



August, 2017

Dear Parents and Guardians,

On behalf of the staff at St. Mary School, I am happy to welcome you to the 2017-2018 school year! In choosing St. Mary School you demonstrate a commitment to the values and philosophy of a Catholic education. We applaud your commitment and look forward to working with you throughout the year to promote faith formation, academic excellence, and stewardship. We recognize that in order to be successful in school, our children need support from both the home and school. We know a strong partnership with you will make a great difference in your child's education. As partners, we share the responsibility for our children's success and want you to know that we will do our very best to carry out our responsibilities. SMS is a place rich in tradition and heavily invested in faith and family. Ours is a nurturing, supportive environment that thrives from the contributions of all of its members. Our students are a valued treasure and the future leaders of our church. With the help of faculty, staff, and parents, St. Mary's is a place where children grow as students, in God's love.

We have had several faculty grade changes/assignments during the summer. Mrs. Christine Cole has moved to 4A and will be teaching Science to both 4<sup>th</sup> grade homerooms. Mrs. Bryson (4B) will be teaching math to both 4<sup>th</sup> grade homerooms. Mrs. Maria Fallon has moved to 5B teaching 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade science along with her homeroom subjects of religion and social studies. Mr. Brian Wolf has moved to 7B and will be teaching 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade science along with his homeroom subjects of religion and social studies.

We say good-bye to Mrs. Joan DiCicco and wish her well as she journeys on to a new teaching position. We are grateful for her dedication to our students and our school throughout the past 8 years. Mrs. Jeana Davi will be our new 2A teacher. Mrs. Davi comes to us with many years of experience teaching in another of our diocesan schools. She is also a parishioner of our parish. Mr. Joachim Cendana will be joining us in 6A. Mr. Cendana has been a substitute at our school for the past

few years. Miss Melissa Brino will be our 8B homeroom teacher working with our 7<sup>th</sup> graders in the area of Language Arts and teaching Religion and Social Studies to her 8<sup>th</sup> grade homeroom. All of our new teachers are excited to begin the year and look forward to getting to know the St. Mary School family!

Throughout the summer we have been busy preparing for another amazing year. During this time the school has been deeply cleaned, painting has been completed in kindergarten and the computer room as well as the hallway in that area. Several rooms have new carpet. The gym rafters have been cleaned and repainted. You will also notice that the entry way to Assumption Hall now has tile instead of carpeting. Our dedicated staff has been working hard to ensure a successful **start of school on Wednesday, September 6, 2017.**

Our school day begins at **8:15AM**. Wednesday (Sept. 6th) and Thursday (Sept. 7<sup>th</sup>) will be **1:00PM** dismissal days. Lunch will be served those two days. Friday will be a full day of school. Bus students will be directed into the school building by staff and the Officers of Student Ministry. Those who arrive in cars will meet faculty members along with student safeties. All students will be directed to Assumption Hall where their teachers will assemble the classes. The children will have a brief prayer service before moving to their classrooms. Parents who drop off their children are invited to stay for the service but please be aware that we will be asking you to stand toward the kitchen area as it tends to get quite crowded that morning and we need to make sure the children are with the correct class. New parents and parents of children in grades K-3 are asked to place a name badge on your child/children for at least the first week of school. It is helpful to include the bus number or write "Car Line" to avoid confusion at dismissal. For buses, you will receive a bus pass in the mail from your school district listing the location and time of pick up and drop off. You can expect that the bus will run late the first few weeks of school as the drivers become familiar with the routes. Please be sure that your child carries his/her bus pass in the front pocket of their book bag for teachers or driver reference. Also be sure that your child knows how they are going home each day (bus or car rider). Before School Care and After School Care will be offered beginning the first day of school. After School Care and Before School Care Registration forms can be found on our website.

Our Kindergarten Meet and Greet is scheduled for Wednesday, August 30<sup>th</sup> from 9AM until 12PM. Parents of kindergartners and their child are welcome any time during that morning to bring supplies, meet the teacher, and see the classroom.

When you arrive through the gym, you will be met by our staff and directed to the correct classroom for your child. The class lists for grades K-8 will be posted on Thursday, August 31<sup>st</sup>. You will receive an email that day to let you know the class lists are posted. Only first name will be posted. **Lists will be removed from the website on Monday, September 4<sup>th</sup>.** Our teachers have spent a great deal of time assessing the classes, personalities, and learning styles of our students in order to create a classroom environment that will, we hope, lead to a wonderful learning experience for your child. Your child's placement has been carefully determined after consideration of these factors. It is a very deliberate process and carefully balanced classroom communities have been created. Please respect the time and energy the teachers have put into the creation of these lists. I look for your confidence in the placement. **The homeroom lists will not be changed. Please do not contact the school regarding the class lists.**

Thanks to your help in campaigning and participating in the many Action Alerts that we sent your way. The per pupil dollar amounts in the NJ State Budget have increased in the areas of transportation, nursing, security, technology, and textbooks. Our campaigning is sure to continue moving in to the new school year.

RenWeb is the student information system that we will be using. Current families can use their username and password from last year. New families can visit the front page of the school website and follow the directions under "RenWeb Parent Directions" on how to create their username and password. RenWeb will be available to all families the first day of school.

The Student/Parent Handbook for the 17-18 school year has been updated and will soon be on the website. The Student/Parent Commitment form will be sent home during the first weeks of school confirming that you have read the handbook.

- The Athletic Section has been updated. Students must have all mandatory forms completed before the first practice. All forms are located on the front page of the website. Mr. Rob Logan is our Athletic Director and can be reached at [athletics@smarys.org](mailto:athletics@smarys.org)
- The section on the cafeteria explains our Nutri-Serve Program and how we are a part of the National Lunch Program which enables us to offer free and reduced lunch to those families who qualify. Because we belong to this program one of the stipulations that we must adopt is that any snacks or items sent in to school during the school day may not contain sugar as the first ingredient. We do

not want to jeopardize our participation in the program, so therefore, birthday celebrations must be done through Nutri-Serve only. They have a birthday celebration package that you can purchase to make your child's birthday fun. It is a program that follows the rule in which sugar is not the first ingredient. Treats from parents/guardians are not permitted. Information about birthday celebrations through Nutri-Serve can be found on our website. **We also ask that you do not bring in lunches for your child from outside vendors as this could jeopardize our participation in the National Lunch Program as well.**

**Applications for the participation in the Free and Reduced Lunch School Meals Program will soon be on our website.** Lunch prices for the 17-18 school year will be **\$2.85** for students.

- In the event that a student does not have a lunch or lunch money and to avoid a child going throughout the day without the proper nourishment, we will provide the student a lunch with the cost to be reimbursed by the parent or legal guardian. In the event of extensive non-payment of lunch charges (\$20.00 maximum) students must pack a lunch from home.
- Please note that if you are inviting children to a birthday party and would like the invites distributed in school, you must invite all boys/all girls or the entire class.
- Toys, cards, and electronics are not permitted in school or on the bus.
- Cell phone must be off and in school bags. If phones are found on a student and/or used during the school day, parents will need to pick it up from the school office and the child will be issued a detention.
- All after school activities enter and exit the gym through the side door facing the new parking lot from 3:00PM-5:30PM. The main doors of the gym will be for After School Care pick up only during that time.

Back to School Nights will be on September 13<sup>th</sup> (K-4) and September 20<sup>th</sup> (5-8). This is a great opportunity to visit your child's classroom and meet with his/her teachers. These nights are for parents only. More information about these evenings will follow.

During the first full week of school students in grades 4-8 will be introduced to our band leader, Ms. Cloud. For your planning, there will also be a meeting for the parents of any child who will be new to our band program. This meeting will be on Monday, September 18<sup>th</sup> at 7PM in the Science Lab.

One of our first big events for the new school year will be The Crusader Day Festival scheduled for Saturday, September 30<sup>th</sup>. This day celebrates and supports our athletic program. There will be a new spin to the day including fun games/activities and food trucks! Look for more information in the Communication Folder.

We are in the process of updating our records and School Messenger, our school notification system. If you or any of your emergency contacts have updated phone numbers or emails that need to be corrected or added to our system, please notify Mrs. DiNunzio as soon as possible at [mainoffice@smarys.org](mailto:mainoffice@smarys.org).

We at SMS are committed to improving our teaching and learning approaches so that each student entrusted in our care will meet with success. Our teachers are dedicated professionals who truly believe in the mission of Catholic education. We continue to pursue many professional development opportunities. One of those opportunities will continue this year through the Middle States Accreditation process. This is a self-study of our school in a variety of areas that concludes with a plan for growth and improvement. We will be having a Visiting Team with us at the end of February. You will be hearing about our progress through the process throughout the school year.

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to help your child grow both spiritually and academically! At SMS, your children will be safe, they will be loved, and they will learn! Our teachers are devoted to providing a high, quality education rooted in the Gospel message. I look forward to the work and growth we will all accomplish this year. I hope that you are enjoying a peaceful and relaxing summer! See you soon!

Sincerely,  
Mrs. Patricia Mancuso  
Principal