



*The Pursuit of Excellence
Through Christ*

2025-2026

**Parent/Student Handbook
St. Mary Elementary School**

Right to Amend

St. Mary School System reserves the right to amend this handbook. **Ammendments may be accessed via the school website.**

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ABOUT ST. MARY

ST. MARY SCHOOL SYSTEM

St. Mary School System is a Preschool through 12th grade Catholic school system operating under the auspices of the Diocese of Owensboro.

The diocesan curriculum guidelines, consistent with the State of Kentucky guidelines and National Content Standards, are followed for the teaching of all subject areas. St. Mary offers our students a breadth of expertise within a multifaceted curriculum designed to meet individual needs. Our certified teachers challenge students to develop critical thinking and decision-making skills in a Christian atmosphere rooted in mutual respect. St. Mary is committed to preparing students for their vocation in life by providing a faith-based education, academic excellence, and servant leadership.

SALVATION

“The ultimate goal of all Catholic education is SALVATION in Jesus Christ. In faith we truly come to know ourselves. By sharing our faith we communicate a complete vision of the whole of reality and a commitment to truth and goodness. By enriching your students' lives with the fullness of Christ's message and by inviting them to accept with all their hearts Christ's work, which is the Church, you promote most effectively their integral human development and you help them to build a community of faith, hope and love. Community is at the heart of all Catholic education, not simply as a concept, but as a reality to be lived.”

*Pope John Paul II
1987 Visit to the United States*

ST. MARY SCHOOL SYSTEM ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

Episcopal Vicar: Fr. Mike Clark (St. Thomas More parish)

System Director: director@smss.org

Advancement

Enrollment: Lisa Zakutney, ext. 222, lisa.zakutney@smss.org

Marketing/Annual Fund: Ashley Wright, ext. 286, ashley.wright@smss.org

Finance/Fundraising: Robin Mowers, ext. 224, robin.mowers@smss.org

St. Mary Elementary

377 Highland Blvd.

Paducah, KY 42003

(270) 442-1681

Principal: Mary Smith, ext. 252, mary.smith@smss.org

Nurse: Whitney Cobb, ext. 280, whitni.cobb@smss.org

Hours of Operation

St. Mary Elementary School Monday - Friday 6:45 AM - 5:30 PM

Voicemail available 24 hours a day: (270) 442-1681, ES: Ext. 251

- In case of an **emergency** during school hours, **dial “0” for the system operator.**

Summer Hours: See posted hours. Hours may vary

Mission Statement

St. Mary, a Christ-centered community rooted in Catholic tradition, empowers students academically, encourages selfless sacrifice, and nurtures learners to become a positive influence on others.

Vision

We believe we are called by God to serve His purpose as His ministers to His children. Therefore, **We**, the parents, the pastors, the education committee members, the administrators, the staff, and the teachers come together in association based on Gospel values and a shared desire to foster these values in our own lives and in the lives of our children. As a result of this association, **We** support and maintain the St. Mary School System as a Christian school which shares in the teaching mission of the Catholic Church. St. Mary School System, under the patronage of its namesake, Mary, fosters among its members attitudes of tolerance and sensitivity to the individuality of all, of genuine concern for justice and peace, and of service to fellow members and others in the community, based upon the pursuit of excellence through Christ.

- To teach our students, in a Christ-centered curriculum, to integrate their faith, knowledge and talents for their good and the good of all.
- To provide a safe, caring and comfortable environment in which a child can learn and grow.
- To instill a sense of responsibility in each child so that he/she may become a contributing member of the community and acquire the skills necessary to function in our global society.
- To teach, through word and example, that each individual is a unique creation of God and worthy of love and respect.
- To provide, to the best of our ability, the type of curriculum that will meet the needs of every student.
- To encourage the mastery of the tools, techniques and spirit of learning.

Governance

The St. Mary Education Committee (SMEC) is the governing body of the school system giving consultation and **recommending** policy **to meet the needs of the School System**. Each deanery parish is represented by members appointed by the Episcopal Vicar

along with the parish priest.

A non-Catholic representative is also appointed to serve. These members, along with the Episcopal Vicar, comprise the voting body of SMEC. Each member serves a three year term and may be reappointed for a consecutive three year term by the Episcopal Vicar. Members and their contact information are listed on the school website under *About Us*.

SMEC non-voting associate members include teachers, administrators and Advancement office representatives.

History

St. Mary was opened in 1858 and was the first organized school in Paducah. St. Mary has continued to be an integral part of Paducah history having educated many of its civic and business leaders. For more than 160 years, St. Mary has been recognized as an institution of academic excellence throughout the community.

PARENT/SCHOOL RELATIONS

About the Handbook:

The St. Mary School System operates under a philosophy that involves well-understood standards of conduct. It is essential that parents/guardians know and understand the standards of conduct expected of their children. **It is also essential that each student accept total responsibility for his/her conduct at all times.**

"Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule. . . . Parents have a grave responsibility to give good example to their children." (CCC 2223)

This handbook serves two primary functions. First is to assist in the efficient and orderly functioning of St. Mary Elementary. Second, and a result of the first, is to assist in the creation of conditions that produce the highest quality educational experience for every student. Given the complex nature of education and common purpose, it is impossible to predetermine a policy to cover every situation. Accordingly, the administration, after due consideration may, from time to time, be required to make changes to this handbook. When necessary, changes will be made with the greatest benefit to the educational purpose in mind. Parents and other interested parties will be notified of necessary changes. Changes become effective immediately unless otherwise noted.

Registration through FACTS includes your signature of this handbook. You are agreeing to follow the individual school handbooks, specific to the programs your child is enrolled in.

Policy Agreement

Parents and students enrolling or enrolled in the St. Mary School System agree to abide by the policies, rules and regulations of the St. Mary School System for the duration of the attendance of the child/children.

Parents, guardians, and students agree to their responsibility to read and understand all policies, rules and regulations set forth in various publications including, but not limited to, the system handbook, policy letters, newsletters, various electronic media, organizational by-laws, and any other published medium to which access is granted.

Parents, guardians, and students agree to abide by administrative decisions based on the applications of policies, rules and regulations in their published form, and to follow established procedures for appeal in the event there is a disagreement as to whether the policies, rules, and regulations have been misapplied. Administration reserves the right to deviate from the established procedures when in the best interest of the student or school.

Buckley Amendment

St. Mary adheres to the Buckley Amendment (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act FERPA) in regard to student records and the rights of noncustodial parents. It is the responsibility of the parents to share any official custodial information determined through the courts. Official custodial agreements are in a confidential file in the registrar's office.

Parental Custody

Divorced or separated parents must file a complete court-certified copy of the custody section of the divorce or separation decree with the principal's office. The school will not be held responsible for failing to honor arrangements that have not been made known. Please note that the safety of your children is always our utmost concern.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Formal Parent/Teacher conferences are held in October, after the completion of the first quarter of the school year. Parents are encouraged to schedule conferences throughout the school year as needed.

Conflict Resolution

Every effort should be made to solve problems immediately and at the appropriate level. There is no substitute for open and honest communication whenever a question or problem arises. When a concern or a problem arises, every effort should be made to address it at the appropriate level. If satisfaction is not achieved at that level, the next highest level in the chain of command should be approached. The normal process for consultation would be as follows:

Teacher/Student conference→ Teacher/Student/Parent conf.→
Teacher/Student/Parent/Principal conf.→ Teacher/Student/Parent/Principal/Director conf.

Parents' Cooperation

Parental cooperation is essential for the welfare of the students of St. Mary School System. If, in the opinion of the administration, parent behavior seriously interferes with the teaching/learning process, the school may require parents to withdraw their children and may sever the family's relationship with St. Mary.

Parent Teacher Organization

The elementary school has a parent organization called PIE(Partners In Education) which plan special activities for the students, and supports the school and teachers in their efforts. All initiatives of PIE are at the directive of the school system based on needs and wants. Any parent interested in joining/volunteering, can simply contact the school office to get more specific information on how they can help out.

Student Information / Permission to Use

As required by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the St. Mary School System hereby gives notice of intent to release student directory information, including a student's name, address, phone number, date and place of birth, weight, height, dates of attendance, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, diplomas, or specific awards as appropriate in news releases or promotional materials. St. Mary may also use a student's name or photo in news media interviews, photographs, videotapes, or on the Internet, and students' works may be published in articles, books, or professional journals. **If a parent does not wish for student information or photo to be used, the parent must notify the school office in writing.**

CATHOLIC IDENTITY / RELIGIOUS FORMATION

System Committee

A Catholic Identity and Mission committee operates as a subcommittee of SMEC (the governing body of the school). Representatives from the elementary, middle and high schools are on the committee as well as administration, parents and a priest. The committee's mission is to "continuously strengthen our Catholic identity across the system fostering service, prayer and faith opportunities."

Daily Religious Formation

Daily prayer and instruction in the Catholic faith will be provided for all students. Parents should keep in mind that they are the primary religious educators of

their children.

Daily instruction in the teachings and beliefs of the Catholic faith is an integral part of our school curriculum. All teachers of religion (K-12) are certified to teach in this area through the Diocesan Office of Religious Education. All aspects of the education program of the St. Mary School System are designed to promote and reflect the teachings of the Catholic Church. Non-Catholic students are expected to participate in religion class and weekly mass.

Catechesis for Sexuality

The Catholic schools of the Diocese of Owensboro will teach the Christian approach to human sexuality to all students in Grades K-12 [Diocesan Policy #7131]. Parents are notified at the onset of instruction and given the option to opt out.

Circle of Grace Curriculum Provided by the Diocese of Owensboro:
<https://owensborodiocese.org/training-minors-2/>

ADMISSIONS

Enrollment Criteria

St. Mary School System admits students of any race, color and national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to the students of the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, or athletic and other school-administered programs. Students transferring to St. Mary from another school will be reviewed by the principal before admission eligibility is determined. Non-Catholic students who accept the philosophy of St. Mary School System are welcome.

Requirements include:

- Health Records
- Immunization Records
- Birth Certificate (original)
 - Students must turn 5 by August 1st to be eligible for Kindergarten Enrollment
- Baptismal Certificate (Catholic applicants only)

Additionally, transfer students are required to supply **prior to enrolling** (may be sent by previous school):

- Report Cards
- Attendance Records

- Discipline Records
- Standardized Test Results
- Record of any IEPs

Withholding of any information such as: IEP, 504 plans, or discipline records may result in student dismissal from the School System.

All new students will be given a trial period of not less than one semester in which to prove himself/herself both socially in both discipline and acceptance as well as academically. If during this trial period there are any problems, a student may be asked to withdraw his/her attendance at St. Mary. The recommendation and decision of the school is final.

Home-Schooled Students

Student applicants who were previously in a **homeschool** setting will need to provide everything listed above for transferring students, before consideration will be made. Because of some of the differences between formal education and **homeschool** education, every effort will be made to make sure correct placements are made for the student. Diagnostic testing may be done to properly determine where a student should be placed in the absence of formal test scores and grades.

Students Transferring Out / Withdrawal Policy

Notice of withdrawal of a student should be made by the parent in **writing** to the Principal in advance of the withdrawal date. This enables the school to prepare the necessary information and settle accounts. **Every effort will be made to settle Business Office accounts prior to or upon withdrawal.** Student records must be requested by the receiving school.

Families are responsible for the tuition up to and including the month of withdrawal. No reimbursements or refunds will be given. Refer to FACTS contract agreements for additional information.

ACADEMICS

Curriculum

While aligned with the State of Kentucky's graduation requirements, the Diocesan curriculum goes beyond minimum standards to provide a more comprehensive and Christ centered educational experience in all secular subject areas.

St. Mary School System offers students opportunities for growth in the following major subjects:

Religion

Catholic doctrine and tradition, Bible study, Social Justice and Christian Service are emphasized daily. Liturgical services are held regularly for the entire school community. Elementary School students attend Mass on Tuesdays. Students in Grade 5 take the ARK (Assessment of Religious Knowledge) test each winter.

Computer Literacy

Keyboarding, Google Apps, Digital Literacy, Computer Apps, Robotics, Coding and Integration with Curricular Subjects

Fine Arts

Music, Visual Arts, Art, and Performing Arts

Language Arts

Reading, English/Language, Spelling, Vocabulary

Mathematics

Mathematics Skills, Counting and Cardinality, Operation/Algebraic Thinking, Number and Operation in Base Ten, Measurement and Data, Geometry, Math Fluency

Physical Education

Physical fitness programs appropriate for each grade, K-5. This includes but is not limited to weekly P.E. class.

Science

General Sciences and Laboratory Experiences. Forces and Interactions, Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems, Weather and Climate, Waves: Light and Sound, Structure, Function and Information Processing, Space Systems, Structure and Properties of Matter, Earth's System, Life Cycles

Social Studies

History, Geography, Economics, Kentucky History, Community, North America and their Interactions, Global Interactions, Migration and Settlement, Colonization to Constitution

Spanish

Alphabet, Pledge, Prayers, Numbers, Vocabulary, common expressions, grammar, conversation, and culture

Field Trips

The purpose of school-sanctioned activities is to allow young people to grow in their faith, **enjoy fellowship with peers**, form Christian friendships, and have an educational and learning experience. Therefore, expectations of students and adults who participate **must be in compliance with the School, Diocesan Code of Conduct and Safe Environment guidelines**.

Permission for field trips must first be obtained by the faculty sponsor from the

principal. Faculty representatives are to be present for the trip. Parent permission in writing is required through a form provided by the teacher or by the faculty sponsor.

All school regulations are in effect on school trips. Students will be in regular school uniform, unless otherwise stated by the principal.

Grading System

Elementary School Grading Scale

A - Excellent Progress	93 - 100
B - Above Average	85 - 92
C - Average	78 - 84
D - Below Average	70 - 77
F - Failure Below 70	

Satisfactory Scale

Given for All Specials and In Addition 1st Grade(Religion, Science, and Social Studies)

S+	Exceeds Satisfactory Achievement
S	Satisfactory Achievement
S-	Satisfaction Not Met/Needs Improvement
I	Incomplete/No Participation

Academic Excellence

Academic excellence is recognized in the elementary school on an individual basis based on students growth within MAP or other student academic achievements. This includes but is not limited to in class rewards, treasures, certificates, school wide recognition, etc.

Homework

Formal home-study is assigned to help students build independence but also offer practice. Assignments are designed to reinforce daily lessons, to supplement and enrich class work, and to prepare for certain lessons through various experiences. Since each student has different capabilities and interests, it would be difficult to denote the specific amount of time to be spent on an assignment. If a problem arises, the teacher should be contacted.

Library

- a) Library hours - Monday through Thursday, 7:45 AM through 1:30 PM. The school may be contacted for optional hours outside of this window.
- b) Material may be checked out during a designated library special time as well as open library times and may be renewed as needed.
- c) Replacement cost will be charged for any lost articles.
- d) Students with past due material or owing fines will be denied check out privileges.
- e) When classes are being conducted in the library, students from other classes are allowed to use the library with special permission only.

Promotion and Retention Policy

Advancement to the next grade in St. Mary School System is based on a student's daily performance, test results, recommendations of teachers, and the student's ability to complete work successfully on a more advanced level.

Promotion to the next grade depends on successful completion of all subject areas. The Administration may recommend the repetition of a grade, tutoring, or summer school classes as a requirement for promotion when, after conferences with teachers and parents, it is believed that such action will better prepare the student academically or emotionally for the next grade.

Regular and special promotions as well as, retentions, should be coordinated among teacher(s), parents and principal in consultation with the advisory staff, and students as appropriate. Such decisions should be based on the total evaluation of a student's growth in all areas of his/her development, especially emotional, psychological and academic. The possibility of retention is taken seriously, and the possibility of it should be communicated as early as midyear by the Principal, based on the information available from various stakeholders. Notification to parents to be documented in writing and kept on file. Ultimately the Principal will make determination by which grade level the child's needs, ahead or behind, can best be served.

Report Cards

Report Cards are important tools for communication. Report Cards will be given four times during the academic school year or every nine weeks. Parents are encouraged to check their FACTS portal often to see “real time” grades, as their student(s) progress.

Testing

The Measures of Academic Performance (MAP) Testing will be given in grades K-5.

The ARK Test (Assessment of Religious Knowledge) is given to students in Grade 5.

ATHLETICS

Junior Vikings

Junior Vikings Basketball League is organized by the elementary athletic director and parent volunteers. The season games will take place beginning in January with coordinating teams requesting play using our facilities. 2nd- 5th grade boys and girls are eligible to be added to a team. Teams are organized at the discretion of the director and administration.

Fees for equipment will be passed on to the child’s parent and expected upon sign up.

Junior Vikings Cheerleading

Junior Vikings Cheerleading is available for K-5 students. Students cheer at the coordinating Junior Vikings Basketball events.

Fees for equipment will be passed on to the child’s parent and expected upon sign up.

Middle School Sports

5th grade students are eligible to play up on the middle school basketball, baseball, soccer, and volleyball teams based on need of additional players. This will be communicated from the Middle School Athletic Director or Principal.

Title IX

St. Mary School System adheres to the tenets of Title IX: “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

ATTENDANCE

Tardiness

Students are expected to be in the gym and seated no later than 7:45 AM.

Students who are late must park and be walked in the main entrance by a parent. They must sign them in as tardy. Tardies are assessed on a quarterly basis.

Please discuss with the Principal, ahead of time, if there is an individual situation that will cause your student chronic tardiness. It is important that students are on time each day.

Absence

When a student is absent from school, a parent should call the school by 8:00 AM each day of the absence. If the office does not receive a call, a parent will be contacted. This policy is for the protection of the St. Mary students and is aligned with the state statutes of Kentucky.

In order to keep attendance records accurate, a written statement giving reasons for the absence or tardiness **is to be** brought to the office upon the student's return. These notes/letters will be retained in the office for one year. Should absence for any reason other than illness seem imperative, parents are requested to consult with the Principal and present a written reason for the absence.

Students must be fever free without fever reducing medication, vomit free, and lice free for 24 hours before returning to school. Students who are sent home during the school day with a fever will not be allowed to return to school the next day as this would not allow for the 24 hour protection of the entire school community.

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

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

Parents can inform the teacher of an upcoming absence. The teacher, when possible, will gather items ahead of time for your child to complete. Students may also receive missed assignments from their teacher when they return to school. The expectation of administration is that the teacher gather things if time allows but not interrupt instruction to gather materials.

Whenever possible, teachers should be informed in advance of any scheduled absences such as vacations or athletic activities. Arrangements can be made for assignments or tests to be completed either prior to the absence or in a timely manner upon return.

Absence Categories

Absences will be recorded according to the following categories;

- 1) Parent Excused Absences. A maximum of **5 absences per semester** may be excused as a result of the parent/guardian note describing the illness/circumstances (listed on the next page).
- 2) Medical Absence. An absence (prolonged or short term) due to illness or injury as explained by a notice from a doctor or other medical practitioner. Any absence beyond the 5 parent excused absences must be explained under this rule. There are no limits for medical absences. However, prolonged absence or numerous incidents of short absence may require academic assessment of student achievement and may result in a recommendation of retention or some other way to make up the time and work missed.
- 3) Unexcused Absences. Any absence that does not fit categories A or B, or any absence not explained by a note will be considered “unexcused.”
- 4) Excused Absences for which documentation is required include:
 - a. Illness of the student - doctor's excuse after five absences and must be submitted within 2 days of student's return to school
 - b. Medical appointment (note from doctor required)
 - c. Death in the family (such as parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, and any relations who may reside in the student's home).
 - d. Authorized school activities
 - e. Court summons
 - f. Absence for good cause (must have three (3) days advance notice and approval of the administration)
 - i. Family trips with one (1) week written notification (these days accrue toward 5-day absence policy)

Absence and tardiness become a part of the student's record.

Participants in extracurricular activities must be in attendance half day (210 minutes) in order to be eligible to compete, practice or participate that afternoon or evening (unless otherwise approved by the principal). An unexcused absence on a Friday will determine ineligibility for all weekend games or activities.

Presence on the last day of school before a school break denotes eligibility for events taking place during the break.

Extraordinary circumstances that present themselves from time to time which may prevent a student's attendance all day may be appealed. A parent who wishes to appeal should notify the principal in advance of the day of the absence.

Students are encouraged to make all doctor, dental and other appointments after school hours and on Saturdays.

Students who become ill during the school day are required to report directly to the office. The office will notify parents and the child should be promptly picked up.

When it is necessary to send a student home because of illness or for some other important reason, a school official must first notify the parents or guardians by telephone to make suitable arrangements.

Parents or guardians desiring their child/children to be excused from school before the regular dismissal time should make this request to the office staff and/or the principal and sign the early dismissal register in the school office.

Perfect Attendance is determined by full attendance daily. Early dismissals and late arrivals disqualify students for earning the award. Pre-approved absences of a religious nature may not be counted against students on their attendance record. Should you have questions, please contact your principal.

Inclement Weather / Virtual Learning

In the event of inclement weather, St. Mary School System will close at the discretion of the director, in consultation with the principals. Closing or delay will be announced on WPSD-TV (channel 6). Please make sure the school has current email and telephone information. Text messages and emails will be sent upon delays and cancellations.

Administrators or other school personnel should not be telephoned or texted at home with inquiries. St. Mary School System WILL NOT follow the McCracken County School System or the Paducah City School System in determining school closings. The director and the principals will collaborate on any decision to close the St. Mary School System.

Decisions to keep school open on bad weather days are based on how safe it is for the majority of our students to get to school. Conditions may differ from one section of the county to the next. Parents should keep their children home if they feel it is too dangerous for their students to attend.

If a weather event or public health issue comes with enough notice and/or is going to be a significant event anticipated to cause two or more days of closure, the administration team may advise a "virtual learning" day. A schedule will go into effect where students/teachers will meet online virtually, and therefore be able to count the school day as "in session." Please check your electronic communications, as well as, encourage your students to in

anticipation of being out of school and on a “virtual learning” day.

CALENDAR AND DAILY SCHEDULES

Drop off and Pick Up: ELEMENTARY

Before School Care: Designated staff is on duty for student drop off each morning beginning at 6:45 a.m. Students arriving before 7:15 a.m. must be dropped off at the library door. Students in Preschool – 12 will be charged \$2.00 a day for Before School Care. This is not drop in. Please speak with the principal to sign up for before school care drop off.

K-5 Morning Drop Off: Designated staff and parent volunteers in the back for K-5 students from 7:15-7:45am. K-Older students are asked to open their own doors and exit on their own. Preschool students with K-5 siblings may be dropped off at the gym entrance with their sibling(s). The K-5 sibling(s) may walk them to their classroom or designated preschool area.

Preschool Morning Drop Off: Preschool students will be brought through the front loop where parents can drop at the library entrance. A designated adult will be there to greet your child.

Parents are not to leave their children at either entrance without a supervising adult. We ask that adults do not exit their vehicle as it slows down the process. Adults will assist younger students as they exit the vehicle.

Note to Parents: If your child is unwilling to get out of the car, pull around and bring them to the front door so the line is not held up.

Promptly at 7:45 a.m, an adult stationed in the front driveway will place cones blocking the back and front loop. At this time, any remaining or entering cars need to park and walk their children into the main office. Students who enter through the front door after 7:45 must be walked in by their adult. They will be signed in by the adult and will be listed as tardy. The teacher on duty in the back will stay outside until the last child has entered the building.

For Afternoon Pick Up, all students being picked up at the end of the school day will wait in their classrooms or designated area for their name to be called after the closing prayer. Parents will pull through the circular pick up line and wait for their students to be brought to them. The card with the family name should be clearly displayed in the front windshield.

In the interest of safety, parents are asked to remain in their cars and to proceed through the regular carpool process. Designated staff will monitor the loop for safety as the students wait and then enter their cars.

Parents are asked to pay close attention during the carpool process. Please stay off cell phones at this time. Follow the traffic directions given by the teachers on duty.

School dismisses at 2:45 p.m. at which time we begin to load students into vehicles. This process may begin a little earlier to help all students exit in a reasonable amount of time. We continue to load children into vehicles until the last car has gone through a continuous line. The length of time this takes varies from ten to fifteen minutes.

If a child is not in the pick up area at the time that a parent comes through the pick-up line, the parent must circle around, park, and come in to get the child.

Remaining children are taken to the **After School Program**, and teachers are dismissed. Parents who are running late have a grace period until 3:00 p.m. in which they may pick up their students from the After School Program. Any students still here at that time are charged the regular rate for the After School program. In addition, students who take a snack prior to being picked up are charged for the program. Any parent who abuses this grace period by repeatedly picking up their children after dismissal has finished and before 3:00 may be charged After School Care fees.

Homeroom teachers should be advised in writing if a child is to go home in a different carpool or by a different means on a given day. Please do not communicate changes regarding pick up, etc. during the school day through email or message to the teacher. A phone call to the office is the preferred and requested way of communication. This allows our teachers to be teaching instead of checking phones to determine student needs during the day.

Preschool children should not attend the After School Program unless they are scheduled. Preschool must stay in the appropriate adult to child ratio. Please call the office or message the preschool director if you are interested in extending your child's day. Preschool aftercare is not drop in.

Those being picked up from the After School Program need to buzz in at the front office and then come to the table in the front hallway. A designated staff member will call for your child as you sign them out with your Family ID.

Exiting and Entering the Parking Lot: To ensure safety of families and the community, we ask all cars to exit and enter the school using a right turn only. Please utilize the street

behind Lourdes Medical Pavilion for overflow traffic. Turning left into the parking lot or out of the parking lot is a hazard to families entering and exiting but also to through traffic.

Schedule

6:45-7:15- Before Care- Elementary Library
7:15-7:45- Preschool/Elementary Breakfast and Drop Off
7:45- Morning Assembly- Gym
10:40-12:30- Lunch Rotations
11:00- Preschool Half Day Dismissal
2:40- Afternoon Prayer
2:45- Dismissal
2:45-5:30- Aftercare

School Calendar

Please check your email for the Junior Vikings Constant Contact and you can find the school calendar online on the school's website (www.smss.org), and click on "Calendar" in the upper right hand corner.

COMMUNICATION

FACTS

The school will communicate through email or emergency text. It is the responsibility of each family to frequently check their email account. If you need assistance with your FACTS account, please contact the school office.

It is the responsibility of the family to make sure that all health, emergency contacts, addresses, phone and email information is up to date at all times in FACTS.

Student financial information is also located in the FACTS system.

Office Records

Parents/Guardians are requested to notify the School Office in writing of any change of address, custody, home telephone numbers, cell phone numbers, business phone numbers, email addresses and/or phone numbers of emergency contacts. This will guarantee that office records are accurate, complete, and up-to-date. Families are asked to update their information in FACTS.

Constant Contact

The St. Mary School System sends emails regularly to parents who are registered in a program called Constant Contact. In emergency situations, we also send text messages for those who have opted into this service. It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure all contact information in the system is correct. The Technology Coordinator can assist parents in registering for both of these communication systems, and/or for other questions regarding school-wide communication.

Individual Teacher Contact

Teachers are expected to check their email before the school day and prior to leaving for the day. All PreK-5 grade homerooms have Seesaw and Email that they will communicate with family weekly. 2nd-5th grade have an agenda that should be signed nightly. If there are communication issues, or a student has difficulties with organization, please contact the teacher directly to set up clearer or direct lines of communication regarding your student. All teachers/administrators have an email address of (firstname.lastname@smss.org)

The Kentucky General Assembly recently passed Senate Bill 181, which is now codified as KRS 160.045. This law governs how school staff communicate with students, requiring all two-way electronic communication to be traceable through school approved platforms.

The Diocese of Owensboro fully supports the law's intent – to protect all involved by ensuring accountability and transparency in all communication.

Diocesan recommendation:

- Do not use text messages, private messaging apps, or any other unmonitored or non-traceable means to communicate with students or athletes.
- Use only platforms that are approved by your school administration and can be archived/monitored if needed.
- When in doubt, err on the side of caution and keep communication professional, appropriate, and transparent.

The diocese expects everyone to act in the spirit of this legislation. Please always use good wisdom and good judgement to protect yourself and your students. Due to our current Safe Environment Policies, there will not be an opt-out provided to parents concerning this policy.

DRESS CODE & PERSONAL APPEARANCE

The purpose of the dress code is the presentation of a neat and pleasing appearance of the student body. Jewelry and hairstyles are not to be distracting to the learning environment or to present an unnecessary safety hazard. The overall appearance of the students of St. Mary must be modest and, at all times, reflect respect for the

uniform they wear. Students not in compliance with dress code will not be admitted to classes. On days when uniforms are not worn, an appropriate, modest, neat and pleasing appearance is expected. This following section discusses the required uniforms for St. Mary students, grades K-5.

Dress Code Summary and Emphasis

1. Plaid & navy items are available from our school vendor (Land's End and Inka.).
Plaid must be purchased from Inka.
2. Students **out of dress code** may be required to change their dress to comply with the standards of the St. Mary School System.
3. Students are expected to show respect for the school uniform at all times.
4. Shirts/blouses are to remain completely buttoned (except the top button) and tucked in from the time the student arrives at school until he/she leaves the campus.
5. If a "T" shirt is worn **under a uniform polo**, it must be solid white without logo or markings of any kind. Undershirt sleeves may not extend beyond the length of the uniform shirt sleeve **or hem.**
6. Pants/shorts are to be worn properly on the waist and not slung low on the hips.
They are not to be rolled.
7. **Leggings are not considered pants. Navy leggings may be worn under a skirt or skort only.**
8. Sweaters/sweatshirts/fleece jackets will be worn, not tied around the waist.
9. Oversized or bulky fits, as well as skinny or too tight fits, will not be permitted
10. All outerwear including but not limited to sweaters, quarter-zip and crewneck sweatshirts must be worn with a collared white uniform shirt under it.
11. **Walking shorts, skirts, and skorts must be no more than 5" from crease of the back of the knee. Students will be asked to reposition or change if not in compliance.**
12. Female students may have modest ear piercing. **See details in below section.**
13. No "spacers," "gages," or band-aids on ears for male or female students.
14. Male students must be clean-shaven at all times. Sideburns must be no longer than the bottom of the ear.
15. Boys' hairstyle must not touch the collar, cover the ears, or hang in the eyes.
16. Hair is to be clean, neatly groomed, and **natural in color.**
17. **Boys' hairstyles must not touch the collar, cover the ears, or hang in the eyes (even when combed from above and behind the ears). (Mohawks, mullets, perms, faux hawks, pony tails or unconventional hairstyles are not permitted). Girls are not to add tinsel, threads or feathers. Parents will be contacted directly when a student's hair doesn't meet this expectation.**
18. Outer coats/sweatshirts are to be hung in the designated place upon arrival at school. They are not to be worn in class. Students are strongly encouraged to keep a uniform sweater, sweatshirt, or fleece on hand for use in the cooler classrooms. Non-approved logos are not to be worn as uniform.
19. Uniforms must be neat, clean, and not in need of mending.
20. Jewelry should not be oversized or distracting to the learning environment.

21. Watches may be analog or mechanical only. No digital or smart watch is permitted.
22. Hats or bandanas are never to be worn in the building, except on special “theme” days.
23. Commercial or brand emblems may not be visible except for shoes and socks.

Spirit Shirt Day/Non-Uniform Day

1. For Spirit Shirt Day, a official school approved logo must be worn prominently on the shirt/blouse and must be visible (cannot be covered by another shirt/blouse or jacket).
2. All dresses, skirts, skorts, and shorts must be no more than 5” from the crease of the back of the knee.
3. Pants must be proper fitting - no sagging nor can they be too tight or short.
4. Leggings, jeggings, yoga pants, and spandex may not be worn unless the student wears a top shorts or shirt that is at minimum of finger tip in length.
5. Clothes must be neat and clean and free of rips and holes.
6. All rules for shoes still apply due to safety issues.
7. No caps, toboggans, or head coverings, unless it's part of a theme day.
8. Students may not wear anything offensive, immodest, or deemed inappropriate by Faculty. This includes but not limited to political statements, gory, or scary depictions.

Elementary School General

1. Footwear may consist of low cut leather dress or athletic shoes. Shoes must have backs or heel straps so as to be secured on the foot. Other types of footwear are prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to clogs, UGs, CROCS, heels, sandals, wheelies, or oversized shoes.
2. Students may wear a proper fitting pull on tennis shoe or velcro shoe. If the shoe has shoelaces, they must be tied.
3. Boots may be worn to and from school during inclement weather, but must be exchanged for regular footwear during the school day.
4. Hooded sweaters or sweatshirts may not be worn while in class.
5. Plain navy or white sweatshirt, or those with official school approved logo only. See Lands End for approved logoed outerwear.
6. Socks must be navy, black, gray or white and worn at all times. Students may wear no show, crew or tall socks of these colors only.
7. Bracelets must be modest, appropriate and not a cause of distraction.
8. Shirts and blouses may not have any logo.

Elementary School Boys

1. Shirt must be white or navy (long or short sleeved) and may be knit with a collar, oxford, or turtleneck.
2. Navy blue dress pants either flat or pleated front. Black, brown, or navy belt must be worn if there are belt loops. No blue jeans, contrasting stitching, or cargo pants. Leggings/tights may not be worn in place of pants.
3. Navy dress shorts with a black, brown, or navy belt. (no short shorts, cargo shorts, gym shorts, jogging shorts, or nylon athletic shorts, such as, “Umbro”).
4. Solid navy sweater, fleece, pullover jacket, or cardigan
5. Uniform fleece jackets with official school approved logo are allowed.
6. Necklaces must be worn inside the shirt.

Elementary School Girls

1. White or navy long or short-sleeved shirts may be knit with a collar, Oxford, turtleneck, or plain white blouse with pointed or round collar (no frills or lace).
2. Girls may wear the uniform plaid jumper, uniform plaid walking short, navy short or uniform plaid skorts. Jumpers, shorts, and skorts must be no shorter than 5" from the crease of the back of the knee.
3. Uniform plaid or navy blue "under- the-jumper" bloomer shorts (optional).
4. Slacks must be navy.
5. Navy sweater may be worn in the style of fleece jacket, pullover or cardigan.
6. Uniform fleece jackets with official school approved logo are allowed.
7. White, black, or navy tights, or ankle-length leggings may be worn under uniform.
8. Sweatpants may be worn under or over the skirt while traveling to/from school or during outside activity. Sweatpants must be removed while inside the building.
9. Make-up is not permitted.
10. Push on or acrylic nails are not permitted.
11. Earrings must not dangle more than 1/2 inch or be larger in size than a dime.

****St. Mary Administration has the right to amend the dress code as the times change, and in instances of public health issues. Students may be required to wear masks or other PPE as directed by the Diocese of Owensboro. Students will need to have a doctor's exemption to opt out of wearing these items.**

EXTRA CURRICULAR & Extended Day PROGRAMS

Extended Day Programs

Before School 6:45 AM – 7:15 AM Grades PK-12 (Children must be pre-registered.)

After School 2:45 PM – 5:30 PM Grades K-12 (This is a drop in program.) (Preschool must pre-register.)

(Hours are for **full school days only**.) There will be no after school program on early dismissal days.

General

Students need to be registered for Before School Care. In the mornings, they will enter at the library door. The After School Program is a drop in program for K-8 but preschool must be pre-registered. The Before/After School Program (ASP), located at St. Mary Elementary School, provides a snack, homework time and care for those students in grades K-8 who are enrolled in St. Mary. Our mission is to serve working families who desire both parochial school education and supplementary care in a Christian environment.

Our program allows children to experience a variety of growth activities within a

Catholic environment. Activities are planned to complement the philosophy and value system of the school and family. Our program strives to provide security, consistency and fair treatment for children of working parents.

During winter, students should have appropriate dress (coat, gloves, hat, etc.) for outside activities in the cold weather.

All children will remain in uniform for ASP unless a written note is sent by parents stating their child's need to change clothes for a specific reason (dance class, ball practice, etc.) Children will be allowed to change shortly before parents arrive to pick them up. The time of the parent's arrival should be included in the written note.

If a child has an activity such as a practice in the afternoon where they will need to be dismissed from ASP, the parent, coach or approved parent/team mates will need written permission submitted to the principal for a child to be released from ASP. ASP staff is not responsible to transport or supervise the transition of students from ASP to after school activities outside of the building. Please communicate questions to the coach or principal.

Billing

Fees are the sole support of before and after school programs (ASP), and are not subsidized by the school or parish. A fee schedule is available at registration or in the elementary school office.

Billing is through your FACTS financial portal, and costs will be updated monthly to your account.

Late Pick-Up and Fees

A late fee will be charged for any time after 5:30 P.M. The fee will be \$15.00 for the first 15 minutes and \$1.00 for every minute thereafter. Any time over 30 minutes will be charged at the hourly rate.

Arrival/Dismissal

Students brought to school early for before school care must be brought to the library door. Parents/guardians or a designated person must come into the school vestibule to sign out a child from the ASP. No one else will be allowed to take your child unless written notice is sent to the school. Be prepared to show identification to the afterschool staff at the checkout desk. A number is assigned to families picking their child up from the program to check their child out.

Safety Policies for School-Sanctioned Trips

When possible, St. Mary School System provides bus transportation for student trips (field trips, etc.). All students must ride the bus unless specific permission is

granted by the principal.

St. Mary School System relies on volunteers to provide transportation for students to off-campus activities, such as regional and state academic competitions, plays, sporting events, etc. All volunteers must be in compliance and abide by the Diocesan Safe Environment Policy, that includes having a current driver's license, and provide a copy of your driver's insurance that meets the minimum Diocesan requirements.

We are grateful to those who generously volunteer to drive whenever asked. In agreeing to provide this service, parents assume a very serious responsibility. Realizing that the safety of our students is of primary concern, the St. Mary School System Education Committee insists that all traffic rules be obeyed, that all passengers wear seat belts and speed limits be adhered to at all times when transporting students. Drivers are to transport students directly to and from the stated off-campus activity. No side trips are to be taken. All volunteer drivers must have a signed form on file in the school office.

Should a volunteer driver fail to comply with this policy, it is the responsibility of the person in charge of the function which precipitated the trip to confront the violating driver at the first possible opportunity, and to report the violation of this policy to the principal of the respective school immediately upon returning from the trip. Any reported violations will be handled at the discretion of the respective school principal immediately upon returning from the trip.

Chaperones and Other Volunteers

- 1) Supervision is more than physical presence; it is full time involvement with the students.
- 2) All chaperones must be at least 21 years of age.
- 3) All chaperones will abide by the same rules and requirements given to minors (i.e. no alcohol consumption at any time during the trip or event).
- 4) All volunteers will complete the appropriate records checks and/or training as required by the Diocese of Owensboro. Returned records and/or training will be filed by the Diocese and/or St Mary School System based on the volunteer type and records/training requirements.
- 5) Chaperones will not at any time purchase or make available questionable or illegal items for a minor (i.e. smoking materials or any smokeless tobacco product, alcohol, drugs, weapons, condoms and sexually suggestive materials, clothing or items).
- 6) Adult leaders may not use tobacco products while in the presence of minors.
- 7) On overnight and/or out-of-town activities, some chaperones should be of the same gender as the participants. If there are male and female students, there should be a male and female chaperone.
- 8) All chaperones must have participated in the Safe Environment Program.
- 9) Chaperones should not bring other small children or other persons for whom they are responsible to an event for which they are chaperoning.

10) Diocesan Safe Environment requirements must be followed for all school trips.

FOOD SERVICE / CAFETERIA

- A. It is the intent of the St. Mary School System Food Service Program to provide nutritious meals to students during the school day. St. Mary School System participates in the federally funded meal program that is supported by our tax dollars and abides by all wellness policies as promulgated by the federal program (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Lunch/>). **We strongly urge all eligible families to participate in the Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program. Doing so helps subsidize our food service.**
- B. In keeping with the provisions of the federally funded breakfast and lunch program, parents and students are reminded of the following federal regulation that strictly governs our participation in the program. In order to maintain the nutritional integrity of meals available to students, the sale or serving of any food or beverage item to students in competition with the National School Lunch Program shall be prohibited on the school campus during the school day until one-half hour after the close of the last lunch serving period.
- C. No sodas or competitive foods, e.g., Hardee's, McDonald's, Domino's, will be allowed unless before the first school bell rings or one-half hour after the last lunch period at a particular building. This regulation also applies to parents who bring competitive foods to their children in order to eat with them at school. Parents who wish to "treat" their child to fast foods at lunch are required to check the student out of school. Violation of this policy could result in the immediate loss of federal subsidy for that day and jeopardizes the entire federal subsidy for St. Mary School System. Strict adherence to this policy will be expected.
- D. Lunch payment will be established through the cafeteria staff in each building.
- E. Students who pay with cash will not receive change. Rather, the amount will be added to the student's account.
- F. Students are expected to clean tables, chairs, and floors before leaving the cafeteria. The lunch monitor will assign groups to take care of this responsibility.

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLNESS

Allergy Policy

St. Mary School System recognizes that an allergy is an important condition

affecting many school children and positively welcomes all pupils with allergies.

This school encourages children with allergies to achieve their potential in all aspects of school life by having a clear policy that is understood by school staff and pupils. Teachers and new staff are also made aware of the policy. Training is updated as needed.

1. Asthma Medication

Immediate access to reliever inhalers is vital. Children are encouraged to carry their reliever inhaler. Parents are asked to ensure that the school is provided with a labeled spare reliever inhaler. All inhalers must be labeled with the child's name by the parent.

2. Record Keeping

At the beginning of each school year, or when a child joins St. Mary School System, parents are asked to submit a child's medical record. From this information the school keeps its asthma register which is available for all school staff. If medication changes in between times, parents are required to inform the school.

3. The School Environment

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

4. Food Allergy & Other Medical Condition Policy

St. Mary School System recognizes that life threatening food allergies are an important condition affecting many school children and positively welcomes all pupils with food allergies. In order to minimize the incidence of life threatening allergic reactions, St. Mary will maintain a system-wide procedure for addressing life threatening allergic reactions and maintain an Emergency Action Plan for any student(s) whose parent/guardian, and physicians have informed the school in writing that the student(s) has a potentially life threatening allergy.

5. Classrooms

Teachers must be familiar with the Emergency Action Plan of students in their classes and respond to emergencies as per the emergency protocol documented in the Emergency Action Plan.

In the event of a suspected allergic reaction (where there is no known allergic history), the medical professional will be called and the school's Emergency Response Plan activated. The emergency medical services will be called immediately.

Information will be kept about students' food allergies in the classroom and in the substitute emergency folder, accessible by teachers, substitutes or other responsible adults.

All teachers and substitutes will be educated about the risk of food allergies.

A parent or guardian of a student with food allergies is responsible for providing all food for his/her own child. Snacks will be kept in a separate snack box or chest provided by the parent or guardian.

Tables will be washed with soap and water following any food related events held in the classroom. Proper hand cleaning techniques will be taught and encouraged before and after the handling/consumption of food.

Asbestos

In accordance with EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) regulations, St. Mary has been inspected for asbestos-containing materials by accredited inspectors using methodologies specified in the Asbestos-Containing Materials in Schools Rule: 40 CFR, Part 763 (AHERA). Friable (easily crumbled) asbestos-containing material may cause health problems. There is no asbestos or asbestos-containing material in the St. Mary School System.

Child Abuse Laws

St. Mary School System abides by the Child Abuse laws of the State of Kentucky. This law mandates that all cases of suspected abuse and/or neglect be reported to Child Protective Services. 1-877-597-2331 or 1-800-752-6200

Emergency Response

The safety of all persons on campus is the primary concern during any emergency response. Procedures in the Emergency Response Handbook are designed to promote immediate measures to maintain or restore a safe environment. As part of our crisis plan, all teachers and staff are aware of the procedure to follow and keep your children safe.

In the event of an emergency situation, parents are asked to refrain from calling or coming to the school to seek information. Heavy phone traffic may compromise the ability of school staff to provide the proper level of assistance or to communicate with appropriate agencies to obtain needed help. The arrival of additional persons on campus may increase the risk of injury to those already present as well as to those coming to campus. When the situation permits, the school will notify parents/guardians about events and procedures to come and pick up children. Please

remember that children may not be in the school building. Please follow staff instructions to sign out your children from the appropriate location. Local media will be notified as necessary depending upon the situation.

Emergency response signs are located near the door in each room. Each includes the signal for various emergencies, the location of safe areas, and the route for emergency evacuation, if necessary. Visitors should look for the signs in the event of an emergency notice. All persons in the building or on the grounds should comply with the safety procedures if at all possible.

During any emergency response-drill, or actual emergency, students are to remain quiet, follow all instructions from their teacher or the staff, and move about in an orderly fashion.

Drills will be conducted in accordance with state and other regulations. Termination of all emergency drills will be at the discretion of the principal or person serving in the capacity of incident commander. All persons in the building or on the grounds should participate in the drill if at all possible.

All Emergency Procedures are listed in an Emergency Response Manual, updated yearly and a copy provided to each staff member. These procedures are not directly released to families as advised by our local Emergency Management Teams.

Medication at School

Effective for the 2025–2026 school year, OTC medications (such as ibuprofen, acetaminophen, antacids, cough drops, etc.) may no longer be administered to students at school without BOTH:

1. A written order from a licensed medical practitioner, and
2. Signed parental consent.

This change is part of a statewide effort to ensure student safety and consistency in school health practices. To comply with this new regulation, St. Mary Schools has made the required medication permission form available on our website or in the school office. Please note that this form is not valid until it includes both the healthcare provider's signature and your signature.

The faculty and staff are not permitted to dispense to students any internal medication that is not provided by the parents. If a student must take any type of medicine during the school day, the student must take the medicine to the school office at the beginning of the school day along with a prescription from the doctor explaining what the medicine is and when the child should take it. This includes nonprescription as well as prescription medication.

All medicines must be in an original container appropriately labeled for patient and dosage. The student will come to the office and take the appropriately packaged medicine under the direct supervision of school personnel.

Antibiotics or other medications that are directed to be given two or three times a day are to be given at home unless specifically ordered to be given during school hours by the physician. An exception could be made by the nurse or principal if the student remains at school after 3:30 p.m.

In certain situations, students are allowed to responsibly carry self-administered medication (i.e., Epi-pen, inhaler, insulin). However, this may be done ONLY with a written physician's authorization, written parental authorization, and signature of the principal.

Pesticides

St. Mary School System provides numerous health services for students. One of those services is pest control. State regulations require that the school give a 24-hour notice prior to any pest control application made on school property to parents who request it. Parents must notify the school office in writing if they wish to be notified of the pest control application.

Release of Students During School Hours

The school is responsible for students during school hours. Therefore, principals will not release a student from school into the custody of any person other than the student's parents, guardian, or person authorized in writing by the parent.

Students needing medical appointments during school hours require a note in writing/email by the parent. They will be called out by the office. Parents are required to sign out their children. If the child returns to school during the same school day, he/she must be signed back into school in the office. Students who are away from school for an appointment for 3 ½ hours or more will be counted as absent for one-half (½) day. Three (3) early withdrawals each of which are less than 3 ½ hours are considered a one-half day absence.

Search

The school reserves the right to search anything brought on school property. This includes cell phones and other electronic devices.

Transportation Policies

School buses or commercial vehicles will be used for transportation whenever possible. When it is not possible to use such vehicles, privately owned vehicles may be used as long as the owner is aware that his/her vehicle insurance is primary. Liability coverage limits are recommended to be at \$300,000 at a minimum. It has been a trend for several years that individuals who drive frequently for organizations carry a minimum of \$500,000.

All volunteer drivers must fill out the Volunteer Driver's Form. This will be kept on file in the school office and **updated annually or as needed.** Drivers for youth events must be at least 21 years of age.

No privately owned vehicle may be allowed to leave the school site unless a seat belt is available for each passenger. It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that all vehicle safety and traffic laws are observed. All drivers are encouraged to be aware not to place anyone weighing less than 100 pounds near an air bag.

When more than one vehicle is used to transport participants, all drivers should have written directions/maps and be briefed on the area.

No adult should be ALONE in a vehicle with a minor (anyone under age 18).

All drivers should drive directly to and from the designated locations without unnecessary stops. Acceptable stops include: illness, bathroom, or vehicle issues.

Visitors

The St. Mary School System values parental involvement and community support.. Safety is a priority. Visitors may be asked to show identification in the form of a driver's license or other government issued identification.

St. Mary School System values instructional time and supports minimal to no interruptions during those times. Appointments are required for conferences during teacher planning time or before and after school.

Visitors to our schools must page in and state the reason for their visit. If there is an acceptable or planned purpose then the school will allow entrance through the main doors. The visitor must sign in immediately in the vestibule if moving beyond this area. A visitor's pass will be given which is to be worn and be clearly seen by all. When leaving, the visitor must sign out and return the pass.

Visitors must be monitored while in the building.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Bullying and Cyberbullying

St. Mary School System strives to provide a safe environment for all individuals. In accordance with Kentucky State Law, bullying is defined as “any unwanted verbal, physical, or social behavior among students that involves a real or perceived power imbalance and is repeated or has the potential to be repeated. Under the law, the bullying definition will be applied when it “occurs on school premises, on school-sponsored transportation, or at a school-sponsored event; or that disrupts the education process.” Verbal or written threats made against the physical or emotional well-being of any individual are taken very seriously. Students making such threats (seriously, in jest, or online) face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion.

St. Mary School System offers electronic reporting through the S.T.O.P. Tipline. The Safety Tipline, Online Prevention or S.T.O.P Tipline is an "online" tip line. If students, parents or community members know of an unsafe situation in school (bullying, weapons, drugs or alcohol, etc.), they can anonymously pass on that information to school personnel by the STOP logo on our school's website. All tips will be followed up and addressed when necessary <https://www.smss.org/viking-links/>.

Cheating

Cheating of any type will not be tolerated. Students who choose to cheat can face a failing grade or detention. A student who is involved in cheating could also be unable to participate in sports, class clubs, or organizations for a period designated by the principal. Plagiarism is considered cheating.

Students may not use AI to complete assignments, write essays, or take tests unless explicitly authorized by the teacher. Use of AI for cheating, plagiarism, or bypassing learning is strictly prohibited. No AI-generated content may be submitted as original work unless disclosed and approved.

Damage/Injury Liability

St. Mary School System and its employees are not responsible for any loss or damage to clothes, personal articles, or vehicles of students, parents, or guests on school campus or at any school-related activity.

St. Mary School System and its employees are held harmless from any and all claims, damages or other liabilities for injuries to or damage by any student, parent, or guest on campus or at any school-related activity.

Discipline

Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct in the St. Mary School System ensures a safe and orderly learning environment. To this end, mutually supportive efforts on the part of the administration, teachers, students, parents, and all auxiliary staff members are necessary. Consistent, inappropriate behavior, on or off campus, may constitute cause for dismissal from St. Mary.

Anti-Christian activities are forbidden. Professional intervention and/or expulsion may be necessary.

Each classroom teacher is responsible for the instruction in his/her classroom. Each student is responsible daily for the cooperative, well disposed, and undistracted effort which will bring learning to him/her and the classroom.

Student Responsibilities

St. Mary School System is known for its warm, friendly spirit. To promote this atmosphere every student is asked to assume certain responsibilities. The following guidelines are provided to create an atmosphere of learning and at the same time to promote a “family within the field of education.” Failure to conform to the following responsibilities will result in disciplinary action.

Student Behavior Students are expected to use good manners in their relations with teachers and with other students. An atmosphere of order is indispensable in a school building. A moderate tone of voice should be used going to and from classes. An atmosphere of quiet must be maintained in the hallways while classes are in session.

Classrooms. Students are expected to be in their seats, with materials, ready to work, when they are to begin each class or subject area.

Food and Drink. Students are expected to clean up after themselves if a mess is made with their food, snack or drink. A well sealed and labeled water bottle is permitted in the classrooms.

Search and Seizure Participants at school and school-sanctioned activities have a responsibility to follow rules and respect the authority of adults whose jobs are to ensure a safe environment for all. Therefore, in order to maximize the protection of persons and property to the fullest extent possible, the following search and seizure guidelines have been developed.

- 1) A student's outer clothing, pockets, or his/her personal effects (i.e. handbags, backpacks, etc.) may be searched by authorized personnel when there are reasonable grounds to believe a search will reveal evidence of a violation. Reasonable cause is a suspicion with some basis in fact. A phone call, a note, or a suspicious appearance can constitute reasonable cause.
- 2) Searches will only be conducted by those directly responsible for the person's conduct along with another adult witness.

- 3) Another adult need not be present to ask a student to hand over something or “turn out your pockets.” Two adults must be present if the student is searched (backpack/purse/coat/pockets examined, or pockets “patted down”).

Requesting a student to take something out of his/her pocket, backpack, purse, coat, etc., is not considered a “search.”

- 4) When a search is conducted, either the conductor of the search, or the witness, will be the same gender as the subject of the search.
- 5) No search will be conducted in the presence of any other student/participant.
- 6) Those who fail to cooperate when requested will be subject to other disciplinary action.
- 7) Illegal items (i.e. weapons, drugs, etc.) or other possessions reasonably determined by authorized personnel to be a threat to safety and security will be seized. Parents and legal authorities will be notified as per policy.
- 8) School property does not belong to the student. The school reserves the right to bring in police dogs to assist.

Harassment, Threats, Theft, and Violence In keeping with the philosophy of St. Mary School System that each person is a sacred individual, it is the intent of the St. Mary School System to provide for its students and employees an educational environment free from harassment. Harassment based on race, sex, religion, or physical appearance will not be tolerated. All teachers and school staff are instructed to stop harassment when they witness it, and to inform the administration of all allegations, knowledge, or rumors of harassment. Disciplinary action will be at the discretion of the administration and will be on a case by case basis.

The violations included under this section are as follows.

- 1) Harassment: Unwelcome activity or creation of a hostile environment through inappropriate words, actions, or physical contact not necessarily directly resulting in physical harm.
- 2) Hazing: St. Mary School System will not allow the activities of any student organizations not under the direct supervision of approved school personnel. All organizations that represent St. Mary must be inclusive in nature, should support the Christian mission of the St. Mary School System, and follow the standards of conduct stated in this handbook.
- 3) Peer Harassment: Unwelcome taunting, verbal or physical abuse based on race, sex, religion, physical appearance or any other factor that interferes with a student's education.
- 4) Sexual Harassment: Sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment (student to student, employee/volunteer to student, student to employee/volunteer, or employee/volunteer to employee/volunteer) when:
 - a) Submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual's employment or education.
 - b) Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for academic or employment decisions affecting that individual.
 - c) Such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's academic or professional performance or of creating an intimidating, hostile

- or offensive employment or educational environment.
- d) Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to:
 - i. Sexually oriented communication, including sexually oriented phone calls, text messages, letters, verbal kidding, or through social media.
 - ii. Pressure or requests for sexual activity.
 - iii. Touching of an individual, e.g., patting, pinching, hugging, repeated brushing against another's body.
 - iv. Creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment through the use of innuendoes, rumors, overt or implied threats.
 - 5) Intimidation: The act of frightening or coercing by threat or implied threat.
 - 6) Theft: Stealing.
 - 7) Threat: A direct or indirect expression of intent to cause physical harm or damage to equipment and/or property that might lead to or contribute to physical harm.
 - A threat of violence is any expression, verbal or behavioral, of the intent to inflict harm, injury or damage to person or property. The threat of violence carries with it the implied notions of a risk of violence and a high probability of harm or injury. Threats will not be tolerated; students who make threats will be dealt with promptly and severely.
 - 8) Vandalism: Damaging/defacing school or student's property. Infringement on other's property
 - 9) Violence: Aggression resulting in physical assault with or without the use of a weapon.

Procedures to Address Harassment, Threats, Theft, and Violence

- 1) If a student thinks that he/she has been the victim of harassment, threats, thefts, or violence, he/she should not ignore the incident.
- 2) Report the incident immediately to the nearest adult.
- 3) The incident will be investigated.
- 4) The person accused will be confronted.
- 5) A conclusion as to whether the incident occurred will be made.
- 6) Parents will be notified.
- 7) Any consequences administered will relate to the nature, context and seriousness of the incident.
- 8) Outside counseling may be recommended. Cost will be borne by the parents/guardians.
- 9) A suspension or expulsion hearing may be conducted.
- 10) Outside counseling may be recommended; cost to be borne by the parents/guardians.
- 11) Police may be notified.
- 12) If it is determined that a person deliberately filed a false claim, disciplinary action will be taken.
- 13) Records of complaints will be held confidential to the extent necessary

to investigate the complaint.

Reprisal Reprisal is any action taken against someone because he/she reported violations to the code of conduct. The same procedure as outlined above for procedures to address harassment, threats, theft, and violence should be followed with incidents of reprisal.

Terroristic Threatening St. Mary, in coordination with responding law enforcement agencies, will pursue immediate charges for terroristic threatening in the second degree, against anyone who makes terroristic threats, including students.

Below are the definitions of terroristic threatening per KRS 508.078:

Definitions of Terroristic Threatening:

508.078 Terroristic threatening in the second degree.

(1) A person is guilty of terroristic threatening in the second degree when, other than as provided in KRS 508.075, he or she intentionally:

(a) With respect to any scheduled, publicly advertised event open to the public, any place of worship, or any school function, threatens to commit any act likely to result in death or serious physical injury to any person at a scheduled, publicly advertised event open to the public, any person at a place of worship, or any student group, teacher, volunteer worker, or employee of a public or private elementary or secondary school, vocational school, or institution of postsecondary education, or to any other person reasonably expected to lawfully be on school property or at a school-sanctioned activity, if the threat is related to their employment by a school, or work or attendance at school, or a school function. A threat directed at a person or persons at a scheduled, publicly advertised event open to the public, place of worship, or school does not need to identify a specific person or persons or school in order for a violation of this section to occur;

(b) Makes false statements by any means, including by electronic communication, for the purpose of:

- Causing evacuation of a school building, school property, or school-sanctioned activity;
Causing cancellation of school classes or school-sanctioned activity; or
Creating fear of serious bodily harm among students, parents, or school personnel;

(c) Makes false statements that he or she has placed a weapon of mass destruction at any location other than one specified in KRS 508.075; or

(d) Without lawful authority places a counterfeit weapon of mass destruction at any location other than one specified in KRS 508.075.

(2) A counterfeit weapon of mass destruction is placed with lawful authority if it is placed as part of an official training exercise by a public servant, as defined in KRS 522.010.

(3) A person is not guilty of commission of an offense under this section if he or she, innocently and believing the information to be true, communicates a threat made by another person to school personnel, a peace officer, a law enforcement agency, a public agency involved in emergency response, or a public safety answering point and identifies the person from whom the threat was communicated, if known.

(4) Except as provided in subsection (5) of this section, terroristic threatening in the second degree is a Class D felony.

(5) Terroristic threatening in the second degree is a Class C felony when, in addition to violating subsection (1) of this section, the person intentionally engages in substantial conduct required to prepare for or carry out the threatened act, including but not limited to gathering weapons, ammunition, body armor, vehicles, or materials required to manufacture a weapon of mass destruction.

Phone/Smart Watch/Personal Device Use. Elementary students are not allowed to have cell phones, smart watches or personal communication devices on their person. With permission from the principal, students may check their device into the office before going to class, to be checked back at dismissal to afterschool off site activities. Ex: athletic practices, or transition between homes. If found due to sound or sight, the phone/device will be confiscated and brought to the office to a parent to pick up.

If a student needs to communicate with a parent during the day, there is phone access in the front office.

School issued chromebooks do not allow communication outside of our school network.

Permissible Watch Use. Watches may be analog or mechanical only. No digital or smart watch is permitted.

Employee Door Access. Students who enter the building using an employee door fob access are subject to disciplinary consequences. Building fobs should never be given to students for use.

Posters. Posters are displayed only with the approval of the principal or organization sponsors. Posters should be attractive in appearance and clear in message.

Tobacco. The possession or use of any tobacco or like product is not allowed anywhere on the campus. Tobacco products include products containing nicotine or like substances, including (but not limited to) cigarettes, chewing tobacco, vaping pens, “dab” pens, JUULs, patches, gum, or any other device used to deliver nicotine to the body.

Illegal Drugs. For the purpose of this policy, the words “illegal drug” shall mean any mind-altering drug or mind-altering substance. The purchase, possession, use, sale, or distribution of any of these drugs is illegal by any federal statute, and any statute of

the State of Kentucky.

If any student brings to school, or has in his/her possession on the school grounds, during or after school hours, any illegal drug or alcohol, or look-alike, and/or drug paraphernalia, he/she is liable for suspension and/or expulsion.

Upon information that a student is buying or has bought, is or has been in possession of, and/or has been using any illegal drug, the following steps shall be taken:

- a. The teacher or other person having the aforesaid information shall notify the principal of the school wherein the student is enrolled.
- b. The student's parent or legal guardian shall be notified and written documentation kept on file.
- c. The principal may suspend the student pending investigation when there is probable cause to believe that he/she has bought, possessed, and/or used an illegal drug.

Cleanliness. We are very proud of our school. Students are asked to take particular care of their building, the materials and the books that are made available to them. Cleanliness is an innate part of our Christian image. Please make every effort to keep the outside campus, classrooms, halls, commons, gym, and restrooms clean.

Toys, Games, and Electronic Equipment. Students are discouraged from bringing toys, games, or electronic equipment to school. St. Mary assumes no responsibility for damage or theft of any unauthorized item brought to school.

Book Bags. All backpacks, book bags, purses, blankets, coats, jackets, etc. must be stored in the designated areas in elementary school classrooms.

Firearms. Possession or carrying of a firearm, deadly weapon, destructive device, or booby trap device at school, or at any school-sponsored function, is prohibited. Unlawful possession of a weapon on school property in Kentucky is a felony punishable by a maximum of five (5) years in prison and a ten thousand dollar (\$10,000) fine (KRS Chapter 527).

It is the obligation of the St. Mary School System to report any person who is determined to have brought a weapon or firearm into a school building or on the school grounds under the jurisdiction of this system, to the criminal justice or juvenile delinquency system. If said person is a St. Mary student, the student will be immediately suspended, pending investigation.

School Property The parent of a child who carelessly destroys or damages any furniture, equipment, buildings, or anyone's personal property will be obligated to pay the full amount of repairs and labor or replacement. The student will pay a fine or replacement for damaged or lost texts.

Lost and Found Please label coats, jackets, sweaters, etc. to keep this to a minimum. Any items found in the school building or on the school grounds should be taken to the school office to be placed in Lost and Found. At the end of each semester, unclaimed Lost and Found items are taken to St. Vincent de Paul.

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

Off Campus Conduct The administration of St. Mary School System reserves the right to discipline its students for off-campus behavior that is not in line with the behavior expectations of its students during the course of the school day. This mis-conduct could be in person or virtual, and the first course of action by administrators (in all cases) will be notification of the child's parents. Social media posts, texting, and other electronic communications deemed to be inappropriate are included in "Off Campus Conduct." St. Mary administration *encourages* the use of "screenshots" to aid in handling these type of inappropriate technology behaviors by students. Administration will also do their best to protect all sources who come forward to make St. Mary aware of such inappropriate behavior off-campus. These situations will be handled on a case by case basis.

Student Confidentiality Every effort to maintain student confidentiality will be maintained by faculty/staff members. Students are encouraged to go to the adults or administration when they witness wrongdoing. In most situations, all sources will be kept anonymous, however once life, health, and/or safety is involved, the confidentiality will be broken and appropriate officials will be notified, as appropriate.

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

CHRIST RULES

Our students are expected to follow our C.H.R.I.S.T. Rules.

Carefully follow directions.

Hands, feet and objects are in my space.

Respect yourself and others.

I will always give my best effort.

Safety comes first, last and always.

Take responsibility for myself.

If a CHRIST Rule is broken, discipline may include but is not limited to walking laps at recess, lunch detention, recess detention, loss of classroom reward, note home, parent phone call, loss of enrichment activity or reward. Discipline is handled on a case by case basis first by the child's homeroom teacher, by the parent, then by the principal and administration.

Repeated offenses will increase the severity of discipline and could include suspension or expulsion.

Our common goal is to see growth and improvement in our students as we teach them to follow CHRIST. Discipline is at the discretion of the principal and is kept confidential and should not be discussed outside of the individual and the family of the individual being disciplined.

Detention

In-School Suspension

- 1) Student will not attend classes during the day but will receive credit for work completed.
- 2) Student will work in in designated area assigned by the principal.
- 3) Lunch will be eaten privately.
- 4) Each day the student will complete all classwork including tests and quizzes, all homework. There may also be a separate writing assignment designated by the principal.
- 5) Student must be compliant and cooperative. Any additional violations will result in additional days assigned or even out-of-school suspension.

Out-Of-School Suspension

Suspension from school will be used only when normal disciplinary procedures are deemed ineffective or may be used in addressing occasions of severe or repeated breaches of conduct. Suspension from school will be at the discretion of the principal. Students may be suspended from school for a period not to exceed ten consecutive school days.

While suspended, a student is excluded from school and is prohibited from attending any of the school's extracurricular activities. A suspended student must be accompanied to school by a parent/guardian in order to be readmitted to classes. Students are expected to keep up with their work and turn it in upon their return.

Disciplinary Probation

Following suspension, a student may be on disciplinary probation, and asked to sign a "Continued Enrollment" contract. A student on disciplinary probation may be dismissed from the St. Mary School System if a further infraction occurs as specified in the contract. The student on disciplinary probation is expected to contribute to the St. Mary school community in a positive sense. He/she must attend school regularly, be punctual, and his/her academic performance must be consistent with his/her capabilities.

Expulsion

Expulsion is reserved for those situations where the behavior of a student is so severe, and the prospect of reform so unlikely that continued presence in the school is detrimental to the educational purpose. Every attempt will be made to work closely with a student and his parents/guardians toward the resolution of problems before expulsion will be considered.

A student may be expelled from school for misconduct of a very serious nature or for a repetition of conduct for which the student has been suspended.

Expulsion from school will be at the discretion of the principal in consultation with the Director and the Episcopal Vicar. Expulsion results in the loss of credit for the semester during which the student is expelled.

Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment will not be permitted in Catholic schools of the Diocese of Owensboro. Other means of discipline are to be used.

TECHNOLOGY

Acceptable Use Policy

Electronic resources are tremendously useful and powerful sources of information. Electronic resources include but are not limited to educational and productivity software, information databases, and the Internet. Some of the benefits of electronic resources are the many research possibilities, connectivity within and outside our buildings, and experience using telecommunications tools.

Because of these benefits to teaching and learning, the St. Mary School System offers access to these various resources to students, teachers, and staff.

Access to electronic resources can range from read-only access of instructional software to full search capabilities of the Internet. Grade level will determine the initial level of access. Access will be in public places under supervision. The moral and responsible use of electronic resources will be taught along with the technical skills of using them. The St. Mary School System maintains the right to limit access to

software and/or documents found on the SMSS network or the Internet via technical or human barriers. Students who violate the electronic resources policy will be disciplined and shall not be granted further use of the equipment, software, or information access systems; the student/user login account will be suspended or closed.

Students have access to the internet through G Suite for Education accounts. Each student has an individual account with his own user login and password. The account is managed by the school system. G Suite for Education is a set of education productivity tools from Google including Classroom, Gmail, Calendar, Docs, Sheets, Sheets, Slides, Forms, and more. Students have access to cloud storage which may be accessed from anywhere with the internet.

Middle and High School students are also provided a G Suite for Education account with the same details as the elementary accounts.

Students are not allowed to use personal hotspots while on school grounds at any time.

Electronic Use Standards

All users of electronic resources (including parents, guardians and students) must recognize that computers have the potential to make either a positive or a negative impact on the world. As a member of the St. Mary School System, each user must do all he/she can to ensure that computers influence the world in a positive manner. To that end each user must pledge the following:

- 1) Use their login account in support of education and research in a manner consistent with the educational objectives of the St. Mary School System.
- 2) Keep their user information (login and file names) confidential. They will not share their login with other students. They will not use or attempt to use anyone else's login.
- 3) Not break into or attempt access to the SMSS network or any other network.
- 4) Honor files and programs as private property and will not add, erase, rename, or make unusable any file or program that is not their own.
- 5) Respect all others with whom they communicate through electronic resources. They will not annoy, offend, harass, or threaten anyone within or outside the school system. They will not get from or put onto the network any offensive, obscene, illegal, or threatening material.
- 6) Keep all systems safe from computer viruses. They will never write, produce, copy, or introduce any computer code designed to damage the performance of any computer. They will not use any diskette until it has been scanned for computer viruses.
- 7) Respect copyright protection for all software, images, and sounds. They will not obtain or put onto the network any copyrighted material. Copying or knowingly using such software, image, or sound is illegal and is a criminal offense.
- 8) Practice good stewardship with all technology systems. They will not remove, add, adjust, fix, or tamper with any equipment without explicit directions from a

teacher or staff member. They will not intentionally damage any piece of equipment or software. They will notify a teacher or staff member of any damaged equipment or of anyone damaging equipment.

9) Not change screensavers or background photos.

1 to 1

St. Mary has been able to provide 1 to 1 chromebooks for all K-5 students. K-2 students will primarily leave their computers in their classrooms. 3-5 will take home when items are assigned. Each child must have a case to take the school issued computer home. Students must respect school property. A family may be charged due to mistreatment or breaking of a computer.

Social Media/Chat Functions

Engagement in online social networks/**chat functions** such as, but not limited to, **Snap Chat, Instagram**, Facebook®, etc. may result in disciplinary actions if the student's or parent's content includes defamatory comments regarding the school, the faculty, other students or the parishes.

Telephone

Permission to use the telephone must be obtained from the school secretary. Students must have a pass from their teachers. The office phone is a business phone, and students are permitted to use it only in case of an emergency. Forgotten homework, athletic equipment, etc. do not constitute emergencies.

TUITION, FEES, AND FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

Payment of Tuition and Fees

St. Mary operates on a tuition basis. For the most current tuition rates and fees, please see www.smss.org. St. Mary uses a tuition management system (FACTS) to facilitate payment transactions. This system can be accessed on-line with 24/7 support.

Families who anticipate financial need must fill out forms through FACTS . Applications are available at the beginning of the calendar year for the following school year's tuition consideration. Applications are on the school's website at www.smss.org. All submitted financial data is confidential and held by FACTS. Award recommendations are issued by FACTS based on a "qualifications for need" basis similar to a FAFSA application utilized by colleges and universities. Application deadlines are well-publicized, and letters of awards are issued in the summer months.

All tuition must be paid in full before diplomas are given and/or transcripts are released.