



August, 2022

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I wish to welcome you to another year at St. Mary School! We look forward to having the children back in our building again *Learning and Living in Christ*. 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. With the help of faculty, staff, and parents, St. Mary's is a place where children grow as students, in God's love.

Throughout the summer we have been busy preparing for another amazing year. Over the break the school has been deeply cleaned, several classrooms and halls have been painted, and we are refreshing the faculty room for the teachers and staff. A new Social Studies series has been purchased for grade 8. Updated student schedules have been created which will include lunch in the cafeteria for all grade levels. Classes will not be split for gym and computer this coming year, so students will wear their gym uniform once per week on gym day. We are currently working on the purchase of several water bottle filling stations to replace the water fountains.

This year we welcome Miss Gianna Morales to our faculty in third grade. Miss Morales is a recent graduate of the College of Education at Rowan University who has been involved in our school over the years as a substitute teacher and a cheer coach. We also welcome Mrs. Katie Hennigan in classroom 5B. Mrs. Hennigan comes to us with many years of experience including a previous position in a Catholic school. Mrs. Maria Howard, who previously was in 5B, will be moving into classroom 6B. In addition, we are happy to have Mrs. Marie Berni join us as full-time counselor. She looks forward to building new relationships with our children. We are pleased to have these dedicated professionals join our team!

Our enrollment efforts continue even throughout the summer. We have advertised, hosted open house events, and reached out to parishioners who have school aged children. Our efforts have gained some new registrations over the summer, with promising leads for more. However, several parents told us at the end of last school year that their children would be attending other schools for various reasons. As a result, first grade currently has 25 students enrolled, so we will be offering one class of first grade for the upcoming school year. Mrs. Lindsay Audio will continue as first grade teacher, and Mrs. Erin Hagny is excited to be moving to grade 2. This could change with more registrations for first grade. Word of mouth is the best marketing tool for our school. Be sure to

spread the word to your family and friends about the great spiritual and academic experiences that your children have had at St. Mary's!

Our school year will begin with a staggered schedule. School begins at 8:15AM. Preschool opening information was sent home directly to the preschool families.

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|-------------------------------|------------------------|---|
| <b>Tuesday, September 6</b>   | <b>Grades K-4 only</b> | <b>12:15 DISMISSAL – NO LUNCH<br/>NO BEFORE/AFTER CARE</b>          |
| <b>Wednesday, September 7</b> | <b>Grades 5-8 only</b> | <b>12:15 DISMISSAL- NO LUNCH<br/>NO BEFORE/AFTER CARE</b>           |
| <b>Thursday, September 8</b>  | <b>All students</b>    | <b>FULL DAY OF SCHOOL –<br/>LUNCH, BEFORE/ AFTER CARE<br/>BEGIN</b> |
| <b>Friday, September 9</b>    | <b>All students</b>    | <b>FULL DAY OF SCHOOL</b>   |

When the students arrive on their first day of school they will report directly to Assumption Hall where their teachers will assemble the classes. The children will participate in a brief prayer service before moving to their classrooms. Parents who drop off their children are invited to stay for the service.

We ask that all parents driving their children to school, follow the car line in the morning and drop the students off as directed by the teachers. As you enter the parking lot during arrival time, you will follow the car line that goes to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade doors or the one that will allow you to drop off at the gym doors. Please do not get out of your cars when dropping off the children. We will most likely have more car riders this year and we will need to keep the lines moving.

Bus riders will enter through side gym door. Starting on the Thursday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, all children will report directly to their homeroom when they enter the building. New students and kindergarten students will be escorted to their homeroom.

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, car rider, or After Care). **Before School Care and After School Care will not be offered the first two days of school. Both programs will begin on Thursday, September 8<sup>th</sup>.** After School Care and Before School Care Registration forms can be found on our website. You must submit a registration form in order for your child to attend the programs. Parents must register a full week in advance before their child(ren) can attend After Care.

Nurse Val will be checking in medication during the first week of school. She will be at a table outside the main office door on Carroll Ave. from 8am to 9am the first four days of school. Please bring your completed paperwork and medication order form along with the medication.

For car rider dismissal, Grades K and 1 will exit through the gym doors, grades 2, 3, and 4 will exit through the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade doors and grades 5- 8 will exit through the 8<sup>th</sup> grade doors. Please move directly to your cars when your children exit the building. Cars may exit through the middle driveway of the parking lot as usual. Please note that the third driveway to exit the grounds will be for buses only. The parking area is to be exited immediately after dismissal. For the safety of our students and families, you must follow the correct traffic patterns, drive down the correct lanes, and do not cut through the lanes or the green lines near the exit. We will dismiss a few grades at a time, leaving time in between for cars to move safely out of the lot. Please be patient in the parking lot.

Students in grades 8 are expected to bring their own device each day to school. Devices are to be password protected and have a virus protection. Students are to bring their charged device to school beginning the first day. All other students will be issued a school Chromebook in the beginning of the school year which will be kept in school. Expectations regarding the use of the technology will be sent home to parents from the teachers. Students are responsible for the care and safety of their assigned device.

If your child is absent for any reason, please be sure to call our absence line x250 and let us know the symptoms your child is experiencing. All absent students need to be called out of school for an absence by 9AM. If your child will be late to school, please call the absence line as well. When you arrive to school, accompany your child to the front door on Carroll Ave. and sign a tardy slip which is in the drop off box located outside of the front door.

Kindergarten Meet and Greet is scheduled for Wednesday, August 31<sup>st</sup>. Kindergarten parents will be sent a link through email to Sign Up Genius which will allow you to choose a time to bring supplies, meet the teacher, and see the classroom. When you arrive, please park in the lot and enter the school through the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade doors. Someone will be at the door to welcome you. Our staff will then direct you to the correct classroom for your child.

For all other grades after 12PM on Thursday, September 1<sup>st</sup> you will receive a confidential email from Mrs. Morales at [mainoffice2@smarys.org](mailto:mainoffice2@smarys.org) with a link to view your child's homeroom teacher. You will click on the link to open up the report that will state homeroom teacher. If the link does not work properly, you may also copy and paste the link into a web browser. If your email has changed over the summer please email Mrs. Morales at the address above with your new email address. **Please do not wait until September 1<sup>st</sup> to let us know of a change of email address as it will be too late for us to get back to you. Email is the only way in which you will receive information regarding placement in class.** 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. Requests for placement were taken into consideration but are not guaranteed. **The homeroom placement will not be changed. Please do not contact the school regarding the changing of homerooms. Placement will not be changed.**

RenWeb is the student information system that we will be using. Current families can use their username and password from last year. If you do not have your username and/or password from last year you will need to email RenWeb. Mrs. Morales does not have access to your username or password. New families can visit the school website and follow the directions on the home page on how to create their username and password. RenWeb will be available to all families on the first day of school.

We will continue to use the drop box outside of the main office for forgotten items from home. The box will be checked on a regular basis throughout the day. Both the drop off and pick up boxes will remain open until 3:30 each day.

The Student/Parent Handbook has been briefly updated and will be 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. Just a few reminders.....

- Athletics for any sport... 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. 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. The application for the participation in the Free and Reduced Lunch School Meals Program will soon be on our home page of our website.** Lunch prices for the 22-23 school year will be \$3.10 for students.
  - Cell phones 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. Apple Watches and FitBits are not permitted.
  - Students are **not** permitted to wear hoodies or crew neck sweatshirts with the school uniform during the school day. Cardigans are optional and available for purchase at Flynn and O'Hara. In addition, we are offering a Navy Blue Embroidered Fleece Jacket (approved to wear with spring and winter school uniforms). Please note: this is in addition to the vest and can be purchased through the PTA. See link below:  
<https://www.stmarys-williamstown-pta.org/>
- All fleece jacket orders must be placed no later than Wednesday, August 24, 2022 by 11:59 pm.. Any questions, contact [pta@smarys.org](mailto:pta@smarys.org)**
- Gym sweat pants are to be cotton material not nylon.
  - School shoes must be **ALL black**.

- For the winter uniform, boys in grades 5-8 must wear the navy/maroon and silver striped tie.

Please refer to the Uniform Policy in the handbook under general appearance regarding haircuts/color (**bleached hair and fad haircuts** are not permitted), hair bows, nail polish, and jewelry. Boys hair must be above the eyebrow, above the collar and properly groomed. Proper dress for the use of a NUT (no uniform today) card is explained in the handbook. Open back shoes are not permitted on NUT card days. Parents will be asked to bring a change of clothes if students are not in compliance with the policy.

Back to School Nights will be on Wednesday, September 14<sup>th</sup> (K-4) and Wednesday, September 21<sup>th</sup> (5-8). More details will be sent home at a later date.

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).

The safety of our faculty, staff and students is always a priority. We continue to update our security systems, doors, cameras, access card system etc.... not only in the summer but throughout the school year too.

If you would like to volunteer for lunch monitoring, room parent, sports etc.... please contact Mrs. Morales [mainoffice2@smarys.org](mailto:mainoffice2@smarys.org) regarding fingerprinting and Virtus training.

We are charging a \$100 technology fee per child which is going towards updating/improving our technology and operating systems for both students and teachers. This includes new, updated Clear Touch Boards for each classroom, professional development, and Chrome books for student use. The \$100 fee can be sent in to school with your child beginning on the first day of school. This fee is due by September 30, 2022.

Thank you for reading through all of this information! Our partnership with our families is more important than ever. It will take all of us working together to make this school year a success! As parents/guardians you, along with your children, are a part of our faith community. I encourage you to adjust your schedules so that you are able to attend Saturday evening/Sunday mass. The times for mass at Our Lady of Peace Parish are: Saturday 4:00PM, Sunday 7:30AM, 9:00AM, 10:30AM, 12:00PM and 6:00PM. We are confident that the collaborative, innovative, faithful and compassionate spirit of our SMS family will lead us to grow and thrive in this constantly changing world. I look forward to working with you this school year!

God Bless,

Mrs. Patricia Mancuso  
Principal