St. Mary's Catholic School
PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK
2026-2027

Updated 7/31/26

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Overview

St. Mary's Catholic School is a co-ed elementary school for grades Pre-K through eight. St. Mary's Catholic School reserves the right to amend the Parent/Student Handbook and parent(s)/legal guardian(s) will be notified of any changes made. This Parent/Student Handbook is an informative booklet for parents and students setting forth the rules and policies of the school and is not intended as an expressed or implied contract.

Archdiocese of Baltimore's Vision Statement

The Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Baltimore nurture and sustain the God-given gifts of every person, especially students, to be used in service to the Mission of Jesus.

Archdiocese of Baltimore's Mission Statement

Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Baltimore provide a Christ-centered education that is academically excellent and empowers students to reach their full potential - spiritually, intellectually, physically, socially, and morally. Fostered through robust collaboration among all stakeholders, the mission is accomplished through accountable leadership at all levels, ongoing and coordinated strategic planning, centralized efficiencies, and financial sustainability.

St. Mary's Catholic School Vision Statement

Our Vision of Catholic Education:

1. Prioritizes the integral formation of the whole person, body, mind and soul, in light of his or her ultimate end and the good of society.
2. Teaches objective reality, including Transcendent Truth, which is knowable by reason and faith and finds its origin, unity and end in God.
3. Promotes human virtues and the dignity of the human person, as created in the image and likeness of God and modeled on the person of Jesus Christ.
4. Emphasizes a synthesis of faith, life and culture.
5. Develops a Catholic worldview in our students that fosters a deeper incorporation of the student into the heart of the Catholic Church.
6. Emphasizes Sacred Scripture and a strong understanding of the sacraments of the Catholic Church.

Human Formation (Body)

- We provide a safe and trusting atmosphere in which all children can form authentic, life-long friendships.
- We offer an array of extra-curricular activities that provide for a well-rounded social life for all of our students.
- We instill in all of our students the importance of caring for their bodies through lifelong healthy habits, which encompasses not only physical well-being, proper exercise, and nutrition, but also the cultivation of a meaningful prayer life.
- We show our community our values and appreciation by giving back through service learning opportunities.
- Each child is taught healthy boundaries with regards to all things technology.

Academic Excellence (Mind)

- We provide a dynamic student-centered academic environment that fosters student growth, challenges students to reach their full potential, nurtures a lifelong passion for learning, and helps each student recognize and develop their God-given talents.
- We offer a comprehensive curriculum that is approved by the Archdiocese of Baltimore, which surpasses the curriculum requirements set by the Maryland State Department of Education. **We have a heavy focus on mathematics, sciences and STEM**.
- We foster an environment that empowers students to make meaningful discoveries and encourages connections through the integration of disciplines and Socratic thought.
- We equip our students to think critically, communicate effectively, and to advocate for and uphold the principles of God-given truth.
- We nurture the unique potential of each student through differentiation to address the development of the whole child.
- We use the esteemed Virtues in Practice program, created by the Nashville Dominican Sisters, to help students grow in human virtue and excellence.
- We integrate **Spirit and Truth**, the **Catechism of the Catholic Church**, inspiring stories of the **Lives of the Saints**, as well as timeless works of **Classic Catholic literature** into our curriculum. ● We offer high school level courses for our Middle School students in the areas of mathematics, Spanish and technology.

Spiritual Formation (Soul)

- We faithfully impart to each student the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church as guided by the Magisterium.
- We give every student daily access to the Mass and regular access to the sacrament of Confession and Eucharistic Adoration.
- We put our faith to action by serving others in our community, especially those most in need. ● We affirm the dignity of all human life from conception to natural death and the truth of the human person as created male and female.
- We promote the beauty of marriage and human sexuality as proclaimed by the Catechism and unchanging Magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church.
- We teach all children that they are loved by God and share in the vocation to become great saints who are called to set this world on fire!

St. Mary's Catholic School Mission Statement

Our primary goal is to make saints, equipped to go out into the world to transform our culture and bring souls to Christ. Through a rigorous, student-centered curriculum, we promote academic excellence in all subject areas in order to prepare students to grow in wisdom and be prepared for a college-preparatory or technical high school.

History of the School

For one hundred fifty years there has been a Catholic school in Hagerstown. On August 28, 1874, the Sisters of St. Joseph arrived to open the first school. Named St. Joseph Academy, it was the first mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Maryland.

Although there was little ready money in the parish. Father Jones raised funds and purchased property for $6,750.00 on March 31, 1874. This property was used for both the convent and the school. Later in the same year additions were made to the second and third stories. The Sisters of St. Joseph departed the parish in 1885 due to financial difficulties. On August 10, 1885, five School Sisters of Notre Dame arrived at St. Mary's from Baltimore. School opened with the new Sisters in charge on September 4, 1885, and ninety children registered. Enrollment steadily increased each year. By 1914, a total of 262 pupils in grades one through eight were taught by Sisters. The school was not restricted to Catholic children. A commercial school was added and the graduates of this school were always in demand by the business community of the town. In 1930, Archbishop Michael J. Curley recommended that high school grades be added to the school. This was accomplished by the addition of several rooms to the original building. In 1931, the name of the school was changed from St. Joseph Academy to St. Mary's Catholic School.

The high school opened on September 12, 1932, with eleven juniors, twenty-three sophomores, and thirty-one

freshmen. In 1943, a kindergarten was started in the Hamilton House adjacent to the school. Because of increased enrollment in the school, in 1955 a new Catholic high school, known as St. Maria Goretti, was built in the north end of Hagerstown on property purchased by Monsignor Francis Leary. In 1959, an addition was attached to the original building. It housed a cafeteria, kitchen, all-purpose room, kindergarten, and four primary classrooms. This addition was built on the site of the Hamilton House and Gordon Building.

A renovation of the original building was undertaken in 1980. The classrooms were reconfigured; the first floor of the convent was converted into school offices and a library. The convent was moved to the second floor of the building. The final addition to the primary building was completed in 2002. A third floor was added to the existing building housing four new classrooms. In 2012, SMCS added a prekindergarten program for four-year-olds.

In September 2017, St. Mary's Catholic School was recognized as a 2017 National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence by the U. S. Department of Education. The School's commitment to promoting academic excellence and to providing students with a technology-rich environment was influential in SMCS receiving this honor. Following this designation, as part of the school's strategic plan, SMCS widened its focus to include improving the current physical activity space. Therefore, during the summer of 2018, plans were put in motion that converted the current cafeteria (Pangborn Hall) into a gymnasium and turned the current physical education area (the Msgr. Passarelli Room) into the students' dining area. The higher ceiling and increased space in Pangborn Hall lend itself to a more robust physical education program. In order to switch the uses of Pangborn Hall and the Msgr. Passarelli Room, the school kitchen was modernized with new appliances and redesigned to accommodate a new flow pattern for serving students since the students will be eating across the hall from the kitchen instead of in Pangborn Hall.

In March 2026, St. Mary's Catholic School became the 38th school in the United States to be recognized by the Cardinal Newman Society as a "Newman Guide School." The Cardinal Newman Society is the absolute gold standard in Catholic education. This noble institution only recognizes schools that integrate the Catholic faith throughout every aspect of school life--fostering academic excellence rooted in truth, virtue, and the formation of the whole child. In other words, the goal of a Catholic school isn't just academic excellence (although that is a huge part of it), but also helping a child get to heaven. As the first school in the Archdiocese of Baltimore to receive this recognition, St. Mary's continues its longstanding tradition of forming students in faith, knowledge, and virtue while preparing them to serve Christ and His Church. We are a nationally-recognized school in downtown Hagerstown.
Today the school draws students from many areas, contributing a uniqueness to the community. The faculty and staff strive to meet the challenges and changing needs of the students. Each child is seen as an individual with individual wants and needs.

Accreditation

St. Mary's Catholic School is accredited by Cognia through June 2027. In accordance with standards set by the Archdiocese of Baltimore, St. Mary's Catholic School has met the requirements established by the Cognia Accreditation Commission and Board of Trustees and was thereby accredited by the SACS Council on Accreditation and School Improvement.

National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA)

St. Mary's CatholicSchool is a member of the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA).

Awards & Accolades

National Blue Ribbon Award (2017)
Cardinal Newman Recognized School (2026)

Administrative Team

Pastor Father James Boric
Associate Pastor Father Jeremy Smith

Pastor Emeritus Father George Limmer
Principal Dr. Amy Summers
Director of School and Parish Operations Stephanie Roccograndi
Director of Enrollment and Marketing Audi Lebedda
Office Manager Maureen Pham
Administrative Assistant Mandie Rivera
School Campus Minister Stephanie Lyons
Tuition Coordinator Jenny Beck
Student Support Specialist Ryan Cascio
Nurse Kristy Wentz

Faculty and Staff

Pre-K Teacher Penny Abe
Pre-K Teacher Zoe Mutchler
Kindergarten Teacher April Nitzell
1st Grade Teacher Makayla Rajahpillay
2nd Grade Teacher Emma Ortiz
3rd Grade Teacher Kara Watts
4th Grade Teacher Mary Poffenberger
5th Grade Teacher Toni Crehan
Middle School Religion Teacher Jacob Lyons
Middle School Social Studies Teacher Caitlyn Bowles
Middle School Math Teacher Meghan Cordell
Middle School Language Arts Teacher Stacey Renken
Middle School Science Teacher Karina Mose
Spanish Teacher (K-8) Armando Mendez
STEM Teacher (K-8) Brandi Farmer
Art Teacher Jennifer Hoffman
Librarian Leslie Kocevar
Music Teacher Breton Abbondanzio
Physical Education Teacher Sarah Jones
Pre-K Assistant Charlee Mcneil
Pre-K Assistant Alison Ortiz
Kindergarten Assistant Jennifer Flanagan
1st Grade Assistant Grace Haney
Facilities Manager James Renken
Custodian Ryan Lawson
Cafeteria Manager Andrew Capobianco
Food Service Worker Stacey Stine

School Board Members

Rooted in prayer, discernment, and the contemporary vision of the Church for Catholic education, the SMCS School Board serves as an advisory board to the Pastor and Principal. The School Board makes recommendations to assure that the assets and personnel of SMCS are used to promote and strengthen the school and the parish community. The school board works with the Pastor and Principal on policy development and implementation in specified areas such as finance, development/institutional advancement, facilities, community (school/parish), and public relations/marketing.

MEMBERS OF THE SMCS BOARD ARE:
Father James Boric, Pastor
Dr. Amy Summers, Principal
Mrs. Mary Riggs, SMCS School Board President

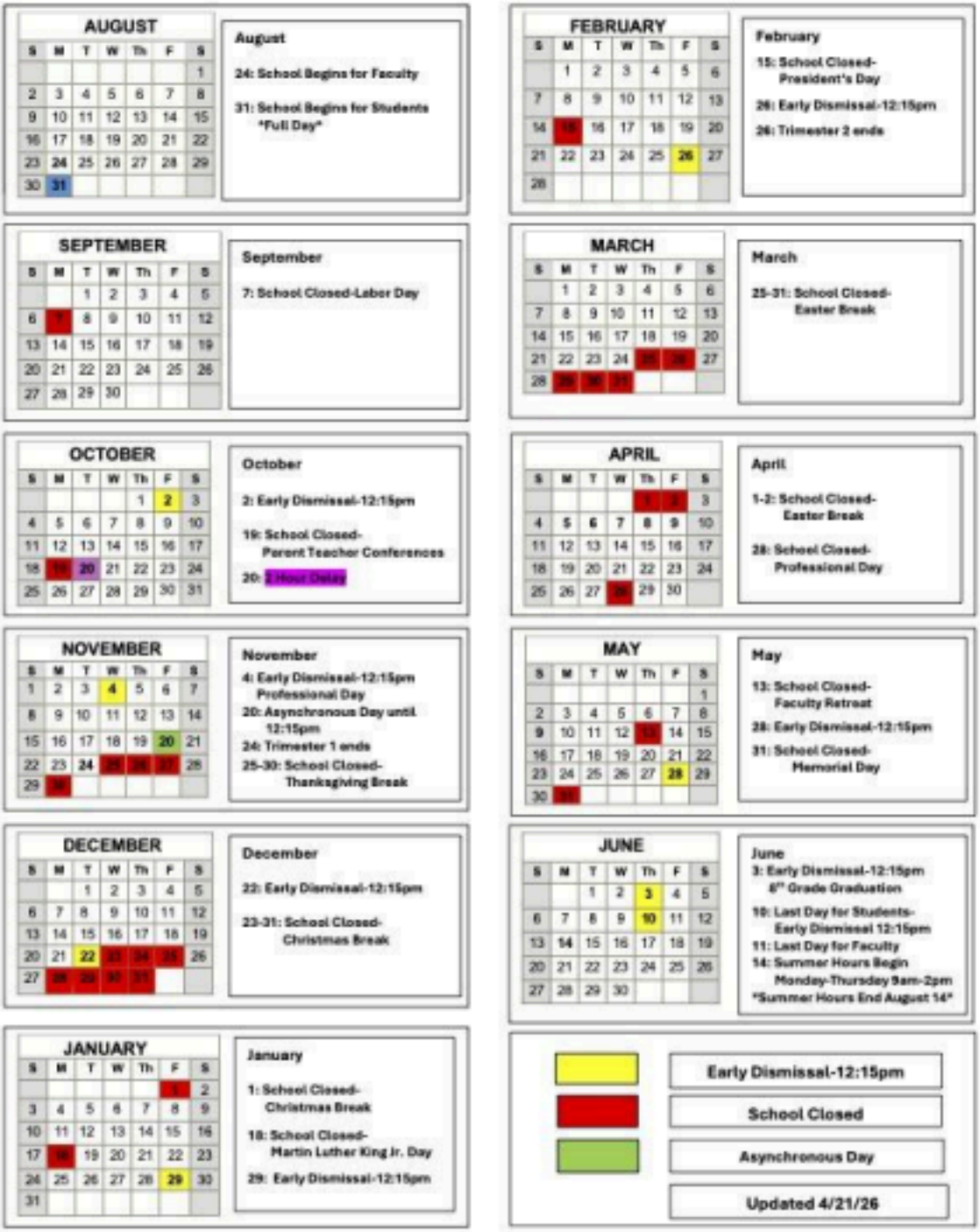
Mrs. Beth Adams
Mrs. Beth Kalk
Mr. Chad Mitchell

School Calendar 2026-2027

The Archdiocese of Baltimore has a plan in case of inclement weather or unforeseen school closings. St. Mary's Catholic School follows Washington County Public Schools for any delayed openings, early dismissals and/or closures. In the event of an unforeseen closing, we will contact parents via email and post on our school website and social media sites.

For the 2026/27 school calendar, there are snow days already built in.

St. Mary's Catholic School
2026-2027 Academic Year Calendar
School Hours 8:15am-3:15pm



Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Morning Arrival Procedures

Students are to arrive between 7:55 and 8:10 AM and will enter through the primary doors. Students arriving before 8:05 will go to the cafeteria. Students entering between 8:05 and 8:10 will go directly to homeroom. Only students may enter the building through the Primary Doors. All visitors must enter through the front office. After the 8:10 AM late bell, students must enter the school through the front office. If a child is late, you must bring him or her through the front entrance door (218 W. Washington Street).

There are two locations for parents to drop off their child(ren) in the morning before school. For reasons of safety and traffic flow, we identify each drop off location to be assigned for the capacity and maturity of a child to quickly and independently unfasten themselves, gather their belongings and exit the vehicle safely.

1. WAREHAM ALLEY FOR GRADES 3- 8

In the morning, students grades 3 - 8 may be dropped off in the Wareham Alley behind the school no earlier than 7:55 A.M. along the sidewalk between the first gate and the second gate. No parents should be getting out of their car while in the Wareham Alley for safety reasons as well as to keep the line of cars moving. Families who have children in both younger and older grades may choose this drop off as long as an older child can quickly and independently assist in the exiting process.

In no way will staff members be responsible in helping a child exit a vehicle. For safety reasons and respect for personal property and boundaries, we insist that parents and siblings help our smallest members to exit the car with their belongings. ALL STUDENTS MUST EXIT FROM THE PASSENGER SIDE OF THE VEHICLE.

2. WALNUT STREET/CHURCH PARKING LOT FOR GRADES PREK - 2

The Walnut Street parking lot is most viable for those travelers who need more time and assistance without impacting traffic. Parents of children PreK - 2 are to park in the Walnut Street Lot and walk their child(ren) across to the school playground area. An older sibling may also walk the younger children across the street. For more independent students, parents may drop off and allow their child to walk across safely. There is a crossing guard to assist with crossing Walnut Street.

Afternoon Dismissal Procedures

Dismissal of our students will begin at 3:13. This year we will be dismissing all students from the school's gated lot. All families will be given a number that they must display on their rearview mirror. Each family will be issued 3 tags that correspond to a designated person who they have identified to pick up students.

1. Students with No Siblings/No Carpool Arrangements (PURPLE TAGS):

Students who do not have a sibling enrolled at St. Mary's will be dismissed at 3:13, directly to the school's gated lot. Families who fall into this category of one student at pick up will be allowed to enter the school's center gate (closest to the Adoration Chapel) at 3:05. We ask that these families access Wareham Alley via Washington St. to Walnut St. to help with our traffic flow. When exiting the gates after pick-up all drivers MUST turn right onto Wareham Alley. (Please note that you can then cross Prospect St. or turn right there and left onto Washington. You can turn left on red on Washington because it is a one way street.)

TO MINIMIZE CONGESTION SOME FAMILIES WITH ONLY ONE CHILD ENROLLED AT SMCS WILL BE ISSUED RED AND PASTEL PINK TAGS. RED TAGS WILL PICK UP ON WASHINGTON STREET AND PASTEL PINK TAGS WILL PICK UP ON N. PROSPECT STREET BY PULLING INTO THE STREET PARKING SPACES. **STUDENTS MUST ENTER VEHICLE ON SIDEWALK SIDE AND NOT NEED ASSISTANCE GETTING IN THE VEHICLE OR BUCKLING.

We will be loading one/two rows at a time and filling in the rows as they empty. The rows closest to the wall will load first and exit the lot first. PLEASE FILL IN AS DIRECTED BY THE STAFF AT THE GATE.

If you arrive after 3:18 you will need to go through the same flow of traffic as noted below for the Sibling/Carpool pick-up.

2. Students with Siblings/Carpool Arrangements (YELLOW TAGS):

Students who have a sibling enrolled at St. Mary's will be dismissed at 3:13 and go to the gym where they will wait with their siblings for their family's number to be called, indicating that their family has pulled into the lot. Families who fall into this category of more than one student at pick up will be allowed to enter the school's center gate (closest to the Adoration Chapel) around 3:18 but not until we have

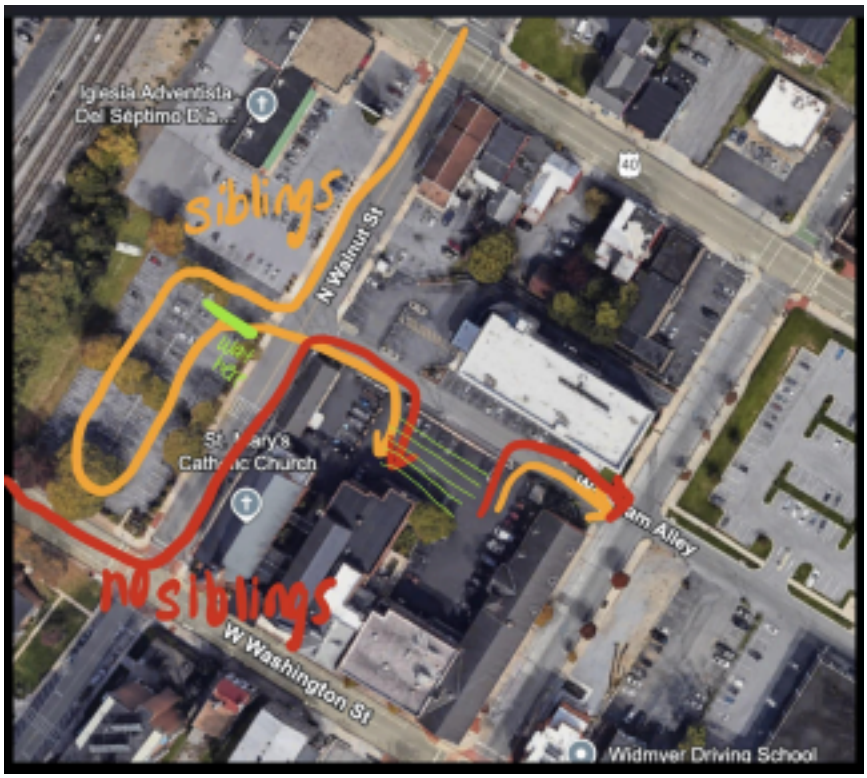
cleared out the first group of vehicles. Drivers may begin staging in the Walnut Street lot at 3:10, pulling into the lot and up to exit from the lot but not into the area that exits to the road. We ask that these families access Wareham Alley/the Walnut holding lot via Church St. to Walnut St. to help with our traffic flow. PLEASE NOTE THAT YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ACCESS THE SCHOOL'S GATED LOT UNTIL 3:18. WHEN PASSING THROUGH THE WALNUT STAGING LOT YOUR VEHICLE'S NUMBER WILL BE RADIOED INTO THE GYM TO SEND YOUR CHILDREN OUT TO THE GATED LOT.

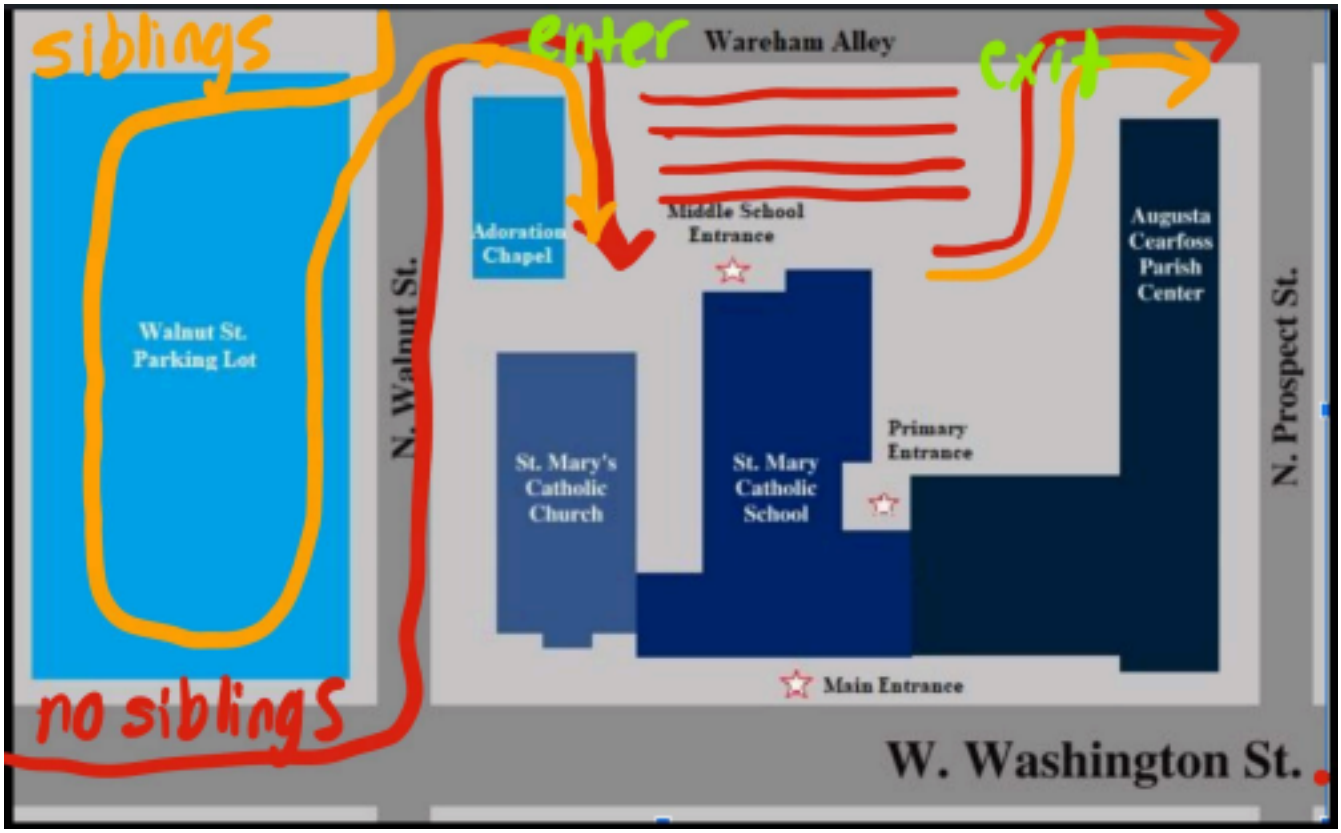
IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER:

1. SAFETY IS OUR NUMBER ONE PRIORITY: We are making these changes to ensure student safety and avoiding crossing Walnut Street.
2. NO IDLE ENGINE ZONE: For cleaner air, please turn off your engine if waiting longer than five minutes.
3. PATIENCE IS A VIRTUE: Driver patience is appreciated as we navigate this new dismissal procedure. 4. TRAFFIC FLOW: Please follow the traffic patterns to ensure a smooth flow of traffic.
5. VEHICLE TAG NUMBER: Please be sure your tag number is hanging from your rearview mirror.
6. SEE MAPS: Please see maps below for detailed photos of traffic flow.
7. WE ASK THAT CELL PHONES NOT BE USED WHEN INSIDE THE GATES TO KEEP TRAFFIC FLOWING AND FOR STUDENT SAFETY.
8. PLEASE FILL IN AS DIRECTED BY THE STAFF AT THE GATE AND EXIT WHEN DIRECTED BY A STAFF MEMBER.
9. When exiting the gates after pick-up all drivers MUST turn right onto Wareham Alley. (Please note that you can then cross Prospect St. or turn right there and left onto Washington. You can turn left on red on Washington because it is a one way street.)

Students not picked up by 3:25 will be taken to the aftercare classroom and can be picked up there. After care charges will apply.

Campus Maps/Traffic Flow





Catholic Identity

The official teachings of the Roman Catholic Church are taught in St. Mary's Catholic School. The faith formation program is under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop. The curriculum integrates the six tasks of catechesis and is developed in accord with the Archdiocesan faith formation curriculum guidelines published by the Institute for Evangelization. Students attend religion classes, participate in liturgical celebrations, and participate in the religious activities of the school. Parents receive information about the faith formation program in the school and the school's expectations of their child(ren) with regard to religion both as an academic discipline and as a lived faith.

Cardinal Newman Recognized School

In March 2026, St. Mary's Catholic School became the 38th school in the United States to be recognized by the Cardinal Newman Society as a "Newman Guide School." The Cardinal Newman Society is the absolute gold standard in Catholic education. This august institution only recognizes schools that integrate the Catholic faith throughout every aspect of school life--fostering academic excellence rooted in truth, virtue, and the formation of the whole child. In other words, the goal of a Catholic school isn't just academic excellence (although that is a huge part of it), but also helping a child get to heaven. As the first school in the Archdiocese of Baltimore to receive this recognition, St. Mary's continues its longstanding tradition of forming students in faith, knowledge, and virtue while preparing them to serve Christ and His Church. We are a nationally-recognized school in downtown Hagerstown.

Daily Prayer

Prayer is at the center of student life at St. Mary's Catholic School. The SMCS community begins and ends every day and every class with prayer. Every school day begins with the highest form of prayer, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

School Liturgy Schedule

A school Mass will be held daily at 8:25 a.m.

Sacraments (First Eucharist, Reconciliation, Confirmation)

St. Mary's Catholic School is first and foremost a CATHOLIC school; therefore, all students who attend St. Mary's Catholic School are required to participate in our daily religion classes, study the tenets and practices of the Catholic Faith as taught in the Archdiocesan curriculum, participate in all church-related activities, including the daily Sacrifice of the Mass (Grades 3-8). As stipulated by the Archdiocese of Baltimore, reception of the Sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Eucharist, and Confirmation takes place in the parish where the child is registered. It is the responsibility of the parents to contact their parish for the requirements of the reception of these sacraments. Please contact your Parish in early Fall.

Service Projects

Service learning is an important part of a Catholic education. Service learning puts faith into action, develops a global perspective, and allows students to see the face of Christ present in others. Through service students learn empathy, kindness, and respect for others and oneself.

At SMCS students will engage in different service projects including: donation drives, working with organizations who provide to those in need, adopting families in need at Christmas, etc.

"Buddy" Program

Building a collaboration between different grade levels of students helps foster community within the school. Our older students "buddy" with younger students to model and teach. Students attend Mass with their "buddy."

Grade 8 and Grade 2
Grade 7 and Grade 1
Grade 6 and Kindergarten
Grade 5 and Pre-K
Grade 4 and Pre-K

Confession

Students in grades 3-5 have the opportunity to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation once every 6 weeks. Students in grades 6-8 have a weekly opportunity to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Eucharistic Adoration

Students in grades 4-8 will attend Eucharistic Adoration three times during the school year.

House System

SMCS uses Houses to integrate faith into the community and provide opportunities for spiritual growth and service. Through the House system we aim to foster a Christ-centered environment where students can develop virtues, build relationships, and live out their faith. Our Houses incorporate mentorship, faith-sharing, and service projects to further the school's mission and encourage students to live out their faith in various aspects of their lives. Each student will belong to one of four houses (House of St. Matthew, House of St. Mark, House of St. Luke, House of St. John). Houses will have monthly meetings, competitions, and activities to help build school culture and community. Students from the same family will be assigned to the same "House."

Virtue of the Month Program

SMCS uses *Virtues in Practice*, a program designed by the Dominican Sisters for children in grades pre-kindergarten through eight, to grow closer to Jesus by imitating His life and virtues. It is set up in such a way that the entire school studies the same virtue each month. The program covers 27 virtues over a three-year cycle, with 81 saints held up as models of the virtues.

Pastor's Contact Information & Biography

Fr. James Boric was ordained a priest in 2014. He has served as a parochial vicar at St. Margaret parish in Bel Air, MD and St. John the Evangelist parish in Severna Park, MD. He was named Rector of the Basilica of the Assumption in Baltimore, MD and served there from 2017 to 2022. He has served as pastor of St. Mary's in Hagerstown since July 2023. Father has a deep love of the Mass, the Eucharist, the Blessed Mother and St. Joseph and wants everyone to know the goodness of God. His email address is jboric@archbalt.org, and his office phone number is 301-739-0390 (x3226).

Stations of the Cross and/or Living Stations

During Lent SMCS students attend Stations of the Cross in the church. During Holy Week, SMCS 8th grade students present the Living Stations of the Cross to the SMCS student body.

May Crowning

May is the month of our Blessed Mother, Mary. During the first week of May SMCS students participate in the crowning of the Blessed Mother in the school courtyard.

Catholic Schools Week

Catholic Schools Week serves as a means to celebrate our tradition, to embrace our Catholic identity, and to appreciate our community. The hallways are adorned with artwork and projects of the students, and classrooms are alive with displays and school spirit. This year Catholic Schools Week is January 30-February 5, 2027.

Religion Curriculum

Spirit of Truth (2022). Manchester, NH: Sofia Press.

Growing with God. (2021). Chicago: Loyola Press.

Policy on Human Sexuality Programs

St. Mary's Catholic School recognizes that parents and guardians are the primary educators of their children in matters of human sexuality and family life. Prior to the start of each family life unit, parents receive an informational letter outlining the content to be taught, access to review instructional materials, and the option to opt out of lessons. Students whose families choose to reserve sexuality instruction for the home are provided with alternative, age-appropriate instruction during this time. These accommodations reflect the school's commitment to a strong parent-school partnership and respect for the family's role in the moral and spiritual formation of their children.

The middle school human sexuality program presents a holistic understanding of human sexuality, addressing its physical, psychological, emotional, social, intellectual, spiritual, and procreative dimensions, always within the context of marriage (Archdiocese of Baltimore Curriculum for Educators, 2023). Instruction strictly adheres to diocesan guidelines and does not include sexually explicit language, images, or materials that could encourage inappropriate curiosity, immodesty, or behaviors contrary to Catholic teaching.

Growing with God Program

As an integral part of our faith formation curriculum, we will be teaching Growing with God. This age-appropriate family life program about Christian living, chastity, character formation and safe environment training promotes communication between you and your child. You are encouraged to review the program materials that the teacher will be using in the classroom, as well as the materials you will receive for home discussion. After examining the program, if you have any questions or concerns about your child participating in this program, please contact the Principal in the school office.

Retreats

Students in middle school participate each year in an age-appropriate retreat to deepen their faith and love for God. Eighth grade students will visit the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in Baltimore. Seventh grade students will visit Lourdes Grotto and Mount St. Mary's University. Sixth grade will visit the Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton.

PBIS

St. Mary's Catholic School emphasizes the Catholic faith and values by implementing the PBIS framework through the House system. Students can earn points for positive behaviors, academic achievements, and participation in school events. Points will be recorded through the Live School app.

Academics

Curriculum

St. Mary's Catholic School school follows the Archdiocesan Curriculum standards, instructional minutes and the regulations of the Maryland State Department of Education for non-public schools. Courses are updated on a rotating basis.

Archdiocese of Baltimore Pre-K - 8 Curriculum

Academic Integrity Policy

A violation of the Honor Code is defined as any act of lying, cheating, attempting to evade the truth, conspiring to deceive, or stealing. Any action that is dishonest or evasive is a violation of both the spirit and the principles of honor and will subject a student to discipline, up to and including expulsion.

Cheating involves the unauthorized use of information, materials, devices, sources, or practices in completing academic activities.

Plagiarism is a type of cheating in which someone uses the ideas or work of another person or persons as if they were one's own without giving proper credit to the source. This includes the use of Generative artificial intelligence (AI) described as algorithms (such as ChatGPT, Stable Diffusion, Midj Journey, etc.) that can be used to create new content, including audio, code, images, text, simulations, and videos.

Northern Illinois University. (n.d.). Academic Integrity Tutorials. Retrieved from https://www.niu.edu/academic-integrity/faculty/types/index.shtml

In the event of academic dishonesty, the following consequences are in place for **cheating**:	
1st Offense:	Verbal Warning, reduced grade, parent conference
2nd Offense:	Written warning, in school suspension, zero for the assignment, and parent conference
3rd Offense:	Expulsion

In the event of academic dishonesty, the following consequences are in place for **plagiarism (this includes work submitted using any generative artificial intelligence* to plagiarize)**:	
1st Offense:	Verbal Warning, reduced grade, parent conference
2nd Offense:	Written warning, in school suspension, zero for the assignment, and parent conference
3rd Offense:	Expulsion

****Generative artificial intelligence (AI)** describes algorithms (such as ChatGPT, Stable Diffusion, Midj Journey, etc) that can be used to create new content, including audio, code, images, text, simulations, and videos.*

Textbooks

Religion:
Spirit of Truth (2022). Manchester, NH: Sofia Press. (Grades K-8)
Growing with God. (2021). Chicago: Loyola Press. (Grades K-8)

Math:
Pearson Math. (2018/2024). Paramus: Savvas Learning. (Grades 6-8)
Go Math. (2024). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Handwriting:
Writing Our Catholic Faith. (2016).

Reading:
Novel Units
Junior Great Books. (2025). Chicago: The Great Books Foundation. (Grades 3-8)
Into Reading. (2020). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Social Studies:
Discovery Education Social Studies Textbook

Science:
Science: A Closer Look. (2008). Columbus: Macmillan McGraw- Hill
Mystery Science (mysteryscience.com)

Grading Policy

All archdiocesan K-8 schools shall follow this grading policy to ensure consistent, transparent, and fair grading of students' academic performance. The purpose is to ensure consistent, transparent grading practices that accurately reflect students' academic performance and mastery of the curriculum.

Overview of Grading and Reporting

Grades are a tool to measure and communicate a student's academic performance and mastery of the curriculum. They provide valuable feedback to students, parents, and educators about students' understanding of the material, areas of strength, and areas of improvement. Grades help guide instructional decisions, support student learning, and ensure accountability in the educational process. By reflecting academic achievement, grades serve to motivate students to strive for excellence and foster a culture of continuous learning and growth.

Grades in K–2

In Kindergarten through Grade 2, grading is standards-based and reflects student developmental readiness and progression toward mastery. The focus is on growth, skill acquisition, and demonstration of understanding through developmentally appropriate learning experiences. Progress is reported using performance levels. The levels are defined as: Consistently Demonstrating (CD), Making Progress (MP), Developing (DV), Support Needed (SN), and Not Assessed at this Time (NA).

Assessment Practices

Assessment methods include, but are not limited to: teacher observations, classwork, student discussions, portfolios, checklists, quizzes, and tests. Formal quizzes and tests are administered in developmentally appropriate ways to assess student understanding. While traditional numerical weighting is not applied in Grades K–2, assessment results are used to inform instructional decisions and report progress toward mastery of grade-level standards.

Homework

Homework is assigned to reinforce skills already taught in the classroom and may be graded when appropriate. Assignments should be completed independently and take, on average, approximately 10 minutes per night for students in kindergarten and 1st grade, and 20 minutes per night for students in 2nd grade.

Behavior
Behavior is reported separately and is not factored into academic performance indicators.

Grades 3-8
Grades are a reflection of the student's classroom performance and academic mastery of the content and are weighted in the gradebook for each class in the following 3 categories: Classwork and Assignments (60%), Assessments (30%), and Homework and Practice (10%).

Category 1: Classwork and Assignments (60%)
Formative assessments including application, projects, writing, and practice activities.

- Classwork and assignments are completed during class time and demonstrate a clear understanding of the material. These formative assignments may be graded for accuracy, comprehension, completion, and/or depth of thought.
- Practice activities include tasks that help reinforce learning such as drills, exercises, and review activities. These activities are integrated with class content and help students solidify their understanding.

Category 2: Assessments (30%)
Summative measures of mastery including quizzes, tests, and projects.

- Projects require students to apply learned concepts in more complex, real-world situations. These summative projects can be assessed on both the process (e.g., research, organization) and the final product (e.g., depth of analysis, creativity).
- Quizzes and tests are formal assessments that measure student retention and comprehension. Quizzes assess smaller portions of the content, while tests include larger units or major concepts.

Category 3: Homework and Practice (10%)
Formative practice and preparation primarily completed outside of class.

- Homework assignments will be graded for completion, and may be graded for accuracy if the concepts were previously taught. These assignments provide students with opportunities to practice and review the content discussed in class.
- Practice assignments are tasks completed during class or at home that reinforce previously taught concepts. They include, but are not limited to, exit tickets, spelling tests, math fact drills, or other review activities that support skill development and content retention.

Special Subjects
Participation, engagement, and skill demonstration are used to assess subjects like Art, Music, Technology and Physical Education, using the same performance indicators. Please note that specials that meet 3 or more times per week are eligible to receive letter grades. Specials meeting less than 3 times per week will use performance levels.

Behavior
Behavior is not included in academic grades. Grades are an accurate reflection of a student's academic performance, regardless of their behavior.

Subjects and Activities Requiring Participation
There are courses and activities in which demonstration of mastery through participation is the only way to assess skills and application. These include, but are not limited to:

- Music: Participation in performances, rehearsals, and practice sessions is essential to demonstrate mastery of musical skills.
- Art: Active participation in art projects, critiques, and exhibitions is necessary to showcase artistic

abilities.

- Physical Education: Participating in physical activities, sports, and fitness assessments is crucial for demonstrating physical skills and fitness levels.

Additional Grading Considerations

- The range of student scores is from 0% - 100%. No other grading minimums or maximums are allowed.
- Extra credit assignments or questions are not allowed.
- As a general practice, assessment retakes are not allowed.
- Participation in class discussions may be assessed as part of the learning process, as it provides students with opportunities to demonstrate understanding, communicate ideas clearly, and engage thoughtfully with course content and peers.

Grading Category Summary	**Weighting (%)**
Classwork and Assignments (formative) - application, projects, writing, and practice activities	60%
Assessments (summative) - quizzes, tests, and projects	30%
Homework and Practice (formative) - practice and preparation primarily completed outside of class	10%

Trimester Grade Key Grades K-2/Specials

Consistently Demonstrating	93-100
Making Progress	85-92
Developing	75-84
Support Needed	74 and below
NA	Not Assessed at this time

Trimester Grade Key Grades 3-8	
A+	97-100
A	93-96
B+	89-92
B	85-88
C+	80-84
C	75-79

D 70-74

E 69 and below

Making Progress	85-92
Developing	75-84
Support Needed	74 and below

Report Cards and Interim Progress Reports

Trimester Grade Key Specials Grades 3-8	
Consistently Demonstrating	93-100

In the Archdiocese of Baltimore, students in pre-kindergarten through grade 8 will receive report cards three times a year, at the conclusion of each trimester. In addition, the school will send interim progress reports home for grades 3-8 during the middle of each trimester.

T1 Progress Reports - October 9, 2026
End of Trimester 1 - November 20, 2026
T1 Report Cards Emailed - December 2, 2026
T2 Progress Reports - January 15, 2027
End of Trimester 2 - February 26, 2027
T2 Report Cards Emailed - March 5, 2027
T3 Progress Reports - April 21, 2027
End of Trimester 3 - June 10, 2027
T3 Report Cards Emailed - June 18, 2027

Honor Roll Policy

All Archdiocesan schools shall honor academic achievement with an Honor Roll based on specific criteria. The purpose is to recognize and encourage high academic achievement and positive contributions to the learning environment in accordance with the values of the Catholic archdiocese.

Principal's Honor Roll

Academic Achievement: All A's in core subjects.
Special Classes: Making Progress or better in all special classes.
Standards and Conduct: Making Progress or better, including unstructured time.

Second Honors (Grades 4-8)

Academic Achievement: All A's and B's (more A's than B's) in core subjects.
Special Classes: Making Progress or better in all special classes.
Standards and Conduct: Making Progress or better, including unstructured time.

Promotion Requirements

Students are promoted to the next grade upon successful completion of all subjects each year.

Retention

Students who do not successfully complete the required educational program may be retained at the current grade level. This decision is made by the principal in consultation with the parents after following the timeline described below.

Teachers should communicate with parents on a regular basis regarding the child's progress. By mid-February, the teacher, principal, parents, (and student) review the student's work performance to date and discuss his/her educational needs for the remainder of the year and the possibility of failure and/or retention. This meeting is followed by a written communication to the parents reviewing the content of the meeting, including the educational plan. Students may also be retained for severe attendance and tardy issues during the school year, as determined by the school in consultation with the Department of Catholic Schools.

Graduation Requirements

Students in eighth grade who successfully complete the course of study as outlined by the Archdiocese of Baltimore, will be awarded a diploma at the end of the school year. An eighth-grade student must be in good academic, financial and behavior standing to participate in the end of the year graduation activities.

Power School Access

It is the parents' responsibility to obtain their passwords for PowerSchool and to monitor grades for their children in grades 3-8. Parents will be contacted by the teacher by mid-trimester with an interim report. In some cases, where there is a significant drop in grades or performance, a conference may be required.

Other Student Services

Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Baltimore strive to meet the academic needs of students, so they may access and benefit from a Christ-centered education. The Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1997 (IDEA) is a federal law that mandates all students in the United States who have a disability or multiple disabilities be provided with Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) that is individualized to meet their needs.

Students enrolled in private schools by their parents are not entitled to the same level of service that they would receive if enrolled in a public school. The applicable regulations give public schools the authority to decide, after consulting with private school representatives, which students in private schools will be served, what services they will receive, and where the services will be delivered. The regulations require the development of an Individual Service Plan (ISP), rather than an IEP or 504 plan, by the public school with input from the private school representatives in order for a private school student to receive services, such as speech/language therapy or occupational therapy (OT), from the public school. A family may also seek these services privately.
When a student has been previously identified by the public school as qualifying for an IEP or Section 504 plan, a Student Accommodation Plan (SAP) may be written by the Catholic school staff to document accommodations the student needs to benefit from education services, providing there is psychoeducational testing data or other testing data to support the need for accommodations.

If a parent or teacher identifies an area of concern that is impacting a student's ability to learn, the teacher takes the necessary pre-referral steps to address the concern. The teacher contacts the family about the concerns and response to pre-referral steps. Each school has a Student Advocacy Team (SAT). The teacher completes the SAT referral form and gives it to the SAT leader. The teacher attends an SAT meeting to present the student information. A plan of action is constructed. The school engages the family in the student's plan of action and documents response. The teacher and SAT leader work together to carry out the plan of action. The teacher updates the SAT of the student's and family's progress.

If the SAT recommendation is that the student needs to be formally evaluated, the SAT will discuss with parent or guardian the ongoing concerns and recommendation that the student be evaluated/tested. Testing may be necessary documentation for the school to be able to write a Student Accommodation Plan for their child. All Student Accommodation Plans are reviewed annually with the student's family and revisions are made as needed. SAPs are only valid for the duration of the school year in which they were implemented. In order for a SAP to be implemented in subsequent school years, an annual review must take place with the parent or guardian.

Students who are in need of Tier II academic support in reading, based on multiple points of student data, may be eligible for tutoring through Title I or additional tutoring resources provided during the school day.

Student Support Specialist

The Student Support Specialist supports students with faith-filled, stimulating, safe, and developmentally appropriate programs, through which students will have the opportunity to grow in the cognitive, social, and emotional skills needed to access learning and interact with others. They support students in mentally processing their challenges and/or adjustments to school through goal setting and action planning.

Field Trips

Field trips are considered an integral part of the school's educational program and a valuable learning experience for students. Field trips are scheduled at various times during the school year. In advance of the trip, a permission form, required by the Archdiocesan Department of Catholic Schools, is sent home. A student will be permitted to attend the trip only if the permission form is signed by the parent/guardian and returned to the teacher by the specified date along with any fee.

If, for some extraordinary reason, a student is unable to participate, the student is expected to attend school on that day and fees must still be paid since the rates we are quoted reflect total participation. Work will be supplied by the teacher(s), and the student will be assigned a classroom in which to work under the supervision of a staff member. If a student is unable to attend because of illness, we cannot promise a refund. Parents must notify the teacher if a child will not participate in the field trip experience. Students who are kept home from the trip will be marked absent.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are encouraged to participate as chaperones on field trips as the need arises. However, because of safety and liability factors, pre-school siblings and other school-age siblings are not allowed. The school does not permit parents who are not selected as chaperones to join the group at the trip destination as this creates confusion. All chaperones are required to comply with the school's policies, to adhere to the Archdiocesan Child and Youth Protection policies, and to complete VIRTUS training in advance of the field trip. Any parents who are driving on field trips will have additional requirements.

Admissions

Application Process

Students must be in good standing (financial, academic, and behavioral) to be accepted into a Catholic school. Parents or guardians must provide pertinent information, including required forms for admission as well as additional information that may assist the school staff with your child(ren).

Applications for re-enrollment and new admissions will be available beginning December 14 for the 2027-2028 school year through our online registration platform, FACTS. Notices will be given through the parish bulletins, social media, weekly newsletters, and memos sent home.

Priority for Admissions

St. Mary's Catholic School has a primary obligation to parishioners who are practicing Catholics. Priority admission is given to children with siblings already attending St. Mary's Catholic School. New students will be admitted as follows:

1. First priority will be given to children of REGISTERED AND PARTICIPATING members of St. Mary's Catholic Church who follow our application schedule and procedures (see above) and siblings of current students.

2. Second priority will be given to children of REGISTERED AND PARTICIPATING members of other Catholic parishes who follow our registration schedule and procedure (see above).

3. Third priority will be given to children of families who are NON-REGISTERED/NON- PRACTICING CATHOLICS AND OTHER DENOMINATIONS who follow our application schedule and procedure (see above).

Pre-Kindergarten 3 students (must be 3 years old by September 1st of the pre-kindergarten year) and be fully potty-trained. Archdiocese of Baltimore: Educational readiness is the primary criteria in determining the acceptance of a student into the pre-kindergarten program.

Pre-Kindergarten 4 students (must be 4 years old by September 1st of the pre-kindergarten year). Archdiocese of Baltimore: Educational readiness is the primary criteria in determining the acceptance of a student into the pre-kindergarten program.

Kindergarten students (must be 5 years old by September 1st of the kindergarten year): Archdiocese of Baltimore: Educational readiness is the primary criteria in determining the acceptance of a student into the Kindergarten program.

Our PreK classrooms have 20 students max with a staff to student ratio of 1:10. Our primary and elementary classrooms have a max of 25 students in each classroom.

REQUIRED AT TIME OF APPLICATION

- Birth Certificate
- Baptismal Certificate (if Catholic)
- Copy of previous year's progress/report card, as well as current report card
- Copy of standardized test scores (if applicable)
- Letter of confirmation of registration/participation from home parish (if applicable)
- Teacher recommendation letter (Grades 2 - 8)
- $100.00 non-refundable application fee for Pre-Kindergarten through eighth grade students. (If the student is accepted, an enrollment fee of $250 per student is due upon signing the contract.)

REQUIRED BY OPENING OF SCHOOL

- Copy of up-to-date immunizations records (submit with application if possible)
- Proof of physical examination within last 12 months
- Completed Health Assessment forms

Waiting List

When classes are filled to capacity a waiting list will be held. With parent authorization St. Mary's Catholic School will share your information with other Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Baltimore if your child is denied admission or waitlisted due to space/capacity limits.

Placement

Students are initially placed using the results of the following:

- School administered placement test
- Teacher recommendation (from sending school)
- Report cards
- Standardized test results

High School Admissions and Visitation Policy

Eighth grade students are allowed up to 3 days for shadow visits to local area Catholic High Schools. While these days are the only excused days off, students will be marked absent since they will not be in the building.

High School Placement Test will be given at the school each fall and is required for all current 8th grade students applying to any Catholic High School.

Non-Discrimination Statement

The State of Maryland requires the following statement in the Student Handbook:

"*It is the policy of the State of Maryland that all public and publicly funded schools and school programs operate in compliance with:*

(1) Title VI of the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964; and

(2) Title 26, Subtitle 7 of the Education Article of the Maryland Code, which states that public and publicly funded schools and programs may not:

(i) Discriminate against a current student, a prospective student, or the parent or guardian of a current or prospective student on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability;

(ii) Refuse enrollment of a prospective student, expel a current student, or withhold privileges from a current student, a prospective student, or the parent or guardian of a current or prospective student because of an individual's race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability; or

(iii)Discipline, invoke a penalty against, or take any other retaliatory action against a student or parent or guardian of a student who files a complaint alleging that the program or school discriminated against the student, regardless of the outcome of the complaint."

The State of Maryland does not require a nonpublic school that is religiously affiliated to enroll, retain, or extend privileges to a student or prospective student who does not meet the usual and regular qualifications, requirements, and standards of the program or school or to adopt any rule, regulation, or policy that conflicts with the program or school's religious or moral teachings provided that the denial, rule, regulation, or policy is not based on discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.

Requests for reasonable accommodations for a student with a disability may be directed to Amy Summers and Ryan Cascio.

Religion is required for each year a student attends St. Mary's Catholic School. All students enrolled in St. Mary's Catholic School must attend religion classes and services. We will always teach and act consistent with the tenets of the Catholic Church.

Assessment Program

Standardized Testing

All Archdiocesan schools administer the achievement test designated by the Department of Catholic Schools in prescribed grades.

Pre-Kindergarten 3, Pre-Kindergarten 4, and Kindergarten Students

Pre-kindergarten 3, Pre-kindergarten 4, and Kindergarten students are administered the BRIGANCE developmental screening in the fall and/or spring.

Elementary Students

Elementary school students in grades 2-8 are administered the NWEA MAP Assessment three times a year to measure growth. Grades 3, 5 and 7 also take the Science Assessment each Spring. Parents are given feedback about their child's performance at the end of each trimester.

Assessment of Child/Youth Religious Education (ACRE)

All students in grades 5, 8, 9 and 12 are given the ACRE (Assessment of Child/Youth Religious Education) the spring of each school year. This assessment gives information for growth to each school as it assesses how well the religious education program is forming Christian disciples. ACRE is a school assessment; therefore no individual student scores are obtained from the assessment.

Attendance and Student Records

Absences

Fundamental to academic success is regular attendance at St. Mary's Catholic School. Absences from school for personal trips or vacations should not be taken when school is in session. Absence from school can have a negative impact on a student's academic success.

Every instance of absence, lateness, and/or early dismissal is recorded in the Student Information System. The school does not designate absences as excused or unexcused. School-sponsored activities and trips are recorded as **Present-**School Sponsored/Field Trips. Missing school for non-school sponsored events/activities is considered

an absence. In addition, if early dismissal is required for travel to non-school sponsored events/activities, an early dismissal will be recorded.

Students must take responsibility for keeping pace with their studies. The faculty is under no obligation to help a student make up missed work from this type of absence (personal trips or vacations). Additionally, teachers are under no obligation to provide work in advance for the student.

In order to be considered present for a full day of school, students must observe the following:

- Anyone not present by the school's official starting time is considered absent or late. The school day begins at 8:15. Any student arriving after 8:10 is considered late and must report to the office for a late slip. Tardiness is entered on a student's permanent record. It is the responsibility of the student to check with the homeroom teacher to receive the necessary communication or work that may have been missed due to lateness.
- Arrival after or dismissal before 3.5 hours after or before the end of the official school day is considered a half-day absence.
- Early dismissal is leaving any time before the end of the school day and is documented. The school discourages early departures and requests that families arrange medical and dental appointments, etc. after school hours, on early dismissal days**,** or during vacation periods. Check the calendar for days when school is not in session.
- A note from a provider is required to allow for participation in extracurricular activities if a student arrives late or leaves early during the day. A note from a parent/guardian will not suffice. ● Every absence, late arrival, or early dismissal requires an email from a parent/guardian prior to the official starting time of the school day on the morning the student is absent. A student may not return to school until he/she is well enough to participate in all school activities including recess. ● All absences become part of the student's permanent record.
- If a student has been absent for 5 or more consecutive days, the student is required to bring a note from his/her doctor to be filed by the nurse in his/her medical file.
- Parents/Guardians will be notified in writing when a student's absences equal 10 cumulative total days.
- Permission to participate in extracurricular activities, and/or field trips may be withdrawn when absences, lateness, or early dismissals combine to equal 10 cumulative total days and a parent conference may be required.
- Prolonged unauthorized absences can and will affect students' grades and academic standing. The school cannot be responsible for the consequences of these absences. A student who is absent for more than 20 days in the course of a school year or has an excessive lateness and/or early dismissal record or a combination of the above may be required to repeat the school year at the discretion of the administration.
- The administration reserves the right to request a conference with parents of a student with excessive absences and tardies at any point during the school year, to make parents and students aware of the possible consequences of not attending school on a consistent basis.
- Unlawful absences are considered truant. The school informs parents that if truancy persists, the public authorities will be notified.
- Child Protective Services (CPS) may be called due to excessive absences.

Regular attendance is considered essential for learning at St. Mary's Catholic School. Students need to develop the work habits and responsibilities required of all of us as we go through life. When a student is absent from school, a parent/legal guardian must telephone the school between 7:45 and 8:30 a.m. to report the reason for absence. All absences and tardiness become part of a student's permanent record.

Missed work and assignments may only be obtained upon return. Missed work assignments may not be available for all absences, as they are dependent upon the nature of the work. Teachers are not responsible for creating alternative assignments or experiences for absent students. Students will have the same number of days to make up any work as the length of the absence was (i.e. 3 day absence = 3 school days to make up the work).

Tardiness (coming to school late or leaving school early) is another action that affects a student's readiness to learn. Coming in and/or leaving early, not only disrupts the educational learning for your child, but also those of other students in the class. Parents will be notified in writing for 5 or more tardies and a conference may be requested by the administrative team to address the issue and consequences.

Per the AOB policy, a student marked absent for more than 20 instructional days in one school year is considered excessively absent and may result in the student being retained. The administration reserves the right to request a conference with parents of students with excessive absences and tardies at any point during the school year in order to make parents and students aware of the possible consequences of not attending school on a consistent basis. Child Protective Services (CPS) may be called due to excessive absences.

Extended Leave of Absence

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to keep the Health Suite and the student's counselor updated regarding any chronic medical diagnoses that might impact a student's attendance.

Parents/Students are urged to contact the appropriate counselor to arrange for assignments when the student will be absent from school for a prolonged period of time due to illness.

An Extended Leave of Absence (more than 5 consecutive school days) is used for students who are experiencing physical concerns, psychological concerns, or family emergencies. This is a collaborative process between the family, the student's counselor, the school nurse, the administrator, and an outside licensed healthcare professional. Each case will be handled individually, keeping the student's best interests in mind, with the ultimate goal to help the student focus on managing his/her health so that he/she can return to campus. Depending upon the length of the leave, students may be asked to make up incomplete work, attend an approved summer program, repeat a year of schooling, or complete another option decided upon by the team.
Administrative approval is required for each instance of an Extended Leave of Absence.

Truancy

Students in Catholic Schools must comply with Maryland State law concerning compulsory attendance. The law requires regular attendance during the entire school year. Students are held accountable for time(s) they are absent from school. A principal may excuse a student for a necessary absence.

Regular school attendance is expected in order for students to achieve their academic potential. Each student's attendance is carefully recorded and permanently retained. Therefore, absence for reasons such as a vacation is strongly discouraged. Excessive absence has a serious impact on the student's academic performance.

The purpose of compulsory attendance is to ensure the continuous development and progress of the child's education. Unlawful absences are considered truant. The school informs parents that if truancy persists, the public authorities will be notified.

Truancy is defined as a student absenting him/herself from school without parent/legal guardian permission or leaving school grounds without permission during the school day. Truancy may result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion and may be reported to the Maryland State Department of Education.

Tardies

Students may enter their homerooms at 8:05 a.m. The school day begins at 8:15 a.m. Any student arriving after 8:10 a.m. is considered late and must report to the office for a tardy slip. Tardiness is entered on a student's permanent record.

Early Departure & Late Arrivals (Tardies)

The school discourages early departures and requests that families arrange medical and dental appointments, etc. after school hours, on early dismissal days, or during vacation periods. Check the calendar for days when school is not in session.

*After **four** tardies, students who arrive late will be assigned lunch detention (excluding medical appointments with a doctor's note). Each subsequent four tardies in a trimester will result in a lunch detention. We will be accommodating of traffic issues that arise on a case-by-case basis. After eight tardies, a parent conference with administration is required.*

A student is marked half day absent if they arrive after 11:45 a.m. or leave before 11:45 a.m. On an early dismissal or delayed start, if students are present for 3.5 hours, it will be considered a full day presence.

Regular Dismissal
School dismissal begins at 3:15 p.m.

Early Dismissal Days
On early dismissal days, students will be dismissed at 12:15 p.m.

Location & Access to Student's Records
Student's records are maintained in the school office or a designated administrative area. Access to records is governed by the Records Policy.

Records Policy (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act)
St. Mary's Catholic School complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. In general, FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to education records. (The rights granted to parents under FERPA automatically pass to the student when the student turns 18 or enrolls in college.) These rights and related procedures of St. Mary's Catholic are as follows:

Parents have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the School. Parents should submit to Amy Summers a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School will make arrangements for access and notify the parent of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

Parents have the right to request that the School correct records they believe are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights. Parents who wish to request an amendment of the student's records should write to the Principal and clearly identify the part of the record they believe is inaccurate or misleading and the information they believe should be included in a corrected record. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested, the School will notify the parent of the decision and the parent's right to request a hearing.

Parents generally have the right to consent in writing to disclosures of information from a student's education record. However, there are certain exceptions to the consent requirement, including disclosures under the following conditions:

To School officials who have a legitimate educational interest in the information. A school official is a person employed by the School or the Archdiocese as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff); a person or company with whom the School has contracted to provide a service (e.g., attorney); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his/her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his/her professional responsibilities or duties to the School.

- *To other schools to which a student is transferring.*
  - *In connection with financial aid under certain circumstances.*
- *To specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes.*
  - *To organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school.*
- *To accrediting organizations.*

- *In order to comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena.*
- *To appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies.*

The School also may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent unless a parent objects in writing. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the School to include this type of information in certain publications. Examples of such publications include a playbill, showing the student's role in a drama production; the annual yearbook; honor roll or other recognition lists; graduation programs; and sports activity sheets.

The School has designated the following as directory information

- o *Student's name*
- o *Participation in officially recognized activities and sports*
- o *Address*
- o *Telephone listing*
- o *Weight and height of members of athletic teams*
- o *Electronic mail address*
- o *Photograph*
- o *Honors and awards received*
- o *Date and place of birth*
- o *Dates of attendance*
- o *Grade level*

Parents who do not want the School to disclose the above directory information without their prior written consent must notify Amy Summers in writing by September 1, 2026.

- *A log must be maintained of each request for access to and each disclosure of educational record information other than disclosure to parents or students 18 or older or school officials. The log should contain the name of the person(s), the date, and the legitimate interests the person had in requesting or obtaining the information.*

- *Parents have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by St. Mary's Catholic School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-8520.*

Discipline

Statement on Philosophy of Discipline

St. Mary's Catholic School strives to develop responsible, courteous, self-disciplined boys and girls whose pride in themselves, their parents, their school, and their community is reflected in their behavior. The development of such young people requires a consistent practice of thoughtful, responsible behavior during these formative years. Students are made aware that they are an integral part of the faith community and that their actions affect themselves as well as the entire community. The ultimate purpose is to develop true Christian character and a sense of responsibility; to establish an atmosphere conducive to academic excellence; and to protect the welfare of the individual, as well as the school community.

Students may be disciplined for conduct that occurs on school premises or at school-sponsored events, or for other conduct that adversely affects the interests or reputation of the school regardless of where the conduct occurs.

Our three school rules encompass our school values:

- Be Respectful & Kind
- Be Responsible

- Be Safe

It is expected that SMCS students will act and speak, using appropriate language and behavior at all times, on or off school property, so that they may reflect positively on the image of our school.

If a student is involved in activities that would tarnish the SMCS reputation, either by commission or omission, the student will be held accountable, even if the incident occurs outside the school grounds or school day. **Any out-of-school conduct that violates school rules may make a student liable for disciplinary action.**

Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS)

The Archdiocese of Baltimore has implemented an evidence and research-based Anti-bullying Program, Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS). PBIS is a comprehensive framework in which schools focus on our Christ-centered teachings and values to create nurturing, safe, positive, and supportive learning environments. Consistent school-wide expectations are visible throughout the school and students' positive behavior is acknowledged and celebrated. The PBIS framework adopts behavioral interventions into an integrated continuum that is designed to enhance academic and behavioral outcomes for every student.

To maintain a positive learning environment and standards that are consistent with our Christian philosophy, it is essential that students exhibit a sense of responsibility and respect for themselves as well as others. Listed below are some behaviors that are unacceptable:

Disrespect in manner and/or language to each other, including peers, teachers, faculty and staff Rowdiness

Using the property of others without permission

Dishonesty

Disruptive Behavior

Failure to have necessary supplies for class work

Dangerous Play

Rudeness

Vulgarity

Dress code violations

Gum

Harassment of any kind by word or action including but not limited to digital harassment

Possession or consumption of any drug or look-alike drug while at school or attending a school function

Possession or consumption of alcohol while at school or while attending a school function

Possession of knives/weapons or look-alike knives/weapons

Possession of pornographic material(s) including distribution of both physical and digital

Smoking/using matches/vaping/gummies

Willful destruction of school property

Leaving school property without permission

Theft or extortion

Fighting or threats of violence

Public displays of affection

Harassment

After school activities, while riding on buses to sports games or other school or parish sponsored activities are

included in the definition of on-campus conduct.
When it comes to social media, whether posted during school hours, and on school property, or while occurring outside of the school property, if it creates a substantial disruption, the school can take action to support the school environment.

St. Mary's Catholic School emphasizes the Catholic faith and values by implementing the PBIS framework through the House system. Students can earn points for positive behaviors, academic achievements, and participation in school events. Points will be recorded through the Live School app.

Generally, the teacher will deal with infractions. Should circumstances warrant, the parent and/or the school administration involved will be consulted. In cases of serious or repeated violations, students may be subject to disciplinary suspension or expulsion. Teachers will notify parents by email or phone if a student receives lunch detention or there are behavior concerns. In addition to a meeting, parents will be notified in writing of a suspension or expulsion. The school's fair procedure to be used in cases of possible suspension or expulsion is as outlined in Policy SS 2.0; SS 2.1; SS 2.2. The principal will exercise his/her discretion whether the suspension should be served in-school or at home.

While on suspension, the student is still responsible for missed work. After the specified amount of time for suspension, which shall not exceed three consecutive school days, (unless approved in consultation with the superintendent) the student and the parent(s)/guardian(s) will meet with the school administration for reinstatement. The school administration reserves the right to determine the conditions for reinstatement.

An expelled student forfeits all privileges of the St. Mary's Catholic School student. The school administrator reserves the right not to re-admit an expelled student later. If a student is expelled, the student is entitled to a prompt review procedure established by the Department of Catholic Schools. A written request for review must be submitted to the Superintendent of Catholic Schools within 10 working days of the notice of intent to expel. In some cases, parents are given the option to withdraw the student in lieu of expulsion.

The school reserves the right to deny attendance to anyone whose behavior is contrary to the teachings and ideals of the school or whose behavior or attitude is disruptive to the functioning of the student body.

Disciplinary Action

Some of the disciplinary measures utilized by the school are outlined and illustrated as follows. Disciplinary action rests with the discretion of the school principal.

1. **WARNING:** A reminder to follow school policies/procedures.

2. **TEACHER RESOLUTION:** Matters of classroom discipline and management remain the responsibility of the individual teacher. Students in grades 5-8 may receive lunch detention for things such as: repeated incomplete work, disruptive behavior, inappropriate language, gum chewing, repeated dress code violations, cell phone use or visibility, failure to respect personal space, etc. Classroom discipline and management for students in grades PreK-4 will be handled by the classroom teacher with administrative support.

3. **LUNCH/RECESS DETENTION**: Lunch detentions will be assigned to students for things such as: certain inappropriate behaviors or repeated behaviors, repeated dress code violations, disruptive behavior in church, failure to follow Acceptable Use Policy or excessive tardiness (grades 5-8).

4. **SUSPENSION:** Suspension is a serious penalty imposed for major violations of school policies and rules. Suspensions may be served in or out of school, as designated by the Principal. The length of the suspension will be determined by the severity of the violation. Some offenses which may merit suspension include: fighting,
cutting class or leaving school without permission, destruction of school property, disrespectful behavior toward other students, teachers or staff, or certain violations of SMCS Drug and Alcohol policy. If a student is suspended they may be ineligible to hold leadership positions during the academic year of the suspension. If a

student is suspended they cannot participate in or attend any school sponsored events on the day(s) that they serve the suspension.

While on suspension, the student is still responsible for missed work. After the specified amount of time for suspension, which shall not exceed three consecutive school days, the student and the parent(s)/guardian(s) will meet with the Administration for reinstatement. The Administration reserves the right to determine the conditions for reinstatement.

6. **DISCIPLINARY PROBATION:** Students may be placed on disciplinary probation if their conduct has placed them in danger of expulsion. Probation is a student's final chance to alter his/her pattern of behavior. A student on disciplinary probation is ineligible to participate in co-curricular activities, receive any awards, or run for or serve in an elected position.

Generally, the teacher will deal with infractions. Should circumstances warrant, the parent and/or the Administration involved will be consulted. In cases of serious or repeated violations, students may be subject to disciplinary suspension or expulsion. The school's fair procedure to be used in cases of possible suspension or expulsion is as follows: (review AOB policy 2.1 and 3.0). The principal will exercise his/her discretion whether the suspension should be served in-school or at home.

An expelled student forfeits all privileges of the St. Mary's Catholic School student. The Administrator reserves the right not to re-admit an expelled student at a later date. If a student is to be expelled, the student is entitled to a prompt review procedure established by the Department of Catholic Schools. A written request for review must be submitted to the Superintendent of Catholic Schools within 10 working days of the notice of intent to expel. In some cases, parents are given the option to withdraw the student in lieu of expulsion.

The school reserves the right to deny attendance to anyone whose behavior is contrary to the teachings and ideals of the school or whose behavior or attitude is disruptive to the functioning of the student body.

Search and Seizure

St. Mary's Catholic School reserves the right to search school property (e.g., lockers, desks), a student's belongings, and areas under the student's control in order to enforce school policies, rules and regulations or otherwise to preserve a safe and orderly learning environment.

Conflict Situations

Conflicts are a normal and healthy part of living and growing. The Administration will implement acceptable conflict resolution techniques to work towards a solution.

Bullying Policy

Bullying, harassment, or intimidation (as defined below) of any student is prohibited in all Archdiocese of Baltimore Schools. Retaliation or reprisal against anyone who reports such behaviors or participates in an investigation of a report is also prohibited. Such behaviors are contrary to school life in a Christ-centered community, which respects the dignity and uniqueness of all of God's children. To foster a school environment where all students are educated in a safe and caring atmosphere, all Archdiocesan schools will follow established procedures for bullying prevention, intervention, and response.

Harassment of students on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, religion, disability or handicap, gender identity or expression, and sexual orientation are also addressed under the Archdiocesan Student Harassment Policy in the Code of Conduct. Suspected abuse or neglect of students is addressed under the Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth.

"Bullying, harassment, or intimidation" means intentional conduct, including written, verbal, or physical conduct or an intentional electronic communication, that:

a. Creates a hostile educational environment by substantially interfering with a student's

educational benefits, opportunities, or performance or with a student's physical or psychological well-being and:

i. Is motivated by an actual or a perceived personal characteristic including race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability; or

ii. Is sexual in nature; or

iii. Is threatening or seriously intimidating; and

b. Occurs on school property, at a school activity or event, or on a school bus, or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school.

Electronic technology means a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including a telephone, cellular phone, computer, pager, gaming device, tablet, etc.

Retaliation means an act of reprisal or revenge, i.e., getting back at a person for an act he/she committed (such as reporting misconduct).

The principal or designee will notify the parent/guardian of the alleged victim of a report of bullying, harassment or intimidation within three (3) business days after the incident is reported. The principal or designee will notify the parent/guardian of the alleged perpetrator of a report of bullying, harassment or intimidation within five (5) business days after the incident is reported

Reporting forms are located in the main office and on the school's website. Refer to the bullying policy here Bullying Policy SS 6.0

Harassment Policy

It is the policy of the Archdiocese to prohibit harassment on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, disability or handicap, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, or protected activity (i.e., opposition to prohibited discrimination or participation in the complaint process) in its education programs and activities. Each Catholic school shall adhere to this policy with respect to students. (Employees are similarly protected from harassment by a separate Archdiocesan policy.) A school is not required to adopt any rule, regulation, or policy that conflicts with its religious or moral teachings.

A. Scope

This policy applies to all students in Archdiocesan elementary, middle and secondary schools. The Archdiocese neither condones nor tolerates harassment of students at school, at school-related activities or functions, or in any school-related setting. Harassment of students, whether engaged in by other students, teachers, administrators, or others, is prohibited. Violation of this Policy is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or suspension or expulsion from school, depending on the nature and severity of the offense and the individual's disciplinary record.

B. Prohibited Conduct

a. For purposes of this Policy, "harassment" means verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his or her race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, disability or handicap, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, or protected activity, that:

i. Has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environ

ii. Has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic performance; or

iii. Otherwise adversely affects an individual's educational opportunities.

b. Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to, epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, or threatening, intimidating or hostile acts that relate to race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, handicap or disability, gender identity or expression, or sexual orientation. “Sexual” harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for educational decisions or has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

c. Procedure

i. Any person who believes that a student is being subjected to harassment should immediately report the harassment to any one or more of the following individuals: the student’s teacher, the principal of the school, the Superintendent of Catholic Schools. A bullying/harassment form should be filled out.

ii. Individuals are encouraged to report harassment early, before it becomes severe or pervasive, so that preventive action can be taken. All complaints will be investigated promptly, thoroughly and impartially, and will remain confidential to the extent possible.

iii. Any retaliation, reprisals, or intimidation, whether by the alleged harasser or from another source, directed toward the complaining party or anyone else as a result of the filing or investigation of a harassment complaint is considered a serious violation of this Policy and should be reported immediately.

iv. Once the investigation is complete, the school will take immediate and appropriate corrective action when it determines that this Policy has been violated. The complaining party and the complained-of party will be advised of the investigation’s findings and conclusions. A report of the findings will be forwarded to the Department of Catholic Schools.

Financial Obligations

Tuition Schedule

There is a different tuition schedule for:

- Registered/Participating (must use church envelopes or online giving) members of Catholic parishes.
- Non-Registered/Non-Participating Catholics and members of other denominations.

	Registered and Participating Catholic Rate	Oth Ca Re Ra
Student 1	$7,600	$
Student 2	$7,600	$
Student 3	$6,840	$7,830
Student 4+	$6,080	$6,960

The school is subsidized by St. Mary's Catholic Parish.

Financial: Release of Tuition Obligation/Tuition Refund

Should a family enroll in an AOB school, and later decide to withdraw, responsibility for tuition payment may remain with the family to compensate the school for expenses already incurred as well as the potential lost opportunity to fill that seat with another student. The amount of tuition obligation is dependent on the date of withdrawal. Please note that enrollment deposits, whether applied against tuition or charged as a separate fee and made at the time of contract signing are non-refundable and non-transferable regardless of the date of

withdrawal.

Elementary School Release or Refunds

- Date of Withdrawal after June 1st: Family Tuition Obligation is 25% of annual tuition and fees ● Date of

Withdrawal after First Day of School: Family Tuition Obligation is 50% of annual tuition and fees

- Date of Withdrawal after start of Second Trimester: Family Tuition Obligation is 100% of annual tuition and fees

The basis for the refund policies above is the following:

- Billed vs. Paid - The refund should be calculated based on the amount billed for the school year not the amount already paid. That is why the term release of obligation is used in addition to tuition refund. If the amount is calculated based on what has been paid to date, families who withdraw on the same date will be responsible for a different tuition than those who are on a different payment schedule.
- 25% - School purchased textbooks and supplies as well as completed other administrative tasks based on completed registration. Retaining 25% of the billed tuition is to cover these costs incurred. Since school has not yet started there is the potential that another student can be found to fill the seat, but the closer the withdrawal occurs to the first day of school the less likely that becomes, therefore that risk has also been factored into the obligation percentage.

- 100% – The teacher and the classroom are fixed costs and therefore sunk costs even when a student leaves early.

Payment Schedule
- Annual: Lump sum payment is due in July
- Bi-annual: One-half of the total tuition is due in July & one-half is due in December
- Quarterly: Payments are due in July, October, January, and April
- Monthly: Payment is due on a ten-month schedule, July through April

St. Mary's Catholic School uses FACTS Management Company ("FACTS") to manage the tuition collection process. All school families are required to pay tuition through FACTS. For payments charged to a debit or credit card through FACTS, there is an additional fee of 3.05%. A processing fee of $15 will be charged by FACTS for any checks or ACH payments returned by the bank. Payments are due on or before the 10th of the month, regardless of Method of Payment. There is no grace period. A late fee of $25 will be charged by the School if a payment is late.

Eighth grade students must be paid in full by May 15 or they will not be allowed to participate in graduation ceremonies, and their diplomas, in addition to the progress report and transcripts, will be withheld until paid in full.

Field trips and supply fees are billed through FACTS. Lunch accounts are prepaid online through each family's FACTS account. Any money (cash or check) sent to school for donations or fundraisers must be in a sealed envelope with the following information on the outside: family name, child's name and homeroom, date, and purpose for the money.

If there is a financial problem, contact the principal.

Tuition Assistance, Tuition Grants, and BOOST
FACTS Grant & Aid Assessment conducts the financial need analysis for St. Mary's Catholic School. All families (Catholic and non-Catholic) are encouraged to apply. Families applying for financial aid will need to complete an application and submit the necessary supporting documentation to FACTS Grant & Aid Assessment by

February 28 to be considered for Archdiocesan Grants & Aid, or by April 1 for tuition assistance from the parish. Applicants should apply online at www.stmarycatholicschool.org (Select Admissions tab; click on Financing Education or at https://online.factsmgt.com/aid).

Re-registration for Current Students

Re-registration for returning students for the next school year begins in December through Finalsite Enrollment (formerly named SchoolAdmin).

RaiseRight Grant Program

RaiseRight is a gift card program that generates "free money" to be used toward your tuition costs. For every purchase, a percentage is given back to you as a tuition credit. Your profit is deducted from your tuition twice a
year, or whenever you request it. For more information, visit
https://stmarycatholicschool.org/financial-assistance-programs/ and select RaiseRight Grants.

Annual Giving Fund

Each year, SMCS conducts an Annual Giving Campaign and depends upon generous support from individuals for contributions. As members of our school community, faculty, parents, grandparents, parishioners, and alumni have a vested interest in providing our students with the skills and resources necessary to be successful twenty-first century learners. Generous donations received from the past ten campaigns were used for tuition support and upgrades in our programs rather than for general operating expenses.

Through generous donations and the support of St. Mary's Catholic Church, our students have benefitted from upgrades in technology, new textbooks, new science equipment, web-filtering software, and many more enhancements for our educational programs while keeping the increase in tuition costs to families at a minimum. All upgrades enhanced teaching, learning, and communication—all benefiting our children. Please consider making a donation each year and to support our students.

Mandatory Raffle Tickets

All families participate in a MANDATORY POT OF GOLD RAFFLE FUNDRAISER. The raffle will be held on March 17. Each family is required to buy or sell three (3) tickets that are $25/ticket. An envelope containing raffle tickets and instructions is sent home in each oldest sibling's take home folder on January 5. Raffle ticket stubs should be filled out and returned to the school office in the enclosed return envelope.

Registration Fees

New Student Application Fee - $100 per student

New Student Registration Fee - $250 per student

Returning Family Re-registration Fee - $300 per family

Activity Fees

After school clubs and field trips may have a minimal fee assessed. Parents will be notified of these fees and they will be charged through FACTS.

Other Fees

HSA Dues - $50 per family

Delinquent Tuition

St. Mary's Catholic School reserves the right to withhold any official school record, including progress reports and diplomas, to a parent or other educational institutions until all tuition, fees, and any other financial obligations to St. Mary's Catholic School are satisfied in full. Additionally, the school reserves the right to expel any student whose tuition is unpaid for more than one month.

If a student transfers without having fulfilled all financial obligations, the school is only required to release health records and grade level to the new school. Copies of academic records will be released once all financial obligations are met. Failure to meet financial obligations may result in students being removed from school until obligations are fulfilled.

Withdrawals

If you decide to transfer or withdraw your child(ren) from St. Mary's Catholic School, a parent must notify the principal in writing. Please include the date the transfer/withdrawal will be effective, the reason you are withdrawing, and the name of the new school your child(ren) will be attending.

All books and school-owned materials must be returned to the homeroom teacher. ALL financial obligations must be met before your student(s) records will be released to the new school. See REFUNDS and DELINQUENT TUITION for further details.

A family with outstanding financial obligations to the current school is not to be accepted at another Catholic school within the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

Health

Maryland School Immunization Requirements

All students in Catholic schools must be immunized in accordance with Maryland State Law. A child may not enter school unless he/she has submitted an official immunization record or other appropriate documentation of immunization status. The immunization record must have the month, day and year of each vaccination and be signed by a physician or health department official. In the case of religious objection or medical contra-indication, form DHMH 89, must be submitted and kept on file and be approved by the school. Exempted students are to be excluded from school if there is an outbreak of the disease for which they are not immunized.

Dispensing of Medication

The administration of medication in school is discouraged. However, if a student's physician recommends that the student receive prescription or over-the-counter medication during the school day, a written order from the student's doctor is required. Medication can only be dispensed with a written order from the student's physician, specifying start and stop date. The original medication container or box for inhalers must be brought to the school. These containers or boxes should include the following: name of medication, directions for use, time for dispensing, name of doctor ordering the medication, date of prescription, expiration date as stated by the pharmacist, strength of medication/dosage, and student's name and grade.

A student is not permitted to possess, administer, or distribute medication, whether prescription or non-prescription. Under special circumstances, individual students may be authorized by their physician to carry and self-administer emergency medications (e.g. inhalers, epi-pens). In this case, the school nurse must be consulted. All medication must be delivered to school by a parent/guardian.

Communicable Diseases

Parents must call the school if their child is diagnosed with a communicable disease. The school must notify their county Health Department. All reports are confidential. Reportable diseases include the following:

Measles – regular or German (Rubella) Tuberculosis
Meningitis Whooping Cough (Pertussis) Hepatitis Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever Food
Poisoning Human Immune Deficiency Mumps Virus Infection (AIDS and all
Adverse reactions to Pertussis Vaccine other symptomatic infections) Lyme disease
Animal bites / Rabies
Chicken Pox (varicella) Influenza

Covid 19

Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)

Any student with drainage from the eyes associated with conjunctivitis (pink eye) must be kept at home until under treatment from a doctor. A doctor's note will be required for readmission to school. Students may return once they have been on an antibiotic for 24 hours or until symptoms have resolved.

Varicella (Chicken Pox)

Students who have chicken pox are excluded from school until all lesions are scabbed over.

Health Records

The school maintains a health file for each student for the duration of enrollment. Parents are required to complete a Health Form listing any allergies, serious medical conditions, medications, and emergency contact information. The school must be notified of any changes that occur during the school year.

Head Injury

If any injury to the head or any other serious injury occurs to a student, the nurse will call the parent and send home a report. The report is to be signed by the parent/guardian and returned to school. If the parent/guardian or alternative contact person cannot be reached in an emergency, the school will contact police/ambulance for assistance.

Insurance

The Office of Risk Management has DISCONTINUED offering the Voluntary Student Accident Insurance in fall of 2025.

Allergies

Parents must notify the school of their child's allergies including food allergies. School medication orders must be renewed each year by the physician and the order must be signed on or after July 1. If the student carries an epi-pen with them, the physician must state this requirement on the order.

Bloodborne Pathogens

A complete Bloodborne Pathogens Standard Exposure Control Plan has been established by the school and can be found in each Faculty Handbook and on file in the Office.

Vision & Hearing Screening

The school follows the directives of Washington County Health Department and responds to parents' requests for individual testing.

This testing is usually done for:

1.) All new students who have not provided documentation for screening in the past year;

2.) All students the year they enter the school in Grades PreK, kindergarten, 1, and 8 or 9;

3.) Grade 3 or Grade 4 if funding is available;

4.) Any student with a suspected hearing or vision problem as reported by school staff or parents/guardians.

General Use Epi Pens

As of August 1, 2021, St. Mary's Catholic School has adopted a policy allowing the availability of stock epinephrine in the health suite for use in the event of an anaphylactic emergency. This epinephrine is for emergency use during normal school days and is not dependent on allergy history. It is not available outside of normal school hours or on field trips. Students with a known history of severe allergies are still expected to maintain emergency action plans, medical orders, and their own supply of emergency medication.

Bronchodilators

As of September 1, 2025, St. Mary's Catholic School has adopted a policy allowing the availability of a stock

bronchodilator through the health suite for use in the event of an emergency when a student is, or is perceived to be, experiencing asthma-related symptoms or respiratory distress and the student does not have a bronchodilator of their own readily available. The stock bronchodilator is for emergency use during normal school days. It is not available outside of normal school hours or on field trips. Students with a known history of asthma are still expected to maintain emergency action plans, medical orders, and their own supply of emergency medication.

Naloxone (Narcan)

As of August 1, 2023 has adopted a policy allowing the availability of Naloxone through the health suite for use in the event of a suspected overdose emergency. This Naloxone is for emergency use during normal school days. It is not available outside of normal school hours or on field trips. As required by the "Start Talking Maryland Act" a communication about the program is provided at the beginning of the school year. For those interested in learning more about the program and administration of Naloxone, please refer to the following resources:

https://youtu.be/p9hYzykHs_o and Pages - Home (maryland.gov).

Classroom Parties/Birthdays

Students are encouraged to bring a birthday treat to share with classmates. Please ensure that the treat is store bought (no homemade items) and includes the ingredient label and is nut free.

If a child brings invitations for a birthday party, the entire class, all boys, or all girls must be invited. Otherwise, other arrangements must be made to distribute the invitations. School personnel will not distribute any invitation.

Partnership and Communication with Families

At St. Mary's Catholic School we firmly believe that parents are the first and foremost primary educators of their children. In support of this belief, it is absolutely essential that parents, school staff, and administration support each other. In order to communicate the importance of the point, St. Mary's Catholic School has adopted the following policy for all students, parents, school staff, and administration.

- When posting to social networks or communicating online, please be ever vigilant in maintaining professionalism.
- Online communication (group texts, social media, etc.) is not the appropriate arena for airing complaints.
- Remember, we are all representatives of St. Mary's Catholic School whether we are at school, a school-sanctioned event, or out in the community.
- Refrain from sending inappropriate messages or information critical of other parents, students, school faculty, and/or the school itself.
- Topics that require multiple emails, especially emotional ones, should be handled over the phone or in person.
- Parents set the example for how their children will behave in this digital age. Remember all internet postings are permanent, able to be duplicated, and may go viral. While everyone has the right to express themselves, it does not mean they are excluded from the consequences of the communication. Think twice, type once. In many cases, do not type at all.

In enrolling your child in a Catholic School, you agree to certain important responsibilities. These include:

- to be a partner with the school in the education of your child
- to understand and support the Catholic mission and identity of the school
- to read all communications from the school and to request clarification when necessary ● to know who your child's teachers are and to observe parent-teacher conference dates and any special requests for meetings
- to discuss concerns and problems with the person(s) most directly involved

- to be as actively involved as you can be in the life of the school and to volunteer assistance when possible
- to promote your school and to speak well of it to others to include, but not limited to, social media platforms
- to meet your financial obligations in a timely manner and to support the fundraising efforts of the school when possible
- to appreciate Catholic education and the benefits of attending a school in a Christ centered environment
- to behave appropriately at all school related functions, both inside and outside of the school hours, and whether on school property or third-party sites, and including sporting events ● to follow the guidelines of this handbook including non-academic standards and expectations, including related to parking, drop-off, pick-up, and communication with teachers and staff ● to demonstrate appropriate behavior and respect to all teachers, staff, and administrators, this includes verbal, written or electronic exchanges
- all communications with faculty and staff should be done via school sanctioned communication tools.

Support, Partnership, and Compliance by Families

In cases of disregard of the direction of staff members, threats or threatening behavior, serious or repeated noncompliance with school policies or procedures, or other demonstrated lack of support or cooperation, whether by parent, child or other family member, the administration reserves the right to withdraw child/children from the school. Depending on the severity of the breach of partnership with the school, parents or other family members may be prohibited from entering the campus.

Weekly Newsletters and Communication

SMCS will be using Bright Arrow for schoolwide communication. These communications will be sent via text message and email. **These are important communications and reminders about the daily happenings in the school and should not be overlooked. In addition this is the tool that is used for emergency communication.**

Sunday afternoon of each week a school newsletter will be sent via email and text. This has essential information for the upcoming week as well as all important links to calendars, menus, etc. Teachers will communicate with families via email and telephone and provide a weekly update/information to families.

In the best interest of students, the school welcomes and encourages communication between parents and teachers. Whenever a situation occurs that causes concern, the concern should be addressed first at the level at which the situation arose. Please contact your child's teacher directly by email or phone to schedule a mutually convenient time to meet. Due to instructional time with their students, teachers may respond to emails and calls up to 48 hours on business days. Teachers typically do not respond to emails and calls during the evening or over the weekend. All communications with faculty and staff should be done via school sanctioned communication tools.

Parents whose phone numbers are unlisted must give the school either the unlisted number or a number where the parent(s) can be reached. It is essential that the school have this information in case of an emergency. This information will be kept in the strictest confidence. Any change of phone number or home address is to be given to the school office and homeroom teacher immediately.

Non-Custodial Parent

Emergency contact information for each child is to be provided to the school office. It is the parent's responsibility for completing the emergency contact form in Finalsite Enrollment before the start of each school year, and for notifying the school offices of changes during the school year. Children will only be released to the person(s) designated on the emergency contact form, unless otherwise instructed by the custodial

parent/guardian.

Non-custodial parents are welcome to review their child's records unless there is a court order or legal agreement prohibiting such access. The school may notify the custodial parent of a request to review records.

St. Mary's Catholic School does not allow a non-custodial parent physical access to his/her child during school hours or on school premises unless the custodial parent has consented or the school has a court order permitting access.

Change in Name, Family Status, and Custody

If there is a change in the family status/or the change of a child's name, or a change in custody arrangement, it is important that the school be informed promptly of the change. In case of a change of custody, a copy of the portion of the court order that describes the custody arrangements must be on file with the school. The parent also needs to notify the principal.

Change in Address, Telephone Number, and Email Address

When there is a change in address, phone number or email address, parents need to update the school office immediately.

Parent Teacher Conferences

Parent/Teacher Conferences will be held on October 19 from 10 AM to 6PM.

Home & School Association (HSA)

The purpose of a Home and School Association (HSA) is to partner with the school in providing support for both the academic and social aspects of the school.
Below is the link for the HSA manual.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ULei_pUjrFF-g9VCPcFjGRBr-E7XyU8K/view?usp=sharing

Homeroom Parents

Homeroom parents will be chosen at the discretion of each homeroom teacher. The homeroom parent will assist with organizing classroom events and activities at the discretion of the teacher, supporting classroom needs as directed.

Safety

Emergency Plan

Archdiocesan schools follow the I Love You Guys Foundation school safety standard protocols.

Making the safety of our students our top priority, SMCS has a carefully developed emergency plan. This plan has taken into consideration the training of staff and students for many different types of emergency situations. This plan is reviewed each year.

Fire and Safety Drills

In the unlikely event that an emergency evacuation of the school is necessary, the full cooperation of the students is expected. Fire exit signs and planned routes are posted in each classroom. Upon the sounding of a fire signal or a smoke detector, students will proceed out of the building quickly and silently. When students have left the building and reached the safety zone, they are to meet their homeroom teacher in the assigned area and stand in a single silent line, one for each class, where attendance will be taken. No student or staff is to return to the building until the "All Clear" signal has been given.

Each year we will conduct safety drills in accordance with Archdiocesan and State of Maryland requirements. In the event of an intruder we use the *I Love You Guys* protocol. Drills will be conducted for evacuation (fire or other), earthquake, tornado, active intruder, and hazardous material. Parents will be notified when our Lockdown Drills are performed.

Emergency & Weather-related Closings and Delayed Openings

The school will follow the protocol for Washington County Public Schools for decisions regarding early dismissals, delayed openings and any other emergency and weather-related closings. Parents and guardians will be notified through Bright Arrow.

Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA)

AHERA – In October 1986, the U.S. Congress enacted the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA). Under this law, comprehensive regulations were developed to address asbestos problems in public and private elementary and secondary schools. These regulations require most schools to inspect for friable and non-friable asbestos, develop asbestos management plans that address asbestos hazards in school buildings and implement response actions in a timely manner. Our program for fulfilling these responsibilities is outlined in our asbestos management plan. This plan contains information on our inspections, re-inspections, response actions and post- response action activities, including periodic surveillance activities that are planned or are in progress. The plan is kept in the principal's office and may be viewed upon request during normal business hours.

Child and Youth Protection

St. Mary's Catholic School follows the policies and procedures as outlined by the Office of Child and Youth Protection.

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Policy Procedures

Maryland law requires that all educators and other school employees, including volunteers, report suspected child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities in order that children may be protected from harm and the family may be helped. Our school policy supports Maryland laws in this regard and requires that all school staff report suspected abuse and neglect to the Department of Social Services, Protective Services Division, and/or the local police department, as well as to the principal. The Office and Child Youth Protection (OCYP) director, Archdiocese of Baltimore, may also be contacted.

Visitors

In order to ensure a safe environment for your child, all school doors will remain locked during the school day. All visitors must report to the office and receive an identification badge through RAPTOR before visiting other parts of the school building.

Student Cell Phones

Students should not bring cell phones (or any personal electronic device) to school. There is absolutely no reason for the students to have access to these while they are in school as there are phones available in the school office when necessary for a student to call home. If parents wish their children to have a cell phone for use after the school day ends, devices must be kept in the student's backpack (not on his/her person) and powered off during the school day or at a school function including field trips. Students violating this policy will be subject to disciplinary action. Visible and audible cell phones are also considered violations.

St. Mary's Catholic School will not be responsible for loss, damage, or theft of any electronic device brought to school. The School reserves the right to search the call log, photo gallery, text message history, email or any other data contained in the device.

When a device is confiscated, parents will be notified and the device will be returned at the end of the day. In addition the following will occur:

- First offense: Phone call home
- Second offense: Detention
- Third offense: Detention and parent must pick up the device

Any subsequent offenses will be punishable with consequences up to and including suspension and expulsion.

Cell phones may only be used after 3:15 in the case of an emergency or when a student is still waiting to be picked up. Students must receive permission from a member of the SMCS staff to use a cell phone at this time.

Parents are asked to support this policy by not texting, calling, or otherwise electronically communicating with their child during the school day.

Smart Watches

Students are not allowed to wear Smart Watches during the school day. Electronic health monitoring devices, such as a Fitbit, will not be permitted if the device has the capability of accessing the Internet, text messaging capability, or has a camera, video, microphone, or Wi-Fi capability.

Volunteers

Prior to volunteering, all volunteers must be fully trained in VIRTUS as required by the Archdiocese of Baltimore. All policies and procedures must be followed for Child and Youth Protection. The registration instructions can be found here. This can be done at virtusonline.org. **Please choose the VOLUNTEERS WITH SUBSTANTIAL CONTACT WITH CHILDREN** option.

Family Commitment Hours

An effective school is a partnership among parents, students and the school. Donating your time can be incredibly rewarding and it is a wonderful way to have a positive influence in your child's life and to build our school community. We are grateful to, and dependent upon, families who, through their gifts of time, treasure, and talent, enhance the quality of education we are able to provide our students. At SMCS, we believe that giving of ourselves to others is one of the most fundamental concepts a student can learn and that it is one of the best lessons a Catholic School education can teach. This is our Many Hands Make Light Work policy. Opportunities are available during the days, evenings, and weekends throughout the year. Specific events will be advertised for specific shifts, donations, etc. **All families are required to commit 20 hours each academic year to meet the requirements of our Many Hands Make Light Work policy.**

Playground & School Supervision and Provisions

Students will be supervised by SMCS teachers and staff at all times during the school day and in after school activities. Staff will be present when students are on the playground.

Supervision Responsibilities (Before and After the Official School Day)

Parents are required to follow the times stipulated when dropping off or picking up students. The school is not responsible for supervision of students before the drop-off time and after the pick-up time, as listed above. The school is not liable for any injuries or accidents which may occur before the drop-off time or after the pick-up time, as stated above. Parents are responsible for supervision of students prior to 7:55 a.m. and after 3:20 p.m. if a student is on the school property with the parent.

If the student is participating in a scheduled, supervised activity before or after the hours noted above, specific arrangements must be made for drop-off and/or pick-up at the designated times. If children are participating in before or after school care, parents must comply with the rules established by the program for drop-off and pick-up.

Transportation Procedures

During pick-up and drop-off parents should follow the procedures previously stated in the handbook. Parents should follow all speed signs, traffic patterns, and the school arrival and dismissal policy. Students will only be released to custodial parents or those adults listed on emergency contact forms. Students will never be allowed to leave school in an UBER, Lyft, or any private transportation company.

Use of School Grounds

No students may be unsupervised in the school building and/or gymnasium at any time. **The school building is officially closed at 3:45 p.m. daily.** Students remaining on school grounds after 3:15 p.m.must be with a teacher/coach for a specific purpose. Any student waiting for pick-up after 3:15 PM will be sent to after care and

charges will apply.

Tobacco and Drugs

St. Mary's Catholic School is a tobacco-free and drug-free workplace.

Threat Assessment

Each Archdiocesan school has a threat assessment team to monitor and respond to information about behavior, statements, or plans that may pose a threat.

A *threat* is a communication or behavior that indicates intent to cause physical harm, including self-harm, at school or a school activity or to one or more members of the school community. The *threat* may be expressed by spoken or written words, actions, drawings, electronic communications, or any other means. The *threat* may be observed by or communicated directly to the target(s) or observed by or communicated to a third party. Threats also may be reported anonymously or through "tips" or rumors. *Threats* may be direct ("I am going to beat you up") or indirect ("I'm going to get him").

The threat assessment team shall develop, implement, and monitor a plan to address the *threat*. Possible responses based on the assessment of risk may include a mental health risk assessment conducted by a qualified medical/psychological professional.

A written *Return to School Safety plan* may be implemented to address the immediate steps taken to prevent the *threat* from being carried out and a plan for further support before the student is permitted to return to school.

Student Services

Before & After School Care

SMCS offers Before and After School Care for all students. Both programs are regulated by the Maryland Office of Child Care.

Before Care runs from 7:30am - 8:00 a.m. in the After Care classroom. Snacks are provided. The cost for before care is $5 per day per student. Parents may drop off anytime after 7:30 a.m. and must sign the student in. Parents must accompany students to the exterior library door (using the ramp by the primary door) and wait for an Attendant to come to the door. Before care will not be open on days when there is a 2-hour delay.

After Care runs from 3:15 until 5:30 p.m. each in the After Care classroom in the primary hallway. Snacks are provided. The cost is $9 per hour, prorated based on actual minutes present. When picking up, parents must ring the bell next to the primary doors and wait for an attendant to escort the child to the door. If a parent picks up after 5:30 p.m. **late charges of $1 per minute** will apply. After Care is NOT available on days when there is an early dismissal.

Before and After Care charges are invoiced monthly through each family's FACTS account.

If your child has a medical condition or requires medications to be available at the After Care Program, you are responsible to communicate this information to the After Care Program Staff. Student medications that are kept in the Health Office for during the school day are NOT available to the After Care Program. If your student requires medications available at the After Care Program, you will need to provide a separate Physician's Medication Order Form and an additional medication to the After Care Program.

Cafeteria: Milk & Lunch Program

Students at SMCS are able to enjoy lunches that are made fresh daily on campus. Lunch menus are available on the school website and in weekly newsletters. The cost of a full lunch is $4.50. A la carte and snack options are available. All lunches must be pre-paid through FACTS. More information about the lunch program is available on the school website under QUICK LINKS.

School Activities & Organizations

After School Clubs

Varying school clubs are offered each trimester for a minimal fee. A list of these will be provided at the beginning of each trimester for registration. If students are not picked up within 5 minutes of the club ending, students will be sent to After Care where hourly charges will apply.

Faith Based Activities

GUARDIANS OF THE ALTAR - In this program, led by Father James, boys in grades 4-8 are trained to serve at the Mass, grow in virtue and learn how to pray with the Word of God. This is not just education, it is formation. This leads souls to heaven.

YOUNG WOMEN OF GRACE - Through this program girls in grades 4-8 will be trained to lector at the Mass and grow in virtue and learn how to pray with the word of God. Through faith-based activities designed specifically for girls, participants will deepen their Christian values and learn what it means to be a beloved daughter of God.

MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP - Once a month, middle school students are invited to join in after school activities led by the Parish Youth Minister. These activities will foster fun, virtue and faith.

ROSARY CLUB - Students in grades 2 - 8 may participate in our Rosary Club. This club is led by Father James. Students spend a short time learning about the Rosary and then pray the Rosary together.

Academic Activities

SPELLING BEE - SMCS students in grades three through six participate in a spelling competition to determine who will represent the school in the Archdiocese of Baltimore Spelling Bee.

CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS OF AMERICA EDUCATION CONTESTS - St. Mary's Catholic School students participate annually in the Catholic Daughters of America Education Contest which challenges students to use their talents through art, essay, poetry, photography, computer art, or music to express a given theme.

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY AMERICANISM ESSAY CONTEST - Each year the American Legion Auxiliary, Morris Frock Unit 42, sponsors the Americanism Essay Contest for students in grades three through eight.

ACADEMIC FAIRS - St. Mary's Catholic School hosts a Science and/or Social Studies Fair. Science Fair projects are based on the scientific method. Social Studies projects range from early man to present day. Awards are given to the top projects.

Fine Arts

ART CLUB - Students are invited to enhance their art skills and assist our art teacher in preparing pieces of art for display around the school and for special events.

SCHOLA - Students are invited to participate in the Children’s Choir! They meet after school with our music director to practice songs which will lead our feast days and weekly Fridays school Mass.
MUSICAL - Students are invited to be involved in our annual musical production that takes place in the Spring.

Service Activities

CANNED FOOD DRIVE - The SMCS community reaches out to those in need by contributing canned goods during the month of November to a local food bank.

MICAH'S BACKPACK - Through Micah's Backpack program our school provides weekend take-home bags of food for students in our local community.

SAFETY PATROLS - Eighth grade students serve as safety patrols. Members of the patrol escort student lines out of the building, hold open the school doors as students are dismissed, and assist the teachers in supervising students at dismissal. The safety patrol program enables students to participate in promoting safety skills among their fellow students.

FLAG PATROL - Members of the flag patrol are responsible for putting up the flags in the morning and taking them down in the afternoon each day.

ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES - SMCS sponsors Crusader basketball teams for boys and girls (depending upon the interest level) who participate in the Washington County Basketball League, Volleyball team, an Elementary Girls' Softball Team, and a Running Club for boys and girls. Parent volunteers are needed to serve as coaches.

Leadership Programs

National Junior Honor Society

The Reverend George A. Limmer Chapter of the National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) of St. Mary's Catholic School is a duly chartered and affiliated chapter of the NASSP, a prestigious national organization. Membership is open to middle school students who meet the required standards in five areas of evaluation: scholarship, leadership, service, citizenship, and character. Standards for selection are established by the national office of NJHS and have been revised to meet our local chapter needs. Students are selected to be members by a five member Faculty Council, appointed by the principal, which bestows this honor upon qualified students on behalf of the faculty of our school each spring.

Student Council

The SMCS Student Council serves as the voice of the entire student body. Each spring, officers are elected from the middle school. Students in grades four through eight have homeroom representatives. Student leaders are also leaders in their Houses. SMCS Student Council sponsored activities include Tag Days; Middle School Dances; Thanksgiving Canned Food Drive; Salvation Army Adopt-a-Family; Catholic Schools Week Talent Show; and Fun Night.

Athletic Policy

Philosophy of Athletics

Sports and athletic programs at St. Mary's Catholic School are an extension of the school's mission to form the whole person—body, mind, and soul—in light of each student's ultimate end in God and the good of society. Athletics are not viewed merely as physical exercise or social activity, but as an important dimension of human formation. Through participation in athletics, students develop virtues such as discipline, perseverance, humility, teamwork, leadership, and respect for others, while growing in physical health and athletic skill.

St. Mary's teaches students to care for their bodies as gifts from God, fostering lifelong habits of health and self-discipline. This formation includes proper exercise, nutrition, rest, and the cultivation of a meaningful prayer life. Athletic formation is provided to all students through weekly physical education classes, gross motor development, and recess from Pre-Kindergarten through eighth grade, as well as optional participation in extracurricular sports teams.

Athletic Policy Standards

Coaching Requirements

St. Mary's athletic programs are supported primarily by parent and guardian volunteers. Coaches serve as ministers of the school's mission and must model Christian virtue, positive leadership, and behavior consistent with Catholic moral teaching. All coaches are expected to support the school's goal of forming saints and to uphold the standards of conduct outlined in the Parent-Student Handbook and diocesan safe environment requirements.

Harassment and Bullying

Bullying, harassment, or intimidation of any kind is strictly prohibited. All athletes are expected to treat teammates, opponents, coaches, officials, and spectators with dignity and respect. Definitions, reporting procedures, and consequences are outlined in the Parent-Student Handbook and apply fully to athletic activities.

Modesty and Dress

Athletes must observe standards of modesty consistent with the school's dress code during practices, scrimmages, and competitions, including on designated out-of-uniform days. Dress should reflect respect for self and others and align with Catholic principles of modesty.

Parent/Guardian Permission

Students may participate in extracurricular sports only with written parental or guardian permission submitted prior to the first practice or tryout. Permission forms are maintained in school records.

Prayer

Prayer is integral to student life at St. Mary's. Athletic practices and competitions begin with team prayer, fostering gratitude, humility, and trust in God regardless of outcomes.

Respect for Sundays

In keeping with the Church's teaching on the Lord's Day, no athletic practices or competitions are permitted to be scheduled on Sundays.

Restrooms and Locker Rooms

Students use restrooms and locker room facilities that correspond to their biological sex, both on and off campus. Adult coaches, volunteers, and officials use separate facilities from student athletes in accordance with safe environment policies.

Same-Sex Teams

In accordance with Catholic teaching on the human person and the immutability of biological sex as a gift from God, athletic teams designated for boys or girls are composed according to students' biological sex. This policy reflects the Church's understanding of the complementarity of the sexes and promotes fairness, safety, and respect for the dignity of all participants. Same-sex teams compete only against teams designated for athletes of the same biological sex.

In the event that a competing team includes an athlete of the opposite biological sex, St. Mary's Catholic School will respectfully decline to compete and will forfeit the contest. This decision is made in fidelity to Catholic teaching and out of respect for the integrity of our athletic policy, while maintaining charity and respect toward all individuals.

Scheduling and Communication

Practice schedules, locations, and expectations are communicated to parents or guardians at the start of the season. Competition schedules are shared as early as possible, and any changes are communicated promptly. Practices and games are canceled when school is closed or dismissed early due to inclement weather. No

practices or games are scheduled on Sundays.

Sportsmanship
Sportsmanship is an essential part of athletic formation. Students are expected to demonstrate self-control, fairness, respect for officials and opponents, graciousness in victory, and dignity in defeat. Encouraging teammates and showing charity toward others are expected at all times.

No Athletic Scholarships
St. Mary's does not offer athletic scholarships. Participation in athletics is a privilege that supports, but never supersedes, the school's academic and spiritual priorities.

Conduct of Students and Parents
Students and parents represent St. Mary's Catholic School at all athletic events. All school rules and the Parent-Student Handbook apply at practices, games, and related events. Behavior that contradicts the mission or values of the school may result in disciplinary action, including suspension from athletic participation.

Technology

Acceptable Use Policy for the Internet and Technology Tools

Technology skills are necessary to prepare our students for their future. Access to the Internet and technology tools (including software tools, web-based applications and services, computer equipment, I-Pads, and other personal electronic devices) allow students to conduct research, produce digital content, and communicate with classmates and teachers. The Internet and technology tools put enormous power at the fingertips of users. As such, they also place a great deal of responsibility on users.

It is imperative that technology resources be used to build community, encourage critical reflection, and foster readiness for future learning. Developments in technology at the School are to be used ethically, legally, and responsibly. As in other areas, our students are expected to make good choices with regard to their behavior.

Individual users are responsible for their activity on the Internet and technology tools, including the material stored and information shared. In order to protect private and personal information, unauthorized disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal information is prohibited. The School reserves the right to edit Internet accounts for child-only configurations, and to run filtering software for students' protection.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that student users (and their parents) recognize the limitations the School imposes on the use of the Internet and technology tools and that they understand the standards of behavior the School expects of users.

All users of the School network and technology tools, whether on a School-owned or personal device, are responsible for adhering to the following guidelines for acceptable use.

Acceptable uses of the Internet and technology tools are for authorized academic and school-related activities that support learning and teaching and:

- *Respect the privacy and property rights of others and the well-being of the School*
- *Are consistent with Roman Catholic values and morals*
- *Treat technology tools and computer equipment with respect.*

Unacceptable uses of the Internet and technology tools include but are not limited to:

- *Violating the rights or privacy of others, including by photographing or filming an individual without consent*
- *Posting or distributing videos or photographs without consent of the persons depicted and the School*

● Using technology to send profanity, obscenity, or other offensive or harmful language

● Unauthorized copying, downloading, or installation of content, software or applications (including plagiarism or "pirating" music)

● Sending false information or sending messages to the School community that fail to identify the sender (including anonymous messages or messages using a pseudonym)

● Using any program designed to disrupt network performance or breach network security, such as software designed to capture passwords or break encryption protocols

● Revealing personal information beyond what is required for login while using Internet or web-based resources

● Responding to inappropriate messages from others (which should be reported to the School) ●

Downloading or copying information onto disks or hard drives without prior teacher approval

● Accessing, downloading, storing, or printing files or messages that are inappropriate or may be offensive to others (including pornography and other inappropriate images)
● Sharing of passwords or attempting to discover another's password (passwords should be changed frequently)

● Using or accessing another's account (network accounts are to be used only by those for whom the account has been established)

● Intentionally writing, producing, generating, copying or introducing dangerous codes or programs designed to cause harm, including, but not limited to viruses, bugs, 'worms', etc.

● Intentionally damaging, altering, or tampering with any hardware, software, printers, keyboards, speakers, etc.

● Accessing or searching files, directories, or folders for which the user does not have authorization ●

Intentionally erasing, renaming, or disabling of anyone else's files or programs

● Accessing social media, email, or other off-task websites or apps during School without explicit permission of a teacher or adult supervisor

● Violating School conduct rules or the law.

Harassment/cyber-bullying of others online, whether against a student, non-student, or employee, is serious, is prohibited, and is contrary to the School's policy and values. Harassment/cyber-bullying whether it is initiated on campus or off campus, online or in person, should be reported immediately to a faculty member, and may lead to disciplinary action and possible criminal prosecution under Maryland's law prohibiting the Misuse of Interactive Computer Service ("Grace's Law").

Parents are responsible for:

● Reviewing and discussing this policy with their child as well as supporting the School in its enforcement

● Partnering with the School in monitoring their child's technology use

● Modeling appropriate Internet behaviors for their child

● Reporting any concerns regarding this policy or their child's use of the Internet or technology tools to School personnel.

Failure to adhere to the policy guidelines may result in a revocation of a student's Internet access and other technology privileges and disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion.

Artificial Intelligence

Principals must ensure staff and students in the Archdiocese of Baltimore use generative artificial intelligence (AI) in an ethical and responsible manner, following all policy guidelines listed below.

Purpose:

- To provide clear expectations for staff and students on how to use generative artificial intelligence (AI) ethically and responsibly in the Archdiocese of Baltimore.
- To ensure generative artificial intelligence (AI) supports teaching and learning without replacing critical thinking, creativity, and/or effort.
- To ensure the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) is aligned with the teachings of the Catholic Church and our Catholic values.
- To protect the privacy and safety of all staff and students by ensuring compliance with data privacy laws (e.g., FERPA) and safeguarding personal information.
- To help prevent potential exposure to misinformation, inappropriate content, and unauthorized generative AI use, ensuring that it is used responsibly and ethically.

Introduction and Definitions

- *Artificial intelligence (AI)* refers to computer systems designed to perform tasks that usually require human intelligence, such as reasoning, problem solving, learning, and decision-making. ● As stewards of creation, we are called to use AI to enhance teaching and learning while preserving human judgment and dignity, ethical responsibility, personal interaction, and the common good. AI should serve as a complement to traditional education, rather than a replacement.
- *Generative AI* is a type of artificial intelligence that creates new content, such as text, images, videos, or music, based on patterns it has learned from existing data. Examples include chatbots that write responses, or tools that generate pictures or videos.

Student Use.

- PreK–Grade 4 are not permitted to use *generative* artificial intelligence (AI) at this time. ● Grades 5–8 are permitted to use *generative* artificial intelligence (AI) for academic purposes.

Privacy and Safety

- Any user of generative artificial intelligence (AI) must protect student, parent, teacher, and school data by never sharing private information, including but not limited to student names, grades, SAP (Student Accommodation Plan) details, or any other personally identifiable information (PII).

Misinformation and Potential Bias

- Staff and students must not assume that all AI-generated content is accurate or appropriate to share and must be fact-checked for misinformation and potential bias.
- All staff must carefully review AI-generated content before using it in lessons, parent communications, or content generation.

Student Use (Grades 5-8)

- Only COPPA-compliant tools may be used with students in Grades 5-8 under age 13. Schools must verify

that any AI or digital platform used with students complies with the **Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA)**, which safeguards student data and requires parental consent for certain forms of information collection.

- Students in Grades 5-8 must not use generative artificial intelligence (AI) to create deceptive, harmful, or misleading images, audio, video, or representations of another person.

Resources

Academic Artificial Intelligence (AI) Privacy and Safety Requirements for All Staff in the Archdiocese of Baltimore (Updated 2025)

Web-based Services

The School uses Google Apps for Education as well as other web-based education tools, sites, and services ("web-based services") to provide students with important web-based educational experiences and enhanced opportunities to communicate and share collaboratively with one another. As part of students' use of web-based services, certain educational records may be created, collected, or stored. Directory information, such as a child's name, email address, grade/age, and enrollment status, may also be shared with web-based services. The School may access, monitor, and review children's use of web-based services and Internet use and children shall not have any expectation of privacy with respect to any communications or activities through such services. Use of web-based services is for educational purposes only and subject to the conduct and acceptable use guidelines set forth in this Handbook. A list of the School's web-based services and corresponding privacy policies are available upon request. By enrolling a child in the School, the parent consents to the child's participation in the School's academic activities and programs, including the child's use of and access to web-based services as described in this paragraph. In order to withhold or withdraw consent for the use of web-based services, parents must contact the School principal in writing.

Dress Code

Student Uniforms

Students wear uniform clothing in grades PK-8. Uniforms are a trademark of our school and we believe that adhering to a clear dress code aids in teaching our students a sense of respect for our place of learning and a development of professionalism and self respect. The uniform promotes a strong sense of community and school identity. Clear boundaries foster learning and minimize distractions as the uniform creates a level playing field for all of our learners.

Our dress code has been established as part of our entire image and agreeing to it—in its entirety—is a prerequisite to attending St. Mary's. Please read and become familiar with our rules and regulations with reference to the dress code. Students in Grades 5-8 will receive a lunch detention after three dress code violations. The complete uniform is to be worn to school and home from school every day. All articles of the uniform should be maintained in a clean and neat manner.

Uniform Company

All uniforms should be purchased through Lands' End. We will transition to using all Lands' End uniforms by the end of this year. For this school year students may wear either Lands' End or Flynn-O'Hara uniforms. By the end of the 2026-2027 school year, all shirts should have the logo on them. Those purchasing them this year will add the logo at checkout.

More information can be found here: https://stmarycatholicschool.org/uniforms/

Order Lands' End: Toll free 800-469-2222 (7am-9pm CST)
Order online: landsend.com

School reference #:900080375

Additionally, all students must own a House t-shirt to be worn on House Spirit Days. This can be purchased through our BJ's Custom Creations Store. Items bought from other sources that do not comply with our uniform regulations will not be permitted.

Uniform Description

Below are the guidelines for uniforms. Warm weather uniforms may be worn from the Beginning of school year through October 12 and April 12 through the end of school year.

Pre-Kindergarten	
Shirt	Red PreK St. Mary's t-shirt ordered through PreK teachers and billed through FACTS Students may wear a white long-sleeve shirt underneath the uniform shirt for warmth
Bottoms	Navy bottoms (skort, sweatpants, dress pants with or without belt) (no leggings)
Shorts (warm weather)	Navy walking shorts
Socks	White ankle socks
Shoes	Sneakers (no light up or wheels)

Girls (Grades K - 5)	
Shirt (must be tucked in)	Short or long sleeve, powder blue or white oxford blouse; short or long sleeve powder blue polo shirt (all with logo); peter pan collars may only be worn with jumper (last year of jumper is 2025/2026)
Skort	Plaid skort
Shorts (warm weather uniform)	Navy walking shorts with waistband and belt loops (belt needed grades 4 and 5)

Pants (Grades K-3)	Navy slacks with waist band

Pants (Grades 4-5)	Navy slacks with belt loop and zipper
Belt (Grades 4-5)	Brown or black

Sweater	Navy untrimmed cardigan or sweater (v-neck or crewneck) (with logo)
Socks	Warm weather - White ankle socks (with sneakers only) Winter Uniform - Navy knee high socks (pulled up)
Tights	Navy tights
Sweatpants	Navy sweatpants may be worn during PE class under uniform skirt
Shoes (Winter uniform)	Solid brown, black, or navy dress shoes with neutral color sole
Sneakers (warm weather uniform and PE days)	Sneakers (no light up or wheels) may be worn during the warm weather uniform with shorts or skirts and white ankle socks. They may also be worn on PE days all year.

Boys **(Grades K - 5)**	
Shirt (must be tucked in)	Short or long sleeve, powder blue or white oxford shirt; short or long sleeve powder blue polo shirt (all with logo)
Shorts (summer uniform)	Navy walking shorts with waistband and belt loops (belt needed for grades 4 and 5)
Pants (Grades K-3)	Navy slacks with waist band
Pants (Grades 4-5)	Navy slacks with belt loop and zipper
Belt (Grades 4-5)	Brown or black
Sweater Socks	Navy untrimmed cardigan, sweater (v-neck or crewneck), vest or ¼ zip (all with logo) Winter Uniform - Navy crew socks - winter uniform Warm weather Uniform and PE Days - White ankle/crew socks (with sneakers only)
Shoes (winter uniform)	Solid brown, black, or navy dress shoes with neutral color sole
Sneakers (warm weather uniform and PE days)	Sneakers (no light up or wheels) may be worn during the warm weather uniform with shorts and white ankle socks. They may also be worn on PE days all year.

Girls **(Grades 6-8)**	

Shirt (must be tucked in)	Short or long sleeve, powder blue or white oxford blouse; short or long sleeve powder blue polo shirt (all with logo); Red polo shirt (all with logo)
Skirt	Plaid skirt
Bike shorts	Navy bike shorts must be worn under the skirt
Shorts (summer uniform)	Navy walking shorts with waistband and belt loops with a belt
Pants	Navy slacks with belt loop and zipper
Belt	Brown or black
Sweater	Navy untrimmed cardigan or sweater (v-neck or crewneck); ¼ zip sweatshirt (all with logo)
Socks	Warm weather Uniform and PE days- White ankle socks (with sneakers only) Winter Uniform - Navy knee high socks (pulled up)
Shoes	Solid brown, black, or navy dress shoes with neutral color sole
Sneakers	Sneakers (no light up or wheels) may be worn during the warm weather uniform with shorts or skirts and white ankle socks. They may also be worn on PE days all year.
Sweatpants	Navy sweatpants may be worn during PE class under uniform skirt

Boys (Grades 6-8)	
Shirt (must be tucked in)	Short or long sleeve, powder blue or white oxford shirt; short or long sleeve powder blue polo shirt (no logo); Red polo shirt (all with logo)
Shorts (summer uniform)	Navy walking shorts with waistband and belt loops with a belt
Pants	Navy slacks with belt loop and zipper
Belt	Brown or black
Sweater	Navy untrimmed cardigan or sweater (v-neck or crewneck);¼ zip sweatshirt (all with logo)
Socks	Warm weather and PE days - White ankle/crew socks (with sneakers only) Winter Uniform - Navy or black crew socks/dress socks

Shoes	Solid brown, black, or navy dress shoes with neutral color sole

Sneakers	Sneakers (no light up or wheels) may be worn during the warm weather uniform with shorts and white ankle socks. They may also be worn on PE days all year.

IMPORTANT UNIFORM GUIDELINES
● ALL shirts must be tucked in (not folded over) at all times
● Girls' shirts may NOT have ruffles, lace, or puckered sleeves on blouses
● Girls polo shirts for warm weather option may not be tailored or form fitting
● Shorts must be worn under skirts

SHOES
● No prints, stripes, plaid, glitter, or sequins may be on the dress shoe
● Sperry-style shoes must meet the guidelines for dress shoes

SNEAKERS
● Sneakers are to be worn only on gym days and with the warm weather uniform shorts
● No roller skate sneakers, slip-on sneakers, or light-up sneakers are allowed
● Sneakers must have laces or Velcro
● The laces must be tied at all times

Physical Education Uniform
SMCS students do not wear a separate uniform or change clothes for PE class. On PE days students may wear sneakers with their normal uniform. Girls may wear navy blue sweatpants under their uniform skirt during PE class but the pants must be taken off immediately after class.

Out-of-Uniform Days
On occasion, there may be out-of-uniforms days scheduled. Clothing may not contain terms, logos, pictures, cartoons, slogans, writing, or images that are offensive, political, harassing, or discriminatory in nature. In addition the following items are not permitted: tank tops, halter or crop tops, bare midriffs, leggings, spandex (shorts or pants), cut-offs, baggy pants, ripped jeans or pants that expose the skin, sleeveless shirts, or any other revealing or inappropriate clothing items. Shorts may be worn during summer uniform months but may be no higher than the uniform walking shorts. If in doubt about the appropriateness of your dress, refer to the "Uniform Code" and "General Information" sections for all students. Flip-flops or other unsecured shoes are not permitted as footwear.

Appearance, Socks, Shoes, Jewelry, Hairstyles, and Hair Accessories

- Clean shaven.
- Hairstyles are to be neatly groomed. Boys' hair is not to exceed the top of the collar, the top of the ear, or be below the eyebrows and of reasonable length and height as to not be disruptive to the learning environment. Sideburns may not exceed the bottom of the ear.
- The following styles are examples of prohibited hairstyles: head shaving, lines and designs, faux-hawks, mohawks, mullets, spikes, or coloring of any kind. St. Mary's Catholic School recognizes that particular hairstyles may be part of social, ethnic, spiritual and cultural identities and practices or adopted for protective purposes. In those cases, it is the policy of St. Mary's Catholic School to permit individual families to receive an exception from this policy, so that they may choose the appropriate cared-for hairstyle for their son or daughter. Should a student have a question about a hairstyle, he or she should contact the principal before getting his/her hair cut or styled.
- Body piercing jewelry is not permitted while on campus. Tattoos must be covered while on campus, and during all school-related events off campus, including during participation in athletic events. Chains or

necklaces, if worn, are not to be visible.

- The final decision as to what constitutes acceptable dress and grooming rests with the principal. Students and parents who have questions regarding the acceptability of certain types of clothing and grooming should consult with the principal before appearing in school with them.

EXPECTATIONS OF GENERAL APPEARANCE - It is important to promote cleanliness and a respectable appearance that fits the occasion and setting for learning while reflecting the dignity of a child of God. In keeping with consistent expectations of appearance, learners are less distracted as we provide clear boundaries that level the playing field; foster learning and provide a sense of professionalism.

JEWELRY

- Must be limited to a watch and ring.
- Girls with pierced ears may wear SMALL STUD earrings, no more than two PER EAR.
- Boys may NOT wear earrings of any type.
- A religious medal is allowed.
- One rubber wrist band supporting an important cause may be worn.
- The final decision on appropriateness will be made by the principal.

MAKE-UP

- Girls in grades 6-8 may wear natural looking make-up (light foundation, eyeshadow, and mascara).

NAIL POLISH

- Girls may wear well-cared for, light colored nail polish on the natural nail (NO ACRYLICS).

HAIR ACCESSORIES

- Simple, small hair ribbons may be worn by girls. (Any hair ribbons that create a distraction will not be permitted.)
- No headbands with long ribbons are permitted.
- No three-dimensional headbands, headbands wider than 1”, or bandanas

COATS AND OUTERWEAR

The following guidelines will be used for outerwear. When the weather is above 60 degrees, a sweatshirt is optional. When the temperature is between 50-60 degrees, a sweatshirt or an outer layer must be worn at recess. If the temperature is below 50 degrees, a coat/ 2 layers should be worn. Children will not be permitted outside for recess in cold weather without a coat. They will be sent to the office.

Labeling Clothes & Belongings

Please label all student belongings with your student’s name.

Lost and Found

Lost and found items can be found in a bin located in the cafeteria.