day at dismissal. Inappropriate use of an electronic device will result in its temporary confiscation and be given to the principal. All confiscated devices will be returned only to the parent.
11. Use of the School Telephone – Students can use the school telephone in emergency cases. With permission of a teacher, the student should go to the main office to explain his/her situation and then request permission to use the phone. It will be at the discretion of office personnel to determine if the stated emergency merits use of the school phone.
12. Amendments – Amendments, changes and adaptations of this Handbook are at the discretion of the principal of St. Mary School. The principal must notify the members of the school community of these changes before they can be implemented. No amendments, changes and adaptations to this Handbook can take place sooner than thirty days after public notification of the amendments, changes or adaptations.



Appendices

A: Legal Notices

B: Academic Programs and Policies

C: Bullying Prevention Policy

D: Dress Code

E: School Bus Regulations

F: Extra-Curricular Participation

G: Absenteeism

H: Social Media Policy



Appendix A: Legal Notices

1. Principal's Disclaimer:

The Principal has the absolute discretion to interpret and apply any and all of the rules and provisions in this handbook in the manner the Principal believes to be correct. Nothing in this handbook limits the principal's authority to interpret and apply the rules.

Even though this handbook explains penalties that can be imposed for certain types of misconduct or prohibited behavior, you should be aware that the Principal has the right and the authority to impose different or additional penalties and to impose penalties for offenses that are not specifically listed in this handbook, should the Principal conclude that the conduct or behavior is harmful to the good order and discipline of the school, its religious mission or its educational objectives. This includes disciplinary action for conduct that occurs on the school premises or at other locations. The penalties may include suspension and/or expulsion.

The Principal reserves the right to amend this handbook and the school policies and procedures without prior notice for the safety and well being of everyone. Every effort will be made to notify students and parents(s)/guardians(s) of such changes.

2. Policy of Inclusion

St. Mary School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of educational policies, admission policies, athletic programs or other school-administered programs.



Appendix B: Academic Programs and Policies

CURRICULUM

Major Courses: Religion, Math, Science, Language Arts (Reading, Spelling, Grammar, Penmanship), and Social Studies.

Ancillary Courses: Music, Drama, Band, Art, Physical Education, Technology, Health (Drug education, family life, AIDS education)

HONOR ROLL REQUIREMENTS –

St. Mary School Honor Roll serves as an incentive by giving recognition to those students in grades 5 to 8 who excel in the areas of scholarship, leadership as well as personal and social growth.

Grade Equivalents:

- A+ = 97-100
- A = 93-96
- B+ = 89-92
- B = 85-88
- C+ = 81-84
- C = 77-80
- D+ 74-76
- D = 73-70
- F = 69 or under

Effort and General Conduct are assessed as well

<u>Classification</u>	<u>Academic Subject</u>
Principal's List	All grades above an A (B+ permitted if on advanced level)
First Honors	All grades at or above a B+
Second Honors	All grades at or above a B
Effort Award	Given for continued academic improvement

Any student receiving an unsatisfactory or failing grade in a minor subject will not receive any honors.

Promotion: Promotion to the next grade level depends on successful completion of all subject areas. The administration may recommend the repetition of a level or may recommend tutoring when, after conferences with teachers and parents, it is believed that the student will be better prepared academically or emotionally.



Report cards: Report cards are issued four times per school year to students. The report card represents a composite of daily class work, homework assignments, special reports or projects, quizzes and tests.

Summer school: At the end of the school year, the average of all four quarter grades is computed. A student who fails to average a passing grade on any of the major subjects will be required to attend summer school or have private tutoring before returning for the succeeding year. Appropriate documentation of the successful completion of the summer school or tutoring must be presented before the student can re-enroll. A student who receives a failing grade must attend twenty hours of tutoring in the subject. A student failing two or more subjects cannot do more than forty hours of tutoring outside the academic year. The tutor must possess a standard teacher certificate and be approved by the principal. A tutor of religion must have at least a level one Catechist Certificate.



Appendix C: Bullying Prevention Policy

Introduction

The Diocese of Camden and the Catholic Schools Office believe that each Catholic school in the Diocese of Camden must be aware that its purpose is rooted in the mission of the Church. Each Catholic school, in fulfilling its role within the educational mission of the Church, must share and live out, through Catholic Christian tradition, the message of Jesus Christ and be committed to providing a Catholic educational environment that permeates all aspects of its daily life and operations.

Each student should be challenged to reach his/her full potential, develop a love of learning and learn in an environment that fosters respect and understanding of one another. It is essential that we do our best to provide a safe, positive and productive educational environment where each student may be afforded the opportunity to achieve his or her maximum potential, without being subjected to Bullying, Cyber-Bullying or Retaliation. Bullying, Cyber-Bullying, Retaliation and other similar disruptive or violent behaviors constitute conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students in a safe environment. Pastors, principals, faculty, and other employees are expected to demand that all students treat each other with civility and respect. Bullying, Cyber-Bulling and Retaliation are not to be tolerated.

Accordingly, the Bullying Prevention Policy ("Policy") has been duly promulgated by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Camden ("the Bishop") to apply to all Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Camden and all Parish Schools located within the Diocese of Camden, as well as to all other schools to which the Bishop or a pastor or group of pastors has authority to appoint or approve governing officers or administrators.

Definitions

For the purpose of this Policy, the following definitions shall apply:

Aggressor means a student who engages in Bullying or Retaliation.

Bullying is the repeated use, by one or more students, of written, oral, or electronic expressions or physical acts or gestures of any combination thereof, with the intent to ridicule, harass, humiliate or intimidate the victim, directed at a Target, which a reasonable person should know would have the effect of:



causing physical or emotional harm to the Target or damage to the Target's property; placing the Target in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself, or of damage to his/her property;

causing the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the Target's education; or

materially and substantially disrupting the educational process or the orderly operation of a school.

An isolated incident, however egregious, is not Bullying. Numerous acts of misconduct against different students do not constitute Bullying. Such conduct may warrant disciplinary action, but is not Bullying.

Bullying includes Cyber-Bullying.

Cyber-Bullying means Bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by:

Wire Radio

Electromagnetic

s

Photo-electronic or photo-optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications.

Cyber-Bullying also includes the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or knowingly impersonates another person as author of posted content or message, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of Bullying.

Cyber-Bullying also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more people, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of Bullying.

Plan means the Bullying prevention and intervention plan established by the school.

Retaliation means any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment directed against a student who reports Bullying or provides information during an investigation of Bullying.

SchoolGrounds means property on which the school building or facility is located or property that is owned, leased or used by a school for a school-sponsored activity, function, program, instruction or training.



Staff means all employees of the school or parish and other individuals who receive stipends from the school or parish.

Target means a student against whom Bullying or Retaliation has been perpetrated.

Prohibition against Bullying and Retaliation

Bullying is prohibited:

- on School Grounds;
- on property adjacent to School Grounds;
- at any school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off School Grounds;
- at a school bus stop;
- on a school bus or any other vehicle owned, leased or used by the school; or
- through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by a school

Bullying by students is also prohibited at other locations and through other means if it:

- causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the Target's education; or
- materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a school.

Nothing contained in this Policy or in any Plan shall require a school to monitor any non-school related activity, function or program.

Prevention and Intervention Plan

The principal (or the individual who holds a comparable position) (herein, the "Principal") of each school shall be responsible for overseeing the development of a prevention and intervention plan in consultation with others, which may include Staff, school volunteers, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians. The Plan must comply with the requirements of this Policy. The Plan must be promulgated by September 1, 2014.

The Plan shall include, but need not be limited to:

- definitions of Bullying and Retaliation as contained in this Policy;
- prohibitions against Bullying and Retaliation;
- clear procedures for students, Staff, parents or guardians and others to report Bullying or Retaliation;



the range of disciplinary actions that may be taken against an Aggressor for Bullying or Retaliation; provided, however, that the disciplinary actions shall balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior;

a provision that a student who knowingly makes a false accusation of Bullying or Retaliation may be subject to disciplinary action;

a strategy for providing counseling or referral to appropriate services for Aggressors and Targets and for appropriate family members of such students;

provisions establishing a Bullying prevention program or curriculum;

provisions for informing parents and guardians about the Bullying prevention program or curriculum of the school.

A provision for ongoing professional development to build the skills of all Staff members, including, but not limited to, the Principal, educators, faculty, other staff, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, and volunteers, to prevent, identify and respond to Bullying. The Plan shall be reviewed and updated at least every three years.

The Principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan within his or her school.

Reporting

Any Staff member who witnesses or becomes aware of Bullying or Retaliation shall report the incident(s) immediately to the Principal or to the Staff member designated in the Plan as responsible for receiving such reports, or to both the Principal and such designee.

Investigation

Upon receipt of such a report, the Principal or his or her designee shall promptly conduct an investigation.

Investigation of Complaint

Once a complaint has been reported, the Principal or his or her designee shall promptly investigate to determine if Bullying has occurred. The Principal will review the disciplinary history of the student(s) accused for indication of a pattern or past history of similar behavior. A written report of the investigation shall be prepared when the investigation is complete. The report shall include findings of fact, a determination of whether acts of Bullying were verified, and, when acts of Bullying were verified, the disciplinary action taken and any non-disciplinary action provided or recommended to the parents or guardians.



Retaliation

Retaliation against a person who reports Bullying, provides information during an investigation of Bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about Bullying shall be prohibited.

Disciplinary Action

Once the investigation is complete, the Principal or his or her designee shall determine the consequences for the Aggressor(s) on a case-by-case, age appropriate basis. Bullying can take many forms and can vary dramatically in how serious it is, and what impact it has on the victim and other students. While conduct that rises to the level of Bullying will generally warrant disciplinary action against the students responsible for Bullying, whether to impose disciplinary sanctions and what sanctions to impose in a particular case are matters within the professional discretion of the Principal or his or her designee. It is the goal of the school to have students achieve redemption, learn, and stop Bullying.

Disciplinary action for children in preschool and kindergarten will generally be handled by the child's teacher working with the student, the student's family and the Principal (as needed). These children are very young and are learning social skills.

Non-disciplinary Intervention

When Bullying is identified early and/or when acts do not reasonably require a disciplinary response, students may be counseled as to the definition of Bullying, its prohibition, and their duty to avoid any conduct that could be considered Bullying.

Training

Annual training on the Plan shall be provided for Staff and, at the discretion of the Principal, for volunteers who have significant contact with students.

Publication and Notice

At the beginning of each school year, the Principal or his or her designee shall provide notice to the Staff of the Policy and the Plan. Relevant student-related sections of the Plan shall be included in the school handbook provided to the students and their parents or guardians each year.

The Plan shall be posted on the school's website.



Notifications

If the Principal or his or her designee determines that Bullying or Retaliation has occurred, he/she shall:

- notify the local law enforcement agency if called for by the Memorandum of Agreement with Law Enforcement;
- notify the parents or guardians of the Aggressor;
- and notify the parents or guardians of the Target.

The specific disciplinary consequences imposed on the Aggressor will not be disclosed to the parents or guardians of the Target, unless required by law.

If Bullying or Retaliation involves students from other schools, and the Principal identifies those students and their schools in the course of the investigation, then the Principal or his or her designee shall notify the appropriate administrator of the other schools of the incident so that the other schools may take appropriate action.

Student Assistance

Each school shall provide counseling or referral to appropriate services, including guidance, academic intervention, and protection to students (both Targets and Aggressors) affected by Bullying or Retaliation, as necessary.

Available Consultation

If any Staff member has questions concerning this Policy, he or she is encouraged to contact the Catholic Schools Office.

Appendix D: Dress Code

TRADITIONAL UNIFORM – may be worn at any time from September to June. The uniform will be neat, clean and free of holes.

- All uniforms must be purchased at Cheryl's Uniforms. Specifically, this includes the pants, shorts, and skirts. All items are or will be available at:
Cheryl's Uniform
2100 North Delsea Drive
Vineland, NJ 08360
(856) 696-0141
You may also order online at www.CherylsUniform.com.
- **Grades 5 – 8** may purchase the required white oxford short or long sleeve blouses/shirts at any retail store.
- Mass Days – students are required to wear their formal uniform to school masses.
- Cheryl's Uniform donates a percentage of each purchase back to St. Mary School. You are supporting St. Mary School by shopping at Cheryl's Uniform.

A. PreK-3 & PreK-4 Dress Code

- Students must wear comfortable clothing that is easy on and off for bathroom use. No belts or overalls.
- Comfortable shoes. No flip-flops or sandals. Socks are strongly suggested.
- No thin-strap tops are to be worn; shoulders must be covered at all times.

B. Formal Girls Dress Uniform (K-4)

Option 1

- Navy cardigan with school logo
- Plaid jumper with school logo – jumper length must be **no more than 2 inches** above student's kneecap
- White short or long sleeved peter pan collar shirt
- Navy knee high socks or navy tights
- Shoes: Flat-heeled loafers, oxfords, or Mary Janes. Solid color brown with no embellishments (i.e., bows, flowers, sparkles).
No ballet flats or moccasin-style shoes permitted.

Option 2

- Khaki pant (flat or pleated front) - straight leg with SMS monogram
- White short or long sleeved peter pan collar shirt
- Navy cardigan with school logo
- Brown dress belt
- Navy dress socks

- Shoes: Flat-heeled loafers, oxfords, or Mary Janes. Solid color brown with no embellishments (i.e., bows, flowers, sparkles).
No ballet flats or moccasin-style shoes permitted.

Summer Uniform for Girls K thru 4

- Navy polo with school logo
- Khaki skirt with SMS monogram– skirt length must be **no more than** 2 inches above student’s kneecap
- Navy knee high socks
- Shoes: Flat-heeled loafers, oxfords, or Mary Janes. Solid color brown with no embellishments (i.e., bows, flowers, sparkles).
No ballet flats or moccasin-style shoes permitted.

Gym Attire for Girls K thru 4

- Navy crew neck sweatshirt with school logo
- Navy sweatpants (elastic ankle, without pockets) with school name. Ankle-length sweatpants are required.
- Grey T-shirt with school logo
- Navy gym shorts with school name
- Gym sneakers – Traditional white or black athletic sneaker with single-color accents. (No blinking lights or hanging and/or loose embellishments). Shoelaces must be white or black.
- Socks: Black or white athletic socks. Socks must be crew or low-cut.

Formal Girls Dress Uniform 5-8

Option 1

- Navy cardigan with school logo
- Plaid skirt– skirt length must be **no more than** 2 inches above student’s kneecap
- White oxford short or long sleeve button down shirt
- SMS tie
- Navy knee high socks or navy tights
- Shoes: Loafers, oxfords, or Mary Janes. Solid color brown with no embellishments (i.e., bows, flowers, sparkles). Heels no higher than 1 – 1 ½ inches.
No ballet flats or moccasin-style shoes permitted.

Option 2

- Khaki pant (flat or pleated front) - straight leg with SMS monogram
- Navy cardigan with school logo
- White oxford short or long sleeve button-down shirt
- SMS tie
- Brown dress belt
- Navy dress socks
- Shoes: Loafers, oxfords, or Mary Janes. Solid color brown with no embellishments (i.e., bows, flowers, sparkles). Heels no higher than 1 – 1 ½ inches.
No ballet flats or moccasin-style shoes permitted.
- Navy blue polo with school logo
- Plaid skirt – skirt length must be **no more than** 2 inches above student’s kneecap

- Navy knee high socks
- Shoes: Loafers, oxfords, or Mary Janes. Solid color brown with no embellishments (i.e., bows, flowers, sparkles). Heels no higher than 1 – 1 ½ inches.
No ballet flats or moccasin-style shoes permitted.

Gym Attire for Girls 5-8

- Navy crew neck sweatshirt with school logo
- Navy sweatpants (elastic ankle, without pockets) with school name. Ankle-length sweatpants are required.
- Grey T-shirt with school logo
- Navy gym shorts with school name
- Gym sneakers – Traditional white or black athletic sneaker with single-color accents. (No blinking lights or hanging and/or loose embellishments). Shoelaces must be white or black.
- Socks: Black or white athletic socks. Socks must be crew or low-cut.

Formal Boys Dress Uniform (K-4)

- Navy V-neck sweater vest with school logo
- OR**
- Navy long sleeve V-neck sweater with school logo
 - White oxford short or long sleeve button down shirt
 - SMS tie
 - Brown dress belt
 - Khaki pants (flat or pleated front) with SMS monogram
 - Navy dress socks
 - Shoes: Oxfords or loafers. Solid color brown.
No moccasin-style or boot-style permitted.

Summer Uniform for Boys K-4

- Navy polo with school logo
- Khaki walking short with SMS monogram
- Navy dress socks
- Brown dress belt
- Shoes: Oxfords or loafers. Solid color brown.
No moccasin-style or boot-style permitted.

Gym Attire for Boys K-4

- Navy crew neck sweatshirt with school logo
- Navy sweatpants (elastic ankle, without pockets) with school name. Ankle-length sweatpants are required.
- Grey T-shirt with school logo
- Navy gym shorts with school name
- Gym sneakers – Traditional white or black athletic sneaker with single-color accents. (No blinking lights or hanging and/or loose embellishments). Shoelaces must be white or black.
- Socks: Black or white athletic socks. Socks must be crew or low-cut.

Formal Boys Dress Uniform 5-8

- Navy blazer
- Magnetic pocket clip with school logo

- Khaki pants (pleated or flat front) with SMS monogram
- White oxford short or long sleeve button down shirt
- SMS tie
- Navy dress socks
- Brown dress belt
- Shoes: Oxfords or loafers. Solid color brown.

No moccasin-style or boot-style permitted.

Summer Uniform for Boys 5-8

- Navy blue polo with school logo
- Khaki pants (pleated or flat front) with SMS monogram
- Navy dress socks
- Brown dress belt
- Shoes: Oxfords or loafers. Solid color brown.

No moccasin-style or boot-style permitted.

Gym Attire for Boys 5-8

- Navy crew neck sweatshirt with school logo
- Navy sweatpants (elastic ankle, without pockets) with school name. Ankle-length sweatpants are required.
- Grey T-shirt with school logo
- Navy gym shorts with school name
- Gym sneakers – Traditional white or black athletic sneaker with single-color accents. (No blinking lights or hanging and/or loose embellishments). Shoelaces must be white or black.
- Socks: Black or white athletic socks. Socks must be crew or low-cut.

Other Uniform Guidelines

Girls: Kindergarten – Grade 4

- Plaid uniform hairbands, scrunchies, bows or barrettes.
- Navy, **black** or brown, plain, unadorned hair bands, headbands, scrunchies, bows or barrettes.
- No make up.
- No nail polish.
- No hairspray or gel is permitted to be brought to school.
- No inappropriate and/or distracting hairstyles as determined by the principal.
- Jewelry: only religious medals or cross necklace or bracelet.
 - Earrings: only one set of post earrings.
 - Only one ring per hand
- No body art, including temporary tattoos.
- No fragrances.

Girls: Grade 5 - 8

- No make up.
- Clear nail polish is permitted. (No glitter, French manicures).
- Jewelry: only religious medals or cross necklace or bracelet.
 - Earrings: only one set of post earrings.
 - Only one ring per hand
- No hairspray or gel is permitted to be brought to school.
- No inappropriate and/or distracting hairstyles as determined by the principal.

- Plaid uniform hairbands, scrunchies, bows or barrettes.
- Navy or brown, plain, unadorned hair bands, headbands, scrunchies, bows or barrettes. (No feather or trendy hair accessories).
- No body art, including temporary tattoos.
- No fragrances.

Boys: Kindergarten – Grade 4

- No earrings.
- Jewelry: only religious medals or cross necklace or bracelet.
- Hair:
 - No hairspray or gel is permitted to be brought to school.
 - No inappropriate and/or distracting hairstyles as determined by the principal.
 - Hair must be neat and clean. Hair length must be above eyebrows, over half of ear and above the collar.
- No body art, including temporary tattoos.
- No fragrances.

Boys: Grade 5 - 8

- No earrings.
- Jewelry: only religious medals or cross necklace or bracelet.
- Hair:
 - No hairspray or gel may be brought to school.
 - No inappropriate and/or distracting hairstyles as determined by the principal.
 - Hair must be neat and clean. Hair length must be above eyebrows, over half of ear and above the collar.
- No body art, including temporary tattoos.
- No fragrances.
- No nail polish.
- Clean-shaven, no sideburns.

SMS Spirit Days

- Any St. Mary School spirit wear with school logo will be permitted on school spirit days. This includes: shirts, hoodies, sweatshirts, fleece jackets and SMS baseball caps.
- Students have the option to either wear gym uniform shorts or sweatpants OR spiritwear sweatpants (no pajama bottoms permitted).
- Gym uniform sneakers must be worn.

Dress Down Days

- Periodically, the school will have dress down days. On these days students are permitted to wear clothing other than their required SMS uniform. Students must adhere to the guidelines noted below and in conjunction with the SMS uniform code regarding hair, nail polish, jewelry and makeup.

St. Mary School believes that clothing helps to set an atmosphere and influences behavior. While participating in school activities, students are representatives of St. Mary School.

Guidelines for Dress Down Days

1. Any images or slogans on clothing should be respectful. They should be appropriate for all ages and in keeping with the Catholic atmosphere of St. Mary School.

2. Students may not wear tank tops, muscle shirts, skimpy and/or see-through tops, t-shirts with inappropriate words or pictures, or belly shirts. Outfits should not reveal the mid-drift or navel. Short shorts are not permitted.
3. No shredded or torn jeans are allowed.

The Homeroom Teachers will enforce the Dress Code. If a child is not compliant with the dress code, the parent will be notified in writing of any violations. The school appreciates each student's cooperation.

Appendix E: School Bus Regulations

Students who are reported by bus drivers for unsafe behavior will be disciplined as follows:

- 1st offense – student conference with the principal
- 2nd offense – student and parent conference with the parent
- 3rd offense – removal from the bus for five days

The driver is in full charge of the bus at all times and his/her orders are to be obeyed.

For insurance purposes and safety, no child is allowed to ride a bus to which he/she is not assigned. In case of necessity, you must contact your local transportation coordinator for permission, obtain a temporary bus pass, and then advise the school. Students from one district cannot ask permission to ride on a bus from another school district.

The following rules should be obeyed:

- Pupils should be at the designated stop five minutes before the scheduled bus arrival.
- Each student can only ride on the bus assigned to him/her.
- Each student must conduct himself in a safe manner while waiting for the bus out of the line of traffic.
- Wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before getting on or off.
- Go directly to your assigned seat and keep seated until it is time to be discharged from the bus. Safety belts are to be worn at all times.
- Open windows only by permission of the driver.
- Keep hands and head inside the bus at all times.
- Do not eat while riding on the bus.
- Students are expected to conduct themselves properly while on the bus. This means talking in a conversational tone (no singing or loud talking) so as not to cause confusion and divert the driver's attention, being seated at all times, no playing or "fooling around", no throwing of things, being courteous to fellow students and driver.
- Place nothing in the aisle.
- There is to be absolute quiet approaching a railroad-crossing stop.
- Do not tamper with the bus or any equipment. The offender must pay for any damage done.
- Our responsibility is to get students to their home on their assigned buses. No one may ride on a bus to which he/she is not assigned.
- Students who must cross the highway to reach home shall cross in front of the stopped bus at the signal of the bus driver.
- In case of road emergency, students are to remain in the bus and leave only on permission of the bus driver.

- Any student not planning to ride on his/her assigned bus must hand in a written note at the main office.

Appendix F: Extra-Curricular Participation

Any student who participates in a sport has a personal obligation to the coach and his/her teammates. He/she should be present at practices and games and if unable to attend, he/she should inform the coach personally of the reason for their absence. The student should be serious, committed and loyal to the team and coach giving their attention and using their abilities and talents to the fullest extent. Sportsmanship should be a value to them not only toward their teammates, but to opposing coaches and players as well. Their language and attitude should be an example of their seriousness and commitment. Every player must first be a student; therefore, study and acceptable grades are most important to you.

Eligibility for Extra-curricular Activities-

Students in Grades 5 through 8 participating in any extra curricular activity (not including after school clubs) must maintain a C average in all classes, keep grades stable, try their best and keep up their homework. The students must also maintain a display of appropriate behavior while at school and while participating in the extra curricular activity.

Students and parents/guardians will be given fair warnings if the grades are not up to potential and/or if behavior is not displayed in an appropriate manner.

When a student has been warned of his/her ineligibility, a notice is sent home to the parent/guardian. The student may attend practices and participate in extra-curricular activities during this time. After two weeks, the grades and/or behavior will be reviewed by the teacher and/or principal. If improvement is not shown, the student and parent will be notified and his/her ineligibility to participate in extra-curricular for a two-week period. After this two-week period, the situation is reviewed. If there is a problem with grades or behavior, the administration will notify the activity sponsor for all non-athletic events. For team sports the administrator will contact the athletic director who in turn will notify coaches. If there is a problem with the behavior from a sponsor's or coach's viewpoint, he/she should notify the athletic director.

Appendix G: Absenteeism

St. Mary's School requires parents to send a written note explaining the reason for a child's absence. Excessive absenteeism of a student from school is considered to be a very serious matter that may inhibit a child's learning process. It is the responsibility of the school principal to notify parents when excessive absenteeism occurs.

Absenteeism occurs when any student is absent from school for any reason that has not been previously approved in writing by the school principal. The parents of students who have missed eighteen (18) cumulative days of school within the school year will be notified using the following scale:

1. After 10 cumulative days of unexcused absence, a written notice will be forwarded to the parents. It is expected that the parents will respond to the principal as a result of this notice.
 2. After 18 cumulative days of unexcused absence, a parents' conference should be convened with the principal to inform parents of appropriate corrective measures.
 3. If absenteeism continues, the decision to request student retention or withdrawal is the responsibility of the principal.
- Long term absenteeism; i.e., 14 consecutive school days for medical reasons requires that the school arrange for homebound instruction under Chapter 192 of the state of New Jersey.

Appendix H – Social Media Policy

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

Social networking is an important educational and evangelizing tool to promote programs and events, as well as to have informal discussions with a great variety of communities and individuals. St. Mary School supports the use of social media technologies to give employees, clerics and volunteers the necessary training and tools to interact safely and responsibly online. However, those using social media should bear in mind that certain comments and information may have an unintended, but harmful, effect.

The purpose of the Policy is four-fold:

- To maximize best practices for wide-ranging delivery to and reception of the Good News through mass media and electronic communications channels.
- To be respectfully and responsibly present to those whom we encounter on every level and in every form of communication.
- To balance our digital presence with our real-life presence to all people in the St. Mary School community and beyond.
- To minimize the risk to the reputation of the Church that can be caused by improper and unauthorized external communications.

SPECIFIC POLICIES

1. A social network account for Church purposes will be independent of any individual's personal social networking account. The logon information will be documented and kept on file accessible to management. All employees and volunteers are to familiarize themselves with this Policy.
2. The principal will approve any media project of the school, evaluate its appropriateness in education and determine who will develop it, as well as designate who will oversee its use.
3. All those using social or networking media will inform all interested and/or affected parties of this particular form of communication in order to be inclusive and fully transparent. This information may be published through a bulletin, newsletter, website, etc.
4. While engaged in social networking activities, employees and volunteers must adhere to the highest ethical, pastoral and legal standards. The content of any and all communications is subject to review and monitoring. There is to be

- no expectation of privacy in or to any such communications (including password-protected email accounts), or files, or any other matter, stored in, created on, received from or sent through any system maintained, provided by, funded or paid for by the school, and the retrieval and review by the school of all electronic communications so stored (whether on a hard drive or otherwise), created, received or sent, regardless of whether such communications are in the course of being transmitted or are in storage, is authorized. The school cooperates fully with local, county, state and federal officials in any investigation concerning or related to any illegal activities though the use of social media.
5. No pictures, images, videos, or other releases, except those which are newsworthy or of general interest, may be identified or linked without permission of the person or persons depicted, and no picture or image of any minor may be posted without the specific permission in writing of the minor's custodial parent or guardian.
 6. All social networking sites will be configured so that no comments can be made by the public or unauthorized managers of the site. If a site does not allow for comments to be disabled, the following disclaimer must be displayed prominently on the site: “Thank you for being a member of our online community. We welcome open discussion on current topics and issues. As a community of faith, we always conduct ourselves upholding the dignity of each and every individual. This site permits readers to post comments although we are not responsible for the content of those comments. Opinions and views expressed in those comments reflect the thoughts of the individuals who post them and do not necessarily reflect the views of this organization. As a condition of posting comments, you agree not to post any inappropriate comments – including, but not limited to obscenities, foul language, spam, personal attacks, bashing, bullying, intimidation, harassment, verbal abuse, threats, insults, commercial solicitations, repetitive or fraudulent comments, comments irrelevant to the post under which they are written, comments which are morally objectionable, and comments which are otherwise inconsistent with Catholic teaching. We welcome your questions and comments; however, we will not respond on this site. Please direct questions and comments to us via email at principal@smrsschool.org. We reserve the sole right, but are not obligated to, review, edit and/or remove any and all comments. We reserve the right to block any user who posts inappropriate comments. Links to external websites should not be interpreted as an endorsement of those organizations or the opinions of those organizations. We are not responsible for the content of external web sites. Thank you for your contributions to our site and for your help in creating a courteous, safe and energetic place for discussion.”
 7. The administrator of a networking site reserves the right to monitor

- conversations, postings, images and behavior of members of the group and challenge, educate, intervene and/or delete as necessary. Employees and volunteers are to use discretion when establishing a connection with others.
8. Employees and volunteers are expected to write knowledgeably, pastorally, accurately, and professionally. Employees need to communicate their official location-related email address, not their own personal email address.
 9. Whether or not an employee or volunteer is using social media for personal purposes, comments may be viewed as a reflection of the school. Employees and volunteers need to be on guard against any comment, suggestion or discussion that could harm the school or the Church community.
 - a. Employees and volunteers may not attribute personal statements or opinions to the school.
 - b. If employees or volunteers express personal statements or opinions they must post the following notice: "The views expressed are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of any other person or entity."
 10. Employees and volunteers who serve in a leadership role need to consider whether or not it is appropriate to establish a connection on a social networking page of an individual with whom there is interaction only through this leadership role.
 11. Any use of the name, logo, insignia or coat of arms of the school must be specifically approved in writing prior to use. Any uses in existence at the time of adoption of this Policy are not grandfathered and should be specifically authorized pursuant to this Policy, and such may be revoked at any time.
 12. Even when using social media for personal purposes, an employee's or volunteer's comments may be viewed as a reflection of the school. The use of social networking vehicles owned, operated or provided by the school employees and volunteers will positively represent official positions of the school. Statements made by employees or volunteers may not be represented as expressing the position of the school unless the speaker or writer is specifically authorized to do so in writing (with a copy of such authorization being provided to the principal).
 13. Employees and volunteers must comply fully with copyright law when posting and uploading copyrighted materials. Any posting of materials from diocesan employees or the diocesan website will not be copied or uploaded to other forums without the prior written consent of the principal.
 14. All users of social media must safeguard the privacy interests of others. In particular, potentially identifying information (that is, any information that can identify a particular person, including but not limited to, name, phone number,

address or email address) may not be disclosed without the prior signed written consent of the person identified. In cases where a user has consented to publication of such information, appropriate privacy settings and levels must be considered.

15. Social media is not intended for the use of children under the age of 13. Any site operated by an employee or volunteer that is oriented toward youth between the ages of 13 and 18 must require registration for all users and must be password-protected so that only registered, approved users may access the site. Registration for such a site must require the use of a legal name and valid contact information, such as an operational email address. Users of such a site may not post images of, or communicate with, minors without the prior written consent of a custodial parent or legal guardian of any minor depicted; furthermore, regardless of whether such consent has been given by any person, no information concerning anyone under the age of 18 years is ever to be posted, downloaded or disseminated in any manner.

16. Any use of social media that violates this Policy should be brought to the attention of the principal. In areas where this Policy does not provide a direct answer as to how employees or volunteers should answer social media questions, this question must be referred to the principal.

UNACCEPTABLE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Examples of unacceptable use of social media include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Creating or issuing personal communications that appear to be official communication of the school.
2. Disseminating or intentionally accessing material that is defamatory, abusive, obscene, profane, sexually suggestive, pornographic, harassing, intimidating, threatening, racially offensive, illegal, fraudulent, or otherwise inappropriate – or any illegally written, recorded, or electronically retrieved or transmitted communication.
3. Disclosing confidential information except as necessary for valid work purposes. Confidential information includes all information that is not generally available to the public, including but not limited to, financial information, and/or personnel files.
4. Violating copyright laws, including the acquisition, use or distribution of pirated software.
5. Using someone else's username or password.
6. Attributing personal statements, opinions or beliefs to the school.

7. It is unacceptable to dissent from Church teachings in the use of social media vehicles. Employees and volunteers are expected to represent positively the official positions of the Church, and they need to be on guard against any comment, suggestion or discussion that could harm the interests of the Church or the Church community.

Failure to adhere to this policy can result in disciplinary action in the case of an employee, and a status review in the case of a volunteer. Such disciplinary action can include, where warranted, dismissal in the case of an employee; and in the case of a volunteer, removal from volunteer status.