

Student/Parent Handbook



**Williamstown, NJ
2026-2027**

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St. Mary School

Principal's Disclaimer

IMPORTANT NOTICE

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

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

Mission Statement

Our mission is to prepare today's students for tomorrow's world in a faith-filled, welcoming Catholic community committed to academic excellence and service to others.

MOTTO

Learning and Living in Christ

Nondiscrimination Policy

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

ST. MARY SCHOOL: Faculty and Staff

2026-2027

ADMINISTRATION

Reverend Sanjai Devis, V.C.

Pastor

Mrs. Patricia Mancuso

Principal

Mrs. Mary Baron

Business Administrator

FACULTY/STAFF

Mrs. Christy Aponte

PreK 4 Teacher

Mrs. Tiziana DiMauro

PreK 3 Teacher

Mrs. Elizabeth Calvo

PreK 4 Aide

Mrs. Kristi Dickerson

PreK 4Aide

Mrs. Nicole Lenhardt

PreK 3 Aide

Ms. Stephanie Wittstock

PreK 3Aide

Mrs. Elaine Contrevo

PreK 3 Aide

Mrs. Stacy Silvestro

K1

Mrs. Linda Black

K1 Aide

Mrs. Melinda Giuliani

K2 / Athletic Director

Mrs. Megan Guers

K2 Aide

Mrs. Julianne LaRosa

1A

Mrs. Lindsay Audio

1B / Aftercare Director

Mrs. Mary Sanger

1A and 1B Aide

Ms. Kerry DeCosta

2A

Miss Mackenzie McNelia

2B

Mrs. Tracey Crowthers

2A and 2B Aide

Mrs. Nancy Rinehimer

3A

Mrs. Megan Bryson

3B

Mrs. Elisabeth Simon

4A

Mrs. Tiffany Arrowood

4B

Ms. Lisa Lorusso

5A

Mrs. Sarah Coffey

6A

Mrs. Maria Howard

6B

Mrs. Jennifer Bottino

7A

Mr. Brian Wolf

7B

Ms. Dominae Worstall

8A

Ms. Melissa Brino

8B / Assistant Principal

Mr. John Bakley

6th, 7th, 8th Grade Advanced Math, H.O.T. Program

Mr. Raymond Moffa

Physical Education, Health

Mrs. Tonya Riggins

Art

Ms. Cheryl DeFalco

H.O.T Program, Science Lab Coordinator

Mrs. Robin Busch	Music
Mr. Daniel Carter	Technology / Computers
Mrs. Sandra Randazzi	Spanish
Mrs. Melissa DiNunzio	Secretary (Main Office)
Mrs. Ann Marie Morales	Secretary (Main Office)
Mrs. Marie Berni	Counselor
Mrs. Barbara Dillon	School Nurse
Miss Madison Hindermyer	School Nurse
Mrs. Jacqueline Kern	Advancement Director
Mr. Gerald Rose	Maintenance/Custodial
Ms. Erin Whittaker	Performing Arts
Mr. Ryan Macken	Band

Important Phone Numbers

School Office - (856) 629-6190	School Fax Number: (856) 728-1437
Parish Office – (856) 629- 6142	E-mail: mainoffice@smarys.org
	Website: www.smarys.org

Parish Support Staff

Reverend Sanjai Devis, V.C.	Pastor
Reverend Naveen Borlakunta, V.C.	Parochial Vicar
Mrs. Lisa Caso	Religious Ed/Sacrament Program
Mrs. Paula Fiore	Religious Ed/Sacrament Program

School Board

Mrs. Jacqueline Kern	Mrs. Annemarie Norton
Mrs. Patricia Mancuso	Mrs. Mary Baron
Rev. Sanjai Devis	

PTA Board

Kate McDermott – President & Spirit Wear Coordinator

pta@smarys.org

Annemarie Norton- Vice President & SCRIP Coordinator

Colleen Hemphill- Vice President & School Store Coordinator

Linsie Decker- Room Parent Coordinator & Book Fair Coordinator

Lisa Meddings- Uniform Exchange Coordinator's

58 Members at Large

School Hours/Office Hours

School day begins at 8:15AM Dismissal is 2:45PM
Office Hours – Monday through Friday 8:00AM-3:30PM
Cars/Walkers drop off time no earlier than 7:50 AM

Introduction to our Catholic School

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

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

Catholic School Environment

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

- Communicate respectfully and charitably with all faculty, staff, administrators, and other families.
- Express concerns or disagreements through appropriate channels (beginning with the teacher or school administration), avoiding gossip, public criticism, or confrontation.
- Use constructive dialogue when addressing school issues; inflammatory language, threats, or harassment of any kind will not be tolerated.
- Cooperate with the school in its efforts to develop students spiritually, academically, socially, and emotionally.
- Ensure that their children abide by the policies contained in this handbook and to support the school in its delivery and administration of all programs and all aspects of student life.
- Attend parent meetings, conferences, and participate in school life as circumstances allow.
- Be truthful and timely in communication with school staff regarding attendance, academics, and other student matters.
- Follow all school safety procedures, including check-in/check-out protocols, parking guidelines, and visitor policies.

- Respect the physical boundaries and roles of faculty and staff—do not enter classrooms, offices, or staff spaces without permission.
- Never discipline another child on school property. Any concerns must be directed to the appropriate school personnel.
- Use contact lists, directories, and school communication tools only for school-related purposes. Do not use school resources to distribute political, commercial, or non-school-related materials.

Violation of the above expectations, including behavior or spoken or written communication, including via social media, by parents/guardians, or anyone acting on their behalf, incompatible with the educational and religious mission of the school, or that is determined to be violent, abusive, recalcitrant, excessively negative, or an attempt to intimidate or harass any member of the school community, will not be tolerated. If reasonable attempts to resolve the behavior are not successful, the parent may be excluded from the school grounds and school activities, or other action may be taken including, but not limited to, disenrollment of the student.

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

Human Sexuality

The Catholic Church teaches, "By creating the human being man and woman, God gives personal dignity equally to the one and the other. Each of them, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his or her sexual identity." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2393).

St. Mary School strives to be welcoming, respectful, and sensitive to each student's unique needs, while always being clear about Church teachings. Because the mission of a Catholic school is to form students in the Faith, we must always be true to the teachings of that Faith, even—indeed especially—when those teachings do not suit society's currently-popular views. Some accommodations to address particular needs may be advisable and possible, but a Catholic school cannot provide accommodations when doing so would in any way compromise the teachings of the Church, or introduce confusion about its teachings.

Religious Formation

Parents/guardians are the primary educators of a child in faith. It is our expectation that families who choose to enroll their child/children in our schools are involved in a faith community. For a Catholic family that community is the parish.

All families are expected to report a religious affiliation. For Catholic families, you will be asked annually to keep your parish registration information current. The reception of First Holy Communion, Reconciliation and Confirmation are at the parish church. St. Mary School will inform parishes of registration information so that the parish can communicate with the families about important faith formation opportunities.

Sacramental Policy

Preparation for the reception of First Penance, First Communion and Confirmation is a two- year program. There is a Communion and Confirmation Fee. As per diocesan policy, all sacraments are to be received in the parish of registration. If your child is attending St. Mary School and is registered in a parish other than Our Lady of Peace Parish, parents are responsible to arrange with the Director of Religious Education for the parish where your family is registered for your child to receive his/her First Penance, First Communion or Confirmation.

It is recommended and highly encouraged that those in the sacramental years participate in the parish May Procession.

Sacramental preparation requires mandatory child and parent retreats.

School Policies/Regulations/Programs

Academic Dishonesty

Students who are caught committing any form of academic dishonesty, which may include the unauthorized use of AI, will forfeit the points for the assignment or may redo the assignment for partial credit at the teacher's discretion and will be subject to the school procedures and punishments enforced by school administrators.

Academic Growth

All students are expected to exhibit great effort toward their own academic growth. Attention during classes, quality preparation, and careful completion of homework will insure a successful journey toward academic growth. Class participation, coming to class prepared, actively listening and being on task are factored into grades in every subject area. Communication among students, parents and teachers is also an important ingredient in a student's academic program.

Admissions and Enrollment

Admission Policies and Requirements

Pre-Kindergarten

Children may be admitted to the three-year-old program or four-year-old pre-kindergarten program if they have turned three or four years old by September 30 of the school year in which they will participate in the three or four-year-old pre- kindergarten program. All children admitted to any pre-kindergarten program must be able to use the toilet without assistance. A school may admit a student to a pre-kindergarten program who is unable to use the toilet without assistance if the student has documented health or developmental condition and accommodating the condition does not place undue burden on the school.

Kindergarten

Children may be admitted to a Kindergarten program if they have turned five years old by September 30 of the school year in which they will participate in Kindergarten. Any child who will turn five years old after September 30 whose parents seek enrollment in Kindergarten must be examined by a recognized professional (approved by the Diocesan Schools Office) to determine his/her readiness for Kindergarten. A copy of the examination must be forwarded to the Diocesan Superintendent who will make a judgment on the report. The principal must have a letter from the Superintendent of Schools indicating that the child may be accepted.

Transfer Students

Students who request admission to a Catholic school must be developmentally, academically, behaviorally, and socially prepared to meet the demands of the grade for which admission is sought. Students seeking admission to grades 1-12 must show evidence of successful completion of the previous grade. The individual seeking admission of a child to a Catholic school must show identification and, if applicable, relevant documentation that he or she is the custodian of the child. A civil birth certificate, evidence of required immunizations, and any other health information as required by the state of NJ for school enrollment are required for admission to all Catholic schools. Catholic students must provide a copy of the baptismal certificate and dates of the reception of the sacraments of First Communion, First Reconciliation, and Confirmation, if applicable.

Probationary Period for New Students

New students admitted to St. Mary School will have a probationary period to assure academic performance, behavior, and general expectations for a St. Mary Student are met.

Terms of Enrollment

The decision regarding who is admitted to the Catholic school at any grade, including pre-kindergarten, shall rest within the sole discretion of the school.

Continuing Enrollment and Re-Enrollment

Enrollment and re-enrollment at St. Mary School are contingent upon the ongoing cooperation of both students and parents with the school's mission, policies, and expectations. As a Catholic school, we strive to create a learning environment rooted in the Gospel, Catholic teachings, respect, and academic excellence. To maintain this environment, continued enrollment is subject to the following conditions:

- Parents/guardians are expected to support the school's mission, uphold its policies and this Handbook, and maintain respectful and collaborative communication with faculty, staff, and administration.
- Students and parents/guardians must demonstrate behavior consistent with the values and expectations of the school community, including respect for others, self-discipline, and adherence to the school's code of conduct.
- Students are expected to maintain satisfactory academic progress. The school will work with families to support student growth, but significant or ongoing academic underperformance without evidence of improvement may jeopardize continued enrollment.
- If, at any point, the administration determines that a student's educational, behavioral, emotional, or social needs exceed the resources the school can reasonably provide, the school reserves the right to recommend or require withdrawal.
- Decisions regarding continued enrollment are made at the discretion of the administration and are final. Our priority is to ensure that every student in our care is in an environment in which they can flourish.

After/Before School Care Programs

Our After School Care Program provides care for children until 5:30 pm each day the school is open, including scheduled early dismissal days. The curriculum for the After School Care Program provides snacks and drinks, movies, and periods for play. All children must be picked up before

5:30 pm, or a late fee will be incurred. Please make other arrangements if your child/children cannot be picked up by 5:30 pm. All students must be registered to attend. If picking up your child early from the program, please wait until buses depart for the day. **The After School Care Program will not be available in the event of an emergency school closing.** Please refer to the After Care Program Handbook for further information.

Before School Care is also offered beginning at 7:15 am. **The Before School Care program will not be available if school has a two- hour delay for inclement weather.** Forms and information on both the After School Care and the Before School Care can be found on our website. Payment for both programs is to be made on a weekly basis.

Annual Fund Program

The **St. Mary School Annual Fund** has been established to enable parents, parishioners, alumni, grandparents, faculty, staff and friends of St. Mary School to donate the full amount of what would otherwise be a small percentage of profit from a school wide sales event. This is a crucial part of the funds needed to continue to provide the quality education and services your child receives here at St. Mary School beyond our daily curriculum. Donations to our Annual Fund enable us to provide our students with access to a quality education and the skills for success now and in the future. Tuition covers only 75% of the school's annual expenses, so we count on your generosity to help promote our school and its mission. Because of this program we have greatly limited the individual fund raising activities. Any questions regarding the St. Mary Annual Fund should be directed to Jackie Kern, Advancement Director.

Attendance

To promote success, it is essential for every student to attend school regularly. This ensures that students are consistently exposed to lessons and participate in classroom discussions. Attending school regularly helps the students stay on top of assignments and develop strong study habits. St. Mary School expects that every child be present in school each day unless illness or other serious reasons prevent the student from attending school. Regular attendance is important to a child's academic progress. If for any reason your child is absent from school, a parent/guardian must call the school at 856-629-6190 ext. 250 no later than 9:00 am to report the absence and leave a message with your child's symptoms or the reason for their absence, and if you would like homework/books to go home with another student or sent to the main office and placed in the pickup box for parent pick up between 2:45 pm and 3:30 pm. **Homework/books will not be sent home if the request is not made by 9:00 am.** The main office and teachers and/or teachers will not accept email notifications if your child is absent.

Absences

Teachers or the office staff will document all student absences in POWERSCHOOL. **For legal and safety reasons, the school is required to know the whereabouts of all students during school hours. When a student returns to school after being absent, they must provide a written explanation from a parent/guardian for the absence on the day they return. If a student has been absent for three (3) or more consecutive days, a doctor's note is required upon their return to school. All notes will be kept in the students medical file. Please note that St. Mary School does not recognize any absences as "excused." All absences must be accompanied by the appropriate written documentation (parent/guardian note or doctor's note for extended absences) as outlined above.** When a student is absent from school they are unable to attend after school activities.

Family vacations planned during the school year are strongly discouraged. Students miss important classroom instruction that interrupts the learning process as well as school work and homework which can affect the student's grades in each subject. **If a student is absent due to a family vacation, no homework or classwork will be provided in advance of the vacation. Students are responsible for catching up on missed work upon their return to school. Teachers will assist students in making up missed assignments but will not provide work ahead of time. Classwork and homework assignments will be given to the student once they return to school. All missed assignments are expected to be completed in a timely manner, which may vary by grade. Upper grade students (Grades 5-8) are expected to check for missed assignments upon return.**

Diocesan Policy Regarding Absenteeism

After 10 cumulative days of absence, a warning letter will be sent to the parents. The parents are requested to sign and return it to the principal. After 18 cumulative days of absence, a letter will be sent to the parents to contact the principal to set up a conference to discuss appropriate corrective measures. If absenteeism continues, the decision to request a student's retention or withdrawal is the responsibility of the principal. Elementary school students who have 18 or more absences from school are in danger of not being promoted to the next grade, which may require summer school. Excessive absenteeism negatively affects a student's grades.

A student may not participate in or attend an extracurricular activity on the day he/she is absent from school or leaves early from school due to illness.

Early Dismissal

All requests for early dismissal must be in writing and given to the student's homeroom teacher. Dismissal changes will not be accepted by email. If you need to make a dismissal change during the day, parents must call the office before 1:00 pm. **The homeroom teacher or main office will not accept a dismissal change by email.** When students are picked up for early dismissal, they must be signed out in the drop box to the left of the main office door. When a student is picked up for early dismissal, they must be signed out in the drop box to the left of the main office door and picked up no later than 2:00 pm on full days or 11:30 am on half days.

Tardiness

We kindly request that parents/guardians are requested to make every effort to see that children arrive on time each day. St. Mary School begins at 8:15 am. If a child is not in his/her classroom at that time, he/she is late for school. If a child will be late for school, the parent/guardian must contact the attendance line at 856-629-6190 ext. 250. If late, the parent/guardian must accompany the child to the front door of the school and sign a tardy slip in the drop box. He/she then brings that slip to the homeroom teacher. Punctuality is important in the education of every child. After 10 days tardy, a letter will be sent to the parent/guardian. The parent/guardian are requested to sign and return the letter. After 18 days tardy, a letter will be sent to the parent/guardian to contact the principal to set up a conference to discuss appropriate corrective measures. Lateness can have a direct impact on a child's academic performance, as it often results in missed instruction and disrupted learning. Students who are late to school 24 times or more may be required to make up the time during the summer.

Students are expected to arrive between 7:50 am and 8:15 am for homeroom. This is an important part of the school day as students are required to complete morning work, write down

homework assignments, and organize materials for the day. Students arriving late for school may be required to complete the morning work for homework.

Books

Students and parents are responsible for all text and workbooks issued to students. All schoolbooks must be covered. Writing on bindings/pages is not permitted. Books are very expensive and if damaged or lost, the cost of the book must be paid for in full. Binders are not permitted unless requested by the teacher.

Cafeteria

St. Mary School offers a quality hot/cold lunch program. Our lunch program is handled by the Nutri-Serve Company. They work with the school to make sure that we follow the mandates set by the New Jersey Department of Agriculture who monitors schools involved in the National lunch programs. Menus will be posted on our website monthly. We are part of the National Lunch Program which enables us to offer free and reduced lunches to students whose family qualifies. Information is sent home in September along with the application for this program.

Each student will have their own account and parents are asked to keep the account up to date. To replenish the account, please send checks in an envelope marked cafeteria with your child's name and grade listed. If there is a negative balance only lunches can be charged. Snacks may not be charged with a negative balance. You can review your child activities by contacting the cafeteria at 856-629-6190 ext. 317.

One of the stipulations of the National Lunch Program each school must adopt is that any snacks or items sent into school during the school day may not contain sugar as the first ingredient. Nutri-Serve has 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. Information on this program is posted on our website. Birthday treats from parents/guardians are not permitted. This is an easy way to help celebrate your child's birthday with their classmates. Please contact Donna Daly at smw@nsfm.com to order for your child's birthday celebration package.

We ask that parents do not drop off lunch for their child from outside vendors. It is always a possibility that our school could have an impromptu inspection by the state. We do not want to be fined or denied the ability to participate in the National Lunch Program.

Celebrations During the School Day

Students may have celebrations under the guidance of their homeroom teacher. Celebrations (Halloween, Christmas, Valentines) should be limited in time to guarantee students will have the appropriate amount of instructional time. St. Mary School participates in the National Free and Reduced Lunch Program. One of the stipulations of the National lunch program each school must adopt is that any snacks or items sent into school during the school day may not contain sugar as the first ingredient. We also are aware that many of our students have allergies and medical conditions that prohibit them from certain foods. **Therefore, all birthday celebrations which will include treats, must be done through Nutri-Serve, which has a birthday celebration package. Birthday treats from parents/guardians are not permitted.** Nutri-Serve needs one week notice regarding these celebrations. See website for additional information or contact Donna Daly at smw@nsfm.com. Birthday NUT days are to be worn during winter months.

If you are planning a birthday celebration outside of school and would like to send invitations to the class you must either include all girls, all boys or the whole class in order for them to be distributed in school.

Change of Contact Information

To ensure the safety and well-being of your child, it is **critical** that the school has **accurate and up-to-date contact and address information** on file. If your phone number, email address, home address, or emergency contact changes, please notify the school office **as soon as possible**. It is imperative that correct pertinent information be on file in POWERSCHOOL, the main office, and the nurse's office to use for both emergency and non-emergency issues. If your family moves during the school year, please contact the main office with your new address and you will be required to complete a new B6T transportation form for your student.

Cell Phones/Other Electronic Devices

Student's use of cell phones and other personal electronic devices during school hours is prohibited. Chrome books are the property of the school and are issued to the students for academic purposes only and are not to be taken home. Ear buds/Air Pods may only be used when directed by the teacher. **The school is not responsible for any lost or stolen phones or other electronic devices, including Air Pods.** Electronic devices, including expensive electronic watches including smart watches, fitness monitors, and other internet capable wrist devices are not permitted in St. Mary School or on the bus to and from school as well as on field trips. If parents wish their child(ren) to have a cell phone with them for emergencies, students at St. Mary School may have one in their backpacks. Cell phones **must be turned off** while in school. Phones **may not** be in student's pockets, lunchboxes, pocketbooks and desks. If a student has a phone on his/her person, if a student's cell phone rings or is used during the school day, it will be sent to the office and the student will receive a possible after school or lunch detention. **When cell phones or electronic devices are sent to the office, the parent will need to pick up the phone from the school office.**

Non-staff use of any type of camera or video or audio recording device, including cameras and microphones integrated into cell phones or other personal devices, on the school campus during the school day, is strictly prohibited without the expressed signed permission of the school principal. A violation of this policy may result in the device being confiscated and will result in disciplinary action including removal from the school.

Class Placement

Placement of students in a particular classroom is the responsibility of the faculty and administration. The staff takes into consideration the learning styles and the personalities of the students and tries to blend these qualities into each classroom to create the best learning environment for the students. Placement that is considered most beneficial to the students will be determined at the faculty and staff's discretion.

Communication

At St. Mary School we believe that **open and consistent communication with families** is one of the most important ways we can support your child's success. We are committed to keeping you informed through calls, emails, and weekly communication. Each Tuesday, we will include on the website the latest news of school events and updated information. We will send an email reminder

and we ask parents to review each week so you will be well informed. All other communication will be through POWERSCHOOL.

Communication/POWERSCHOOL

POWERSCHOOL is a school management system used by St. Mary School to manage student records, grades, communication, and more. It gives parents secure, online access to important school and student information. The parents log into POWERSCHOOL to view assignments, grades, report cards, and monitor attendance. Teachers have the ability to comment on homework, assignments, and classroom behavior. It is the responsibility of the parents to access POWERSCHOOL as least once a week. Homework grades, classwork grades, quizzes, and test grades are posted with one week of completion. **It is the responsibility of the parent to access grades/report cards from POWERSCHOOL.** Homework grades, class work grades, quizzes, and test grades are posted within several days of completion.

Parents are required to create their own username and password. You must view your student's site monthly or your password will deactivate. **If for any reason you lose or misplace your password, due to security issues, the school does not have access to your password. You must request a new password directly from the log-in page of POWERSCHOOL.** It is through POWERSCHOOL that you will also view your child's report card. You will be able to print out a copy for your records. Although Kindergarten uses an assessment system in which daily assessments are not available on POWERSCHOOL, Kindergarten report cards can be accessed through POWERSCHOOL during the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th quarters. Report cards are not available in POWERSCHOOL from previous years so please print out the final report cards at the end of each school year.

Conferences

Conferences are scheduled in the fall. If a parent wishes a conference outside the scheduled time, requests can be made in writing to the teacher. Teachers will be happy to arrange a mutually acceptable time to meet but may not be available during school time or lunch time. The principal is also available for a conference. A note to the principal or a call to the Main Office will facilitate this communication.

Court Decisions

Court decisions that affect dismissal patterns or school communications need to be explained to the School Office by the custodial parent. The school would need a copy of the official court decision.

Custodial Agreements and Student Access

It is the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian to present to the school a notarized copy of the court order determining custody agreements. The copy will be kept in a confidential file. The school abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment. Thus, non-custodial parents will be given access to academic records, information regarding the academic progress of their children, and be subject to receiving phone calls and email communications from the school regarding academics and behavior concerns unless there is a court order specifically stating that a non-custodial parent is denied access to that information.

Curriculum

An overview of the school curriculum can be found on the school web site: www.smarys.org.

Extracurricular Programs

There are many extra-curricular programs available to all students at St. Mary School.

Students are strongly encouraged to participate wherever their interests and abilities are best served.

All St. Mary students must maintain adequate grades in each of their courses in order to participate in extracurricular programs. The principal and faculty shall closely monitor all student performance. All students in grades 5-8 who participate in extra-curricular activities are expected to maintain all grades above 75 in major subjects, with no NI or U grades in minor subjects

Grades will be reviewed mid-marking period (four weeks), students with a “D” will be notified that they must maintain adequate grades to remain eligible and students with a failing grade in a major subject will be notified that they are ineligible for extra-curricular activities for two weeks. Ineligible students can become eligible with acceptable grades after two weeks.

Students who fail a subject on the report card, or have an NI or U in any area for the marking period will be ineligible for extra-curricular activities for the first four weeks of the next marking period. Ineligible students may become eligible with acceptable grades after four weeks. It is the Athletic Director’s responsibility to inform moderators/coaches if a child may not participate for any length of time.

Students who participate in school-sponsored activities are representatives of the school and are subject to the disciplinary codes of the school while attending these events. Violations may be considered grounds for a ruling of ineligibility in addition to other disciplinary action as deemed appropriate. **Students who are absent from school for a day or leave early due to illness may not attend or participate in an extracurricular activity after school on that day or during that evening.**

Parental support of the above mentioned policies are important to secure a place in a school-sponsored activity. Programs are offered based on number of students interested and the availability of coaches.

Extracurricular Programs

Student Government

Ministry of Student Leadership Grades 4 to 8

Academic

Yearbook Grade 8

Spiritual

Altar Servers Grades 3 to 8

School Choir Grades 2 to 8

Rosary Club Grades 3 to 8

Social

Science Explorers Grades 1 to 5

Instrumental Music Grades 3 to 8

Chess Club Grades K to 8

Performing Arts Grades 4 to 8

Autism Awareness Grades 6 to 8

Craft Club Grades K-3

Sports

Basketball

Intramural Grades K to 3

JV Girls	Grades 4 to 6
V Girls	Grades 7 & 8
JV Boys	Grades 4 to 6
V Boys	Grades 7 & 8
Baseball	
Boys	Grades 5 to 8
Girls Cheerleading	
Intramural	Grades K to 2
Competition	
Cheer Team	Grades 3-8
Soccer	
Intramural	Grades K to 3
	Grades 5-8
Track	Grades K to 8
Cross Country	Grades 2 to 8
Volleyball	Grades 5 to 8 (Girls)
Flag Football	
Intramural	Grades 1-4
	Grades 5-8

Extracurricular Activities – Drop Off/Pick Up

All students participating in any afterschool activity in and around the gym area during the hours of 3:00 pm-5:30 pm will need to be dropped off and picked up from the side doors of Assumption Hall, which are located in the new parking lot. Students may not enter through the main doors of Assumption Hall for the safety of all students. Coaches and/or staff will be at the doors for all drop offs and pickups.

Dismissal Procedures

Students will be dismissed from school according to the method designated by their parents/guardians. If they are registered for bus transportation, they will be directed to await the arrival of their bus. It is the responsibility of each student to listen carefully for their bus to be called. Students must walk in the hallway and on the sidewalk to their bus. Students going home by cars will be escorted to the areas outside the school facing the parking lot by the faculty who will monitor their safety, until the arrival of parents/guardians who will walk them to their vehicles. When picking up students from school, parents/guardians are asked to park in the **SMS parking lot and not on Carroll Ave.**

Students are not permitted to leave the car line until they are dismissed by a faculty member. For the safety of all students, once car riders are dismissed they should report directly to their parent/guardian. Students should not run, perform gymnastics, or wait/play by the doors. Only adults with permission may take a student out of the designated waiting area. If someone other than parent/guardian is picking up in car line, we need a note stating the name of the person picking up. **If there is to be a change in a child's dismissal procedure, parents/guardians must send a note to the homeroom teacher or call the Main Office to notify a school secretary by 1:00 p.m. If you are picking your child up for an appointment or for a special need, please do so by 2:00 p.m. Students will not be dismissed early after 2:00 p.m.** Email to the student's teacher and school secretaries about dismissal changes will not be accepted due to safety reasons. Unless we receive direct communication from the parent/guardian at the main office, students will be directed

to their usual method of travel home from school. Students may not be picked up on school grounds by a taxi or ride sharing service.

Discipline Plan

The word *discipline* is linked to the word “disciple” which means “pupil” or “one who is learning.” We feel that allowing children to grow means allowing them to be responsible for mistakes and take ownership of them. St. Mary School believes a positive discipline policy is the best way to accomplish this. By providing positive guidance and discipline, we are teaching our students responsibility while promoting self control. Our effective guidance and discipline is focused on the students’ growth and development. Just as each child is an individual; our discipline is designed to promote the development of the individual. Since discipline comes from discipleship, we have incorporated a “point system” for each class and each individual to help us to continue to grow as our school motto states, “Learning and Living in Christ”. Our students are rewarded with points for Service, Pride and Academics with every teacher that they meet. The emphasis is always on charity, enthusiasm and discipline.

Discipline Plan for Grades K-3

It is important that students in the younger grades of Kindergarten through 3rd grade are aware of consequences for their actions during their time at St. Mary School.

The Discipline Policy for grades K-3 will be determined by each classroom teacher, specific to the needs of the class. The Discipline Policy will be reviewed by the classroom teacher at Back to School Night. Every student is expected to behave according to the Christian values of St. Mary School. Disciplinary action is recorded by the classroom teacher and kept on file throughout the school year.

Discipline Plan for Grades 4-8

As students approach the teen years, it is important to learn that with every action there is an equal reaction. Because the middle school student can have a range of emotions that sometimes cause them to react in uncharitable ways, we also have incorporated a Tracking System in which behavior not befitting the rules set forth in each classroom setting are monitored. Tracks may also be given by the specials teachers. The Tracking System works as follows:

- 1 track for any misbehavior of school rules and class rules set by the teacher
- 5 tracks will result in a detention
- 2 detentions will result in a meeting with the principal to discuss ways to improve behavior

Tracks will be on-going throughout the year, not reset with the beginning of each new quarter. Part of the philosophy of the middle school student is learning from your mistakes therefore, a student who has accumulated tracks can earn back a track to lessen his/her chance for a detention. This will take place on an individual basis after meeting with the homeroom teacher and principal.

Conduct is an entry on the report card, and all students start out with an **S (satisfactory 87)** for each marking period. This grade may increase or decrease due to behavior. Students will receive a minimum of a **two** point reduction for each track received at the discretion of the teacher. Eight points will automatically come off conduct grade for automatic detentions. Twenty points will be deducted from conduct grade for suspensions. Students are given a verbal warning before given a track depending on the infraction. Lunch/recess detentions will also add up to points (4 pts for lunch and/or 4 pts for recess) deducted from conduct grade. Students may lose points for overall behavior. Students may have the opportunity to earn points back for conduct at teacher/principal discretion.

Three detentions will lead to a conduct referral from the principal. Any student who receives three conduct notices from the principal is given a suspension for repeated infractions of rules. Three suspensions from the principal warrant a conference with the pastor, at which time expulsion is an option.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

St. Mary School will employ various disciplinary measures, including suspension and expulsion, for behavior that is not consistent with the proper atmosphere for a Catholic school. This section of the handbook explains the types of disciplinary action typically imposed for various types of misconduct and prohibited behavior. Please be aware that similar disciplinary action may be taken for violations that are not listed here if the conduct or behavior is harmful to the good order and discipline of the school, its religious mission, or its educational objectives. In addition, while this section explains typical disciplinary procedures, the principal and the pastor have the authority to alter these procedures if they determine it is warranted in a particular situation.

1. One of the goals of St. Mary School is self-discipline and personal responsibility. Through moral instruction, facing consequences, and guidance, the students are encouraged to develop a sense of responsibility, accountability, and a healthy self-discipline. School rules and expected conduct are built on our Christian heritage of reverence and respect for God, for others, and for self. Teachers have the authority and responsibility to maintain discipline in the classroom and in the school for the safety and well being of all. School discipline policies are established and consistently enforced. When a student is having a problem, the teacher may conference with the student, conference with the parent, refer the student to the school counselor, use classroom disciplinary procedures, give an extra assignment, revoke privileges, issue a detention or in consistent and/or extreme cases refer to the principal. Three detentions will lead to a conduct referral from the principal. Any student who receives three conduct notices from the principal is given a suspension for repeated infractions of rules. Three suspensions from the principal warrant a conference with the pastor, at which time expulsion is an option.
2. Some infractions call for immediate suspension. They include: fighting, destroying property, disrespect, abusive language directed at another, disruptive classroom behavior that might interfere with the ability to learn or teach, leaving class or school without permission, or continued inappropriate behavior.
3. Students may be issued punishments from teachers for disregarding classroom rules, disregarding dress code, bus conduct warnings, failing to complete home assignments, disregarding school yard rules, or interrupting the lesson. Parents can keep up to date by checking POWERSCHOOL regularly.
4. In lieu of a detention, students may be removed from other events including holiday celebrations (Halloween, Christmas, Valentines).
5. Students and parents will be notified in advance prior to a detention. Detention slips must be signed by the parent. Transportation is the responsibility of the parent.

6. The possession, sale or use of alcohol, cigarettes, drugs or any controlled substance on the school grounds or buses is cause for immediate expulsion. It will be immediately reported to the appropriate law enforcement agencies.
7. Students who may be a threat to themselves or others will be referred immediately for counseling or crisis counseling.
8. Sexual misconduct is cause for immediate expulsion.
9. Any student, who on school property or at any school function, is in possession of a firearm or a deadly weapon, will be expelled. It will be immediately reported to the appropriate law enforcement agencies. If the principal receives a report from a student, teacher, staff member, or parent indicating that a student is in possession of a weapon or made a threat of harm, including threats of violence, the principal may inform the local police in accordance with the school's Memorandum of Agreement with Law Enforcement. The principal may also determine that a psychological or psychiatric evaluation from a licensed professional is necessary. The student will be excluded from the school environment and all extracurricular activities until a) all police activity has been completed, and b) the parents arrange for the student to be interviewed by a licensed mental health professional if necessary, and c) the parents present a letter from the mental health professional to the school indicating that student is not a threat to harm himself/herself or others. In addition, the student who was in possession of a weapon or made the threat will receive disciplinary action, which may include suspension, or expulsion.
10. The principal will assign suspensions from school. Parents must conference with the principal before the student is readmitted to school. "In-School" suspensions consist of the student's removal from the classroom. Academic assignments are completed in the principal's office. Reinstatement will be given after a telephone conference with parents/guardians. "Out-of- school" suspensions necessitate the parent removing the student from school. A conference is held before the student is readmitted.
11. Expulsion of a student can occur after three suspensions. Out-of-school suspensions are cumulative throughout the student's tenure at St. Mary School. Expulsions can also occur for extremely grave infractions of school regulations, for continued inappropriate conduct detrimental to the moral and physical safety of other students, for the continued and malicious disobedience or disrespect for duly authorized authority. The decision to expel is made jointly by the principal and the pastor. In all cases, however, the policy of the Camden Diocese gives the pastor the final say on expulsion. Once a student is expelled, there will be no allowance for re-admittance in the future.
12. Expulsion appeals are to be made in writing to the Catholic Schools Office.
13. The administration reserves the right to discipline students for off-campus conduct, if that conduct is in any way associated with teachers, staff or students of St. Mary School, where the behavior is contrary to Catholic teachings, or could bring disrepute, embarrassment, or disruption to the school.

Emergency Preparedness Drills

In compliance with school laws for the State of New Jersey, fire drills and emergency drills are held monthly. Students are to exit the building at the sound of the fire alarm. Students are required to be quiet and orderly during any emergency drill. Lock down safety drills/shelter in place drills will be practiced. Students will follow the directions of their teacher for these procedures.

Field Trips

Field trips are educational in nature and enhance the curriculum. These trips are a privilege and not a right and may be denied to any student if he/she fails to meet academic or behavioral requirements. Students with excessive absences or failing grades may not be permitted to attend a field trip.

Students must take the bus provided by the school to and from the trip. Chaperones must be parents/legal guardians or grandparents only. St. Mary School will follow the Chaperone Policy of the Diocese of Camden regarding the minimum chaperone requirements for all field trips.

Prior to a scheduled trip, a letter accompanied by the official diocesan permission slip must be signed and returned. Only students who submit the proper, unaltered signed form will be allowed to participate in the field trip. Telephone calls will not be accepted in lieu of proper forms.

There are no refunds for trips that have to be booked and paid for in advance. We plan trips based on the number of students in a grade. The expectation is that all students will attend.

When chaperoning a trip, parents/guardians are to park in the back of the parking lot and meet out by the bus loading area. In order not to disrupt our classes in session, we ask chaperones to sign their child out on the bus at the end of the trip. The office needs to be informed early in the day if parents wish to have siblings dismissed after the field trip. Those students will be ready at the main office when the trip is over.

Electronic devices including cell phones are not permitted on field trips. We kindly ask that chaperones only use their phones in the case of an emergency.

Government Aid

St. Mary School benefits from funding available through state and federal agencies. Bus Transportation is provided to families of students of non-public schools. A textbook grant, technology grant and nursing services are also provided through State Funding.

Graduation

A Baccalaureate Mass is offered for our graduates to celebrate their growth as educated Christians. A diploma is awarded to those students who have successfully completed the prescribed course of study given by the Diocese of Camden. Any student who does not meet these requirements will not receive a diploma until the necessary courses are successfully completed.

Therefore, it is essential that every eighth grader keep his/her academic

subjects in good standing. If a student fails a subject during any given report period it is important that the work improve for the following reports through greater effort and concentration and possibly tutoring. A student who fails any major subject for the year will not receive a diploma until summer school, or 20 hours of tutoring, has been completed. All tuition must be paid in full by May 1st in order for the child to participate in the class trip and other graduation festivities. An outstanding tuition balance will result in the student being ineligible to participate in graduation ceremonies, including walking for graduation.

Homework

St. Mary School staff supports the intelligent and meaningful assignment of homework for students of the school. Teachers assign homework with care and for the purpose of reinforcing skills taught in class and fostering habits of independent study. Teachers will electronically post assignments each week.

Neat work completed on time is essential. Reading and study assignments are as important as written assignments. Forgetfulness or extracurricular activities are not an acceptable excuse for coming unprepared for class. We ask for parents cooperation in seeing that all written and study assignments are completed. We also ask parents to check and replenish school supplies on a monthly basis; i.e. loose-leaf, pencils, pens and erasers etc.

Homework assignments missed due to absence are the students' responsibility. Teachers will not provide work prior to scheduled vacations or absences. Work will be provided upon return from vacation. Students should find out what has been missed and complete the assignment as soon as possible. If homework is requested, it is to be picked up from the box outside the main office by 3:30 pm.

For safety reasons, students are not permitted to return to school for forgotten books or items after 3:30 pm.

An **Assignment or Homework Book**, will be given to all students in grades three through eight. It is our hope that this organizer will foster good study and organizational skills in each student. The **Homework Book** will be available in school at the beginning of the year. All homework will also be electronically posted. **Parents are requested to check POWERSCHOOL at least once a week to keep in touch with their child's school performance.**

The suggested time allotment of the grade level is:

Grades 1 and 2	20 to 30 minutes
Grades 3 and 4	30 to 45 minutes
Grades 5 and 6	45 to 60 minutes
Grades 7 and 8	60 to 90 minutes

Students in the primary grades (K-3) who are learning how to assume responsibility for home assignments require constant patience and parental guidance. As soon as possible, however, all children should become self-reliant in this regard. Parents should never relinquish their right to examine the completed work.

Students in grades 6-8 who do not complete a homework/project on the day they are due will have five points taken off the grade and will be given a recess detention. Consequences for missed homework in grades K-5 are at the discretion of the teacher.

Types of Homework

- **Preparation** Homework that is assigned before the classroom lesson.
- **Practice** Homework that is assigned after the skill or concept is taught.
- **Extension** Homework that is assigned to see if a student can transfer an idea or skill to a new or different situation.
- **Creativity** Homework that is assigned for putting together concepts and skills in new and different ways.

Home Study Habits

- Do homework at the same time and in the same place each night.
- Have needed materials on hand and a quiet work area before beginning.
- Begin promptly and work consistently until completion.
- Study with a purpose. Work with a goal. Have a definite time for each assignment.
- Check the completed work against the original assignment.

Long Term Assignments

The purpose of any long-term project is to teach various skills such as research, outlining, proof-reading, writing bibliographies, refining writing skills, organizing, planning and, developing concepts into a cohesive unit. These skills require that long-term assignments be grouped into phases. Each phase of the assignment will have its own due date. Each teacher according to the project will determine these phases.

If the student fails to meet the required deadline of any phase of the assignment, it will be treated as a "no homework" situation. Academic credit will be affected and it will be noted in POWERSCHOOL.

Leaving School Grounds

Students may not leave school grounds without permission from the Principal and a note from the parent/guardian. Consequences will be at the discretion of the principal. 911 will be called.

Library

If a student has a past due library book, a notice will be sent home. If Library books are lost or damaged, students will be responsible for the cost to replace the book.

Megan's Law

We will be cooperating with the Gloucester County Prosecutor's Office in facilitating any communications regarding Megan's Law.

Parental Support

It is critical that parents and guardians support the mission of the school and demonstrate a spirit of cooperation with the faculty and administration. Parents and guardians are expected to cooperate with and uphold the policies set forth in this handbook. The primary communication during the school day is to be by email.

As a condition of enrollment, parents and guardians agree to encourage their children to respect and obey school policies and school officials. If a child should become involved in any difficulty at school, his or her parents or guardians are to register necessary complaints with the appropriate teacher and/or administrator and to cooperate with the school's procedures for addressing and resolving such complaints.

Parents are always welcome to voice their concerns in a calm and reasonable manner. We cannot allow parents to speak to another student without the parent being present. Never is a parent to approach any child or staff member in a disrespectful or threatening manner. If they do, they will not be permitted on school grounds in the future and risk their child being issued a transfer.

From time to time, parents will disagree with a decision made by either the school staff or administration. These concerns will be investigated to the best of the schools' ability and hopefully the situation will be resolved. At times we must agree to disagree and move forward for the benefit and safety of the child.

Outside promotions and/or solicitations, and all political activity, are prohibited on the school grounds or in any electronic forum related to school activities.

The school reserves the right to dismiss any student whose parent or guardian refuses to cooperate with the policies established in this handbook or engages in conduct that is detrimental to the school.

Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

The Parent Teachers Association is involved with many of the activities of St. Mary School. They support teachers by helping with class activities and by planning some of the seasonal parties that are celebrated throughout the year. The PTA supports the school budget by promoting the St. Mary School Annual Fund and overseeing a variety of community fundraising ventures for the benefit of our school and future planning.

Fund Raising ... The PTA supports the **Annual Fund Program** for St. Mary School. The PTA plans several events, which are cost-effective and promote the school and parish communities, help provide income, and is dependent upon the support of all school families to participate in these events. With your continued support and cooperation, the Annual Fund Drive and PTA functions will be successful in achieving their goals, which benefit our children and St. Mary School.

The PTA is always looking for parents to support these activities and is grateful for the generous donation of time and talent that parents offer.

PTA Gatherings ... Since the nature of our association is one of education, the PTA provides meetings each year of an educational nature to enlighten and support parents. Often these experiences involve the children: Science Exhibit, Performing Arts, Variety Show etc...Most of the meetings are planned for evening experiences in Assumption Hall. Dates and times of these meetings will be in our on-line weekly communication folder throughout the school year.

Room Parents ... The role of the room parent is to serve as a communication link between the teacher and the classroom parents. They solicit help for classroom celebrations, call parents as needed and provide assistance to the PTA officers whenever possible. It is expected that room parents involve as many parents as possible in organizing the classroom/school activities. Room parents are chosen by the Home Room Teacher.

Pictures

School pictures are taken in the fall of each year. Parents may want to consider having the picture taken in school uniform. All picture attire must follow dress code.

Possession or Consumption of Alcoholic Beverages at School Events

It is an offense for an adult to bring or possess an alcoholic beverage on school grounds without the express written permission of the pastor or principal. Therefore, alcoholic beverages are not permitted at school-sponsored functions/sporting events unless specifically advertised as such.

Promotion/Retention

Students are expected to complete all requirements for their current grade level in order to be promoted to the next grade. If retention is being considered, communication throughout the school year between teacher and parent is essential. Retentions will only be considered for those who have academic difficulties. Parents may be notified of possible retention as early as the end of the second marking period and notification will continue to the end of the school year. Final decisions regarding retention will be made by parent, teacher and principal.

At the end of a school year, the promotion of a student to the next level is considered the norm. The school will determine a student's risk of retention based on relevant factors, such as but not

limited to, assessments, report card grades, standardized assessments, student developmental level, attendance, or other factors. Students must receive a final grade of 70% in all subjects to be promoted to the next grade. Those students who fail a course at the end of the year must remediate the failure over the summer at their own expense. A student with two failures at the end of the school year may be considered for retention based on other academic and developmental factors. If a student has more than two failures at the end of the year, the school may dismiss the student. In order for a student to be promoted to the next grade, courses must be remediated through an accredited summer school or by a certified tutor approved by the school. The tutor or the instructor may not be the student's teacher from the failed course. The student is required to provide proof of successful completion of the remediated course to the school immediately upon completion. Students will receive the lowest passing grade (70%) as a final grade on the report card after successful completion of the remediated course. Eighth-grade students who would be dismissed under this policy will be permitted to attend summer school to remove the failures and will be able to receive a diploma after receiving a passing grade.

Registration

Registration for new families may take place at any time during the school year. Reregistration takes place in November. All financial obligations must be met for registration to be accepted.

Report Cards

Report Cards are issued four times a year for all students. **Report cards are available on-line through POWERSCHOOL.** If needed, a Deficiency Notice will be issued to keep parents informed of student's progress. The signed Deficiency Notice is to be returned via the Communication Folder. **Parents should stay informed of student's progress by frequently viewing the on-line POWERSCHOOL program.** A letter will be sent in the event a student is in danger of failing a subject. If a student fails a subject for the year they will be required to attend summer school, or 20 hours of tutoring.

Grades K-2 use progress indicators.

Marking Code for Major Subjects – Grades 3-8:

A+ 97-100, A 93-96, B+ 89-92, B 85-88, C+ 81-84, C 77-80, D+ 74-76, D 70-73, F below 70

Marking Code for Minor Subjects: E= exceeding grade level, G=good, S=satisfactory, NI=needs improvement, U=unsatisfactory

Honor Roll... Special recognition of student performance is enabled by our Honor Roll system which is open to students in grades **6 to 8**. Students must achieve an 85 and above in all subject areas with Satisfactory or above grades in all minor subjects as well as conduct and effort.

Principal's List... Special recognition of student performance open to students in grades **6 to 8**. Students must achieve a 97 and above in all subject areas with Satisfactory or above grades in all minor subjects as well as conduct and effort.

Returning to School After Hours

Students are not permitted back into the school after 3:30 PM for forgotten materials. Students are also not permitted to go through the After School Care Program or Assumption Hall doors in order to return to classrooms. This is for the safety of the students

School Closing

Emergency closings are an inevitable part of life in the Northeast due to inclement weather. Local transportation authorities determine when their buses can operate safely. Therefore, when Monroe Township public schools are not open due to inclement weather, St. Mary School will also be closed. We will utilize Parent Alert by telephone, text and email to inform you of emergency closings and you can view Channels **CBS, ABC or NBC**. Monroe Township, Gloucester County will be identified not St. Mary School. Information about our closings or delayed openings will also be posted on our website: www.smarys.org.

School Counselor

St. Mary's School is fortunate to have a School Counselor available to our students. The Counselor will meet with students during the school year and summer months as needed for various reasons. If you should not want your student seen without your permission, please send this request, in writing, to the school in September. In necessary cases, the counselor may make phone or email contact with parents at administrative discretion. If your child is to be seen regularly by the counselor or asked to join a small group, a permission slip will be sent home. In the case of follow up, the school is responsible to call only one parent/guardian. Either parent/guardian is subject to receive emails/phone calls and it is the expectation that both parents would communicate with each other and share information.

SMS - Crusader Anti-Bullying Plan

Introduction

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

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

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

St. Mary School has adopted the Bullying Prevention Policy from the Diocese of Camden and the Catholic Schools Office. St. Mary School has combined their current program with this program to ensure a comprehensive approach.

Definitions

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

Aggressor means a student who engages in Bullying or Retaliation.

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

- causing physical or emotional harm to the Target or damage to the Target's property;
- placing the Target in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself, or of damage to his/her property;
- causing the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the Target's education; or
- materially and substantially disrupting the educational process or the orderly operation of a school or the rights of other students; and that
 1. A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, that the act(s) will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property or
 2. Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students; or
 3. Creates a hostile educational environment for the student by interfering with a student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.
- Is reasonably perceived as being motivated by either any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, or a mental, physical or sensory disability; or by any other distinguishing characteristic.

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

Bullying includes Cyber-Bullying.

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

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

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

Cyber-Bullying also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be

accessed by one or more people, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of Bullying.

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

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

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

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

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

Prohibition against Bullying and Retaliation

Bullying is prohibited:

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

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

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

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

Prevention Plan

Faculty, staff will participate in in-servicing regarding bullying prevention. Yearly appropriate bullying education programs will be presented to our students.

Reporting

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

SMS has formed a committee made of staff members and administrators that will oversee and manage any bullying issues. Each student will have access to an FYI (For Your Information) form to report any incidents. When reporting an alleged incident of bullying or harassment, please make sure that the incident meets the criteria listed above (see definition section). The forms will be investigated to see if they are deemed a bullying situation. Students will be able to fill out these forms in private to avoid any issues. The designee/committee will look into each FYI form and records will be kept for each incident. Disciplinary action will be taken as needed and may include detention, tracking, and/or suspension based on the incident. Parents will be made aware of any occurrence of bullying involving their child. St. Mary School will not tolerate any form of bullying by one of its students.

Investigation

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

Investigation of Complaint

Once a complaint has been reported, the Principal or his or her designee shall promptly investigate to determine if Bullying has occurred. The Principal will review the disciplinary history of the student(s) accused for indication of a pattern or past history of similar behavior. A determination as to whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy shall be based on an assessment of all the facts and surrounding circumstances. Consequences and age appropriate remedial action for students who committed acts will be decided upon by the Principal and bullying committee. The appropriate consequences will be consistent with age appropriate expectations, school policies and regulations.

A written report of the investigation shall be prepared when the investigation is complete for the purpose of keeping administrative record. The report shall include findings of fact, a determination of whether the acts of bullying were verified, and, when acts of bullying were verified, the disciplinary action taken and non-disciplinary action provided or recommended to the parents or guardians of the offender.

***Please note: Federal law prohibits the disclosure of personally identifiable student information to any person other than that student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s); therefore, the school cannot provide information of this nature at any point during or at the conclusion of a bullying investigation.

Retaliation

Retaliation against a person who reports Bullying, provides information during an investigation of Bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about Bullying shall be prohibited and will incur further disciplinary action.

Disciplinary Action

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

sanctions and what sanctions to impose in a particular case are matters within the professional discretion of the Principal or his or her designee. It is the goal of the school to have students achieve redemption, learn, and stop Bullying.

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

The following factors shall be given full consideration by school administrators in the implementation of appropriate consequences and remedial measures for each act of bullying by students.

1. Age, developmental and maturity levels of the parties involved and their relationship to the school;
2. Degree of harm;
3. Surrounding circumstances;
4. Nature and severity of the behavior(s);
5. Incidences of past or continuing patterns of behavior;
6. Relationships between the parties involved; and
7. Context in which the alleged incidents occurred.

Once the investigation of the situation is complete, the Principal/Assistant Principal shall determine the consequences on a case-by-case, age appropriate basis. Bullying can take many forms and can vary dramatically in how serious it is, and what impact it has on the victim and other students. When bullying is identified early and/or when acts do not reasonably require a disciplinary response, students may be counseled as to the definition of bullying, its prohibition, and their duty to avoid any conduct that could be considered bullying.

To maintain a safe, orderly, and Christ-centered learning environment, St. Mary School reserves the right to inspect and search student belongings, including but not limited to backpacks, lockers, desks, electronic devices, and personal items brought onto school property or to school-sponsored events. As a private institution, St. Mary School retains the authority to conduct such searches at any time, with or without prior notice, when there is reasonable cause or concern related to the health, safety, conduct, or well-being of the student or school community. The school will notify parents if a significant issue arises from a search, or if disciplinary action is taken as a result. By enrolling at St. Mary School, students and parents acknowledge and accept the school's right to conduct such searches as part of its duty to protect and promote a safe and faithful school community.

Consequences are at the discretion of the Principal/Assistant Principal. These may include, but are not limited to:

1. Admonishment
2. Required counseling (in or out of school)
3. Temporary removal from the classroom
4. Classroom or administrative detention
5. Counseling may be required
6. In-school suspension during the school
7. Prohibiting after-school programs/activities

8. Out-of-school suspension
9. Reports to law enforcement or other legal action
10. Expulsion

This policy shall apply to instances when a school employee is made aware of alleged harassment, intimidation, or bullying occurring off school grounds as well. All school employees who have contact with students are required to verbally report alleged violations of the policy to the principal/vice-principal or the counselor on the same day when the individual witnessed or received reliable information regarding any such incident. The principal/vice-principal will inform parents of all students involved in alleged incidents, and, as appropriate, may discuss the availability of counseling and other intervention services. The principal/vice-principal may take interim measures to ensure the safety, health, and welfare of all parties pending the findings of the investigation. Students, parents, and visitors are encouraged to report alleged violations of this policy to the principal/vice-principal, or counselor. These reports may be made anonymously.

Parents are always welcome to voice their concerns in a calm and reasonable manner. We cannot allow parents to speak to another student without the parent being present. Never is a parent to approach any child or staff member in a disrespectful or threatening manner. If they do, they will not be permitted on school grounds in the future and risk their child being issued a transfer.

From time to time, parents will disagree with a decision made by either the school staff or administration. These concerns will be investigated to the best of the schools' ability and hopefully the situation will be resolved. At times we must agree to disagree and move forward for the benefit, safety and development of all of the children involved.

Non-disciplinary Intervention

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

Training

Annual training on the Plan shall be provided for Staff and, at the discretion of the Principal and for volunteers who have significant contact with students. Students receive monthly in class guidance lessons, focused on (but not limited) to social skills, conflict resolution, empathy and anti-bullying.

Publication and Notice

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

Notifications and Privacy

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

- notify the local law enforcement agency if called for by the Memorandum of Agreement

with Law Enforcement;

- notify the parents or guardians of the Aggressor; and
- notify the parents or guardians of the Target.

Federal law prohibits the disclosure of personal student information to any person other than the student's parents or guardians, therefore any specific disciplinary consequences imposed on the Aggressor will not be disclosed to the parents or guardians of the Target. For the same purpose copies of official bullying reports cannot be distributed to families. The specific disciplinary consequences imposed on the Aggressor will not be disclosed to the parents or guardians of the Target, unless required by law.

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

Student Assistance

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

The Diocesan Bully Prevention Policy has been added to the back of the Parent/Student Handbook.

Scrip Program

Scrip is “substitute money”, and looks and functions just like gift cards and certificates. This program allows our school families and friends to purchase scrip for everyday expenses like food, clothing, and entertainment; while receiving anywhere from 1 to 20 percent of each dollar of scrip purchased back in rebate. A scrip purchase agreement will need to be signed to designate how the rebate will be received. You may use your rebate to make a charitable contribution to the school or to the parish, receive the cash back, or apply the rebate to your school tuition account.

The reason for the effectiveness of scrip is simple: use of scrip generates revenue through purchases you would be making anyway. Groceries, clothing, toys, gifts, restaurant purchases, even gasoline can be purchased with scrip. Any church or school of 150 families easily spends between one and two million dollars per year on food, clothing and other essentials. If scrip is used for these purchases, it can raise as much as \$35,000 per year or more for St. Mary School – without spending one additional penny.

Our Scrip coordinator will maintain an up to date accounting of the amount that you have spent on Scrip and the amount of your rebate. The rebate will be returned to you or applied as you choose. Disbursements will be made twice during the school year, once in January and once in June. You could apply the amount accrued as of June toward the next school year tuition as well.

If you wish to purchase grocery money, such as Acme, Shop-Rite, or Walmart or gift cards from other retailers, all you need to do is download the **Raise Right App** on your iPhone, Android or tablet and create an account. As you begin to set up your account you will see that it will prompt you to enter an enrollment code- **RR-FZJZ2HSAVX** . As you begin to place your orders through the app you will be given 3 options of payment. You can choose to pay the coordinator directly by sending in cash or check to the school with your child, you can choose to pay via a bank account, or you can choose to pay via credit card. A SCRIP volunteer will then fill the order and the order will be sent home with your child by the end of that week. Wawa Gift Cards are also available to make in-store purchases or used at the gas pump just like cash.

The rebate will vary depending on the retailer. The discount for each retailer is printed on the GLScrip Retailer form. One-half of the rebate is paid to the school as an administrative fee and the other half belongs to you, to be applied according to the option you select in the Scrip Purchase Agreement.

The school benefits from the portion of the rebate it receives. Also, the retailers that are listed on the GLSCRIP Retailer form are supporting our school by issuing these rebates and we thank them for their support. If you choose to donate any portion of your rebate, we will provide necessary documentation of the donations for your tax purposes.

Student Expectations

At all times St. Mary School students will be expected to follow our school-wide expectations: **Be Safe, Be Responsible, Be Respectful**, which are grounded in the principles of our Catholic faith.

These expectations include but are not limited to the following:

- Accept responsibility for his/her own actions and consequences.
- Work toward self-improvement and self-control.
- Practice courtesy, good manners, and use proper and respectful language.
- Be neat, clean and in proper uniform at all times.
- Respect and obey faculty, assistants, lunch aides, school volunteers, students, and self.
- Care for our building by not chewing gum, cleaning up after self in all areas of the school including but not limited to bathrooms, cafeteria, and classrooms.
- Complete home and class assignments in a timely manner.
- Come to class prepared with assignments and supplies.
- Pay close attention during class, assemblies, and announcements.
- Demonstrate good sportsmanship and school spirit.
- Be responsible for taking home notices or forms that are distributed during school for parents and returning information or responses to the teacher.
- Be responsible for taking home and returning Communication Folders, which include tests to be signed and returned to teachers.

School Nurse

The school nurse is on duty each day. If a child becomes ill at school, the parents will be contacted. The emergency cards filled out at the beginning of the year are kept on file and used in such emergencies. A child, who is ill before school, should be kept at home.

Prescription and nonprescription medications will only be given with a written order from a physician and a written request by the parent. Any medication that is to be administered during the school hours:

- Must be accompanied by a note from the parent/guardian.
- Must have a note/order from a physician, dentist, or orthodontist containing the following: child's name, date, medication name, dosage, time to be given, diagnosis, length of time order is in effect and physician or Nurse Practitioner's signature.
- Must be in its original container (ask your pharmacist for a separate bottle for school). Over the counter items must be in original packaging.
- Medication is to be transported to/from the school by parent/guardian.

Please keep nurse continually up-to-date when your child receives immunizations. A print out from the doctor is needed in order to have an immunization added to the permanent record.

Students are required to have all immunizations required for school attendance by the State of New Jersey. Medical exemptions are allowed with a written statement provided by the child's physician. The statement must declare that the required vaccine is injurious to the child's health or

poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the child. Medical exemptions are reviewed annually.

St. Mary School will review requests of parents for religious exemptions from immunization if the parents submit a letter describing that their request is a matter of informed conscience for them. The pastor will make the final determination as to whether a religious exemption is warranted.

Care given at school is limited to first aid in accidents and illness until the parents can be reached to take the child home. **Emergency forms are kept for each child providing information to assist in locating parents or emergency persons. It is important for you to keep this information up-to-date.**

Important: If your child contracts a communicable or infectious disease, do not permit him/her to return to school until you receive a note from your doctor. **Students must be fever free and have stomach and bowel control for 24 hours before they may return to school.**

Please inform the school nurse if your child contracts head lice at any time during the school year – even when it has been treated at home, as it may be necessary to check the classmates.

Upon return to school after an absence of any length, a child must bring a note from the parent/guardian explaining the reason for absence and the dates of the absence. These notes must remain on file for the duration of the school year by diocesan policy. For students who are absent for three or more days, a doctor's note is required upon return to school.

Social Media

Parents/guardians/family/friends who take photos of our students and events are asked not to post on social media sites. Not all of our students are permitted to have their photograph taken while in our school.

The use of any school logo on social media or representation of a social media post or page as being an official communication of the school is prohibited.

Parents are prohibited from posting inappropriate comments on any school-managed social media. Inappropriate comments include obscenities, foul language, spam, personal attacks, bashing, bullying, intimidation, harassment, verbal abuse, threats, insults, commercial solicitations, repetitive or fraudulent comments, comments irrelevant to the post under which they are written, comments which are morally objectionable, and comments which are otherwise inconsistent with Catholic teaching.

The school reserves the sole right to edit and/or remove any or all comments from a post.

As a Catholic community, St. Mary School expects that parents will not use their personal means of communication, including online and mobile-based communication tools of every type, kind, nature and description to criticize, demean, or publicly disparage the school, its administration, faculty, staff, or students, or to sow discord or undermine the school's mission or Catholic identity.

If reasonable attempts to resolve violations of the school's social media policy are not successful, the parent may be excluded from the school grounds and school activities, or other action may be taken including, but not limited to, disenrollment of the student.

Improper use of social media is a current problem among middle school age students (and younger) in the US. Please know that parental guidance and supervision is needed and necessary. Each site has an agreement policy. This is where parents can check the age of acceptable use of the site. To participate on the site, registration includes birth date.

Please be aware that most social media sights have an age requirement of 13 or older. It is important for students to understand that posting on social media leaves a digital footprint. What is posted on the internet, stays on the internet. As representatives of the student body of St. Mary School, students who post anything that is deemed inappropriate may be subject to disciplinary action. Social media should not be accessed during school hours and students who do so may also be subject to disciplinary action.

Each student will receive a school email address and may only be used for school operations. Any computer account created for the student to be used as part of class or for home assignments, such as email or online accounts, will only be used for school purposes and will be monitored by the teacher. The school email address is the property of the school and as such should never be used to sign up for personal accounts including but not limited to social media accounts. At the conclusion of a student's tenure at St. Mary school the student will be granted one year to retrieve any data on the account, after which their email and all associated data will be deleted.

Sports/Athletic Program

Philosophy

Students' participation in athletic programs facilitates well-rounded growth and development of students physically and mentally. Sports participation contributes to the health and emotional well-being of students and aids in formation of social competencies, moral values and increased maturity. Athletic programs at the elementary level enhance the educational process by integrating character formation and spiritual growth with academic achievement. The Christian environment, which is based on the love of God and one another, incorporates the spirit of fair play and good sportsmanship.

Proper conduct by the athlete and his/her parents must be demonstrated at all times in order to achieve the goals of athletics. Cooperation between the coach, players and parents must be perpetuated in order to carry through an effective sports program. While parents are ultimately responsible for the discipline of their children, the administrators, teachers and coaches of St. Mary School feel that everyone working together can encourage proper discipline. The ultimate goal of disciplinary action is to assist the athlete in realizing self-discipline. The attainment of self-discipline is inherent in the philosophy of St. Mary School because the essence of Christian discipline is self-discipline. Coaches may use their discretion in disciplining an athlete. Discipline may include, but is not limited to, additional drills and/or reduced playing time. Inappropriate conduct by parents may result in an athlete's dismissal from the team.

Criteria for Sports Participation

Expectations listed below are for Varsity and Junior Varsity team members. Students participating in the Intramural program are to practice these rules in an effort to develop appropriate behaviors.

Eligibility Standards: Age/Grade

Participants are to be in fourth to eighth grade (K-8 for Track) and may not have reached their 15th birthday prior to October 1st of the current school year.

No graduates or repeaters of 7th or 8th grades may participate at the grade school level, regardless of age. The GCCAL Board will take under advisement and determine eligibility requests for any repeat students below the 7th grade level.

Expectations at the Varsity Level:

At the Varsity level, sporting events are highly competitive and require a more significant dedication from the student athlete. This will support his/her preparation of High School sports programs. That dedication also promotes his/her self discipline responsibility. This form of discipline includes understanding team comes before individual and participation on a team requires time “on the bench”. There are no rules at this level that require an athlete to play a specific number of minutes during a game. Just as in High School, time played is determined by the coach as a result of the game’s progression and the player’s skill set. It is also expected that the student athlete and his/her parents will support this philosophy. Please keep in mind that this is an elementary school program.

All parents are expected to contact their coach if any questions or concerns arise during the season. Coaches may be contacted by email and arrange an appointment. For sports using the school gym, coaches are busy after games sweeping the floor and stacking chairs. Therefore, coaches are not expected to be available for parent discussions after games.

If a parent desires further discussion after meeting with their coach, the seasonal coordinator then athletic director may be consulted. The Principal may be consulted as a final recourse.

All St. Mary School students must maintain a passing grade (75 or above) in each of their courses in order to participate in extracurricular activities. The principal and faculty shall closely monitor all student performance.

- All students in grades 5-8 who participate in extra-curricular activities are expected to maintain all grades above 75 in major subjects, with no NI or U grades in minor subjects.
- Grades will be reviewed mid-marking period (four weeks), students with a “D” will be notified that they must maintain adequate grades to remain eligible and students with a failing grade in a major subject will be notified that they are ineligible for extra-curricular activities for two weeks. Ineligible students can become eligible with acceptable grades after two weeks.
- Students who fail a subject on the report card, or have an NI or U in any area for the marking period will be ineligible for extra-curricular activities for the first four weeks of the next marking period. Ineligible students may become eligible with acceptable grades after four weeks.

Every student is expected to attend school each day. If a student is late for school, he/she must report prior to 11:30 AM in order to be eligible for practice or participation in any athletic contest for that day. If a student leaves school early, they must attend school for a minimum of 3 hours to be eligible to play. If a

student is absent the day of a practice or contest, the student will not be permitted to participate in the activity or be a spectator for that activity. If a student violates this policy, he/she will be eliminated from the team for the duration of that season.

- **Any student athlete who is serving a school suspension** will not be allowed to participate in any practice or contest until the suspension is completed, this may be extended at the discretion of the Principal.
- **Any student who was absent from school is unable to participate in any practice or contest on the date of the absence.**
- **If an athlete has attended school but is unable to participate in a practice or contest, it is his/her responsibility to notify the coach at least 2 hours before the scheduled event.** An unexcused absence when the coach is not notified will result in suspension from the next contest. Two violations of this rule will result in a warning notice sent to parents and administrators. Three violations of this rule will lead to dismissal from the team.
- **All Athletes must complete an Athletic Registration form, Concussion Policy Acknowledgement Form, Sudden Cardiac Death Sign Off form, Parent Code of Conduct form, Player Code of Conduct form and Health History Update Questionnaire.**

Athletes in grades 5-8 ONLY must also complete all Athletic Physical forms.

All forms must be submitted to Mrs. Morales in the school office before the player is eligible to participate in a practice or a game.

- While attending athletic contests at home or away, St. Mary School students are expected to conduct themselves according to the conduct rules of the school and the rules of good sportsmanship. This applies to both the players on the field/court and to the spectators in the stands. The consequence of inappropriate behavior by any athlete or his/her parent may include a warning, suspension or dismissal from the team for the athlete and student spectators may receive detention or a suspension. **Parents who violate rules of good sportsmanship may be given a warning or may be prohibited from attending future events. In addition, players whose parents violate conduct rules will be dismissed from the team.**

Each coach will maintain communication with parents, guardians and administrators at all times should an athlete violate any disciplinary policy. Each coach is responsible for enforcing

the clean-up of any playing field or gym by the players. Any area not left clean will result in forfeiture of the next contest. Coaches and assistants must adhere to all state regulations regarding their individual sports.

Students may not be dropped off at the school for a game and practice unless the parent is assured that the coach is present. For the safety of the children, parents must walk their child into the gym. Also, students must be picked up on time from games and practices. Violations may be cause for dismissal from the team. AN ADULT MUST ACCOMPANY ALL STUDENT SPECTATORS TO EVENTS. While in the gym, all spectators are prohibited from entering the stage area and side storage rooms. Any student in violation of this policy will be dealt with at the discretion of administration. ***The Athletic program must raise funds in order to maintain the program. In addition to the registration fee, parents of athletes are required to work a set amount of time in the snack stand for any sport using the gym.***

We encourage students to participate in only one sport per season.

Scheduling

Please note that when reserving use of Assumption Hall the parish get scheduling priority. All scheduling of Assumption Hall for Sundays must be made after 1 p.m.

Athletic Committee

The Athletic Program is overseen by an Athletic Committee. The Committee consists of the school Principal, Athletic Director, and Seasonal Coordinators, as well as other consulting committee members.

Athletic Program Dynamics Team Selection

The coach will have the final decision regarding team selection. All materials used in coach evaluation process will be confidential and not available for review. Players are not only chosen on athletic ability skill set, but also on coachability and Christian values. Admittance to a team does not guarantee game-time play.

Appeals Process once team is formed:

1. All grievances must first be brought to the attention of the coach.
2. Secondly, if not resolved, grievances are then brought to the attention of the Athletic Director.
3. Coach misconduct, parent misconduct and violations of Codes of Conduct will be brought to the attention of the Athletic Directors.
4. If further review is needed, and once steps one, two and three have been fulfilled, the Sports Board of Directors will be consulted to render a final decision. Principal and possibly pastor will be informed. That decision will be final.

Sports Registration Fee Refund

Sports registration fee refund requests must be made to the Athletic Directors for consideration before the first game is played. If further review is needed, the Sports Board of Directors will render a final decision.

Coach Conduct

Coaches serve at the discretion of the Sports Board, Principal and Pastor. They may be removed at any time, for any reason. This includes, but is not limited to, misconduct or failure to support athletic program policies. Coaches are required to contact parents/guardians regarding updates, reminders, schedules through email and/or text and not the athletes themselves. All coaches/assistant coaches must be fingerprinted and attend a Virtus training prior to coaching.

Student/Athletic Accident Insurance

All students are covered by the Diocesan School Insurance Policy. The plan provides **ACCIDENT** insurance only. It does **NOT** provide basic hospital, basic medical or major medical for sickness coverage. This insurance covers expenses that are not recoverable from your own insurance plan.

Transfers

When a student transfers during the school year, parents are asked to call or email the principal of the date the child is leaving and the reason. The parents/guardians will receive a transfer card to take to the new school. Upon receipt of a request from the new school, and textbook/material are returned and all financial obligations have been met, St. Mary School will send an official transcript and academic records. Students who transfer from St. Mary School for reasons other than academic will not be permitted to reenroll in our school.

When a student transfers at the end of academic year or during the summer and will not be returning to St. Mary School the following school year, parents are asked to call or email the principal the reason for the transfer. The student will receive a transfer card on the last day of school or if during the summer, the parent will need to pick it up at the school. The parents/guardian will take the transfer card to the new school. Upon receipt of a request from the new school, and textbooks/materials are returned, and all financial obligations have been met, St. Mary School will send an official transcript and academic records. Students who transfer from St. Mary School for reasons other than academic will not be permitted to reenroll in our school.

Technology Expectations for the Classroom

To support a focused, respectful, and academically honest learning environment, all students are expected to use school-issued technology—including Chromebooks, cell phones, and other electronic devices—in a responsible and appropriate manner. The guidelines below outline school-wide expectations for the use, care, and academic integrity associated with classroom technology.

Chromebooks

All Chromebooks are the property of the school and as such are not to be taken home. Students are expected to handle their school-issued Chromebook with care at all times. This includes transporting the device safely between classes, avoiding rough handling, keeping it away from

food and liquids, and storing it securely when not in use. Students are responsible for maintaining the condition of their device and must report any damage to school staff immediately. If a Chromebook is lost, damaged, or broken due to negligence, misuse, or failure to follow care instructions, the student and their family may be held financially responsible for the cost of repair or replacement, as determined by school administration.

In addition to proper handling, students are responsible for the daily use and management of their device. Chromebooks must be stored securely in students' bags when transitioning between classes and plugged into the appropriate charging cart at the end of each day. Background images must be school-appropriate, and no stickers or personal decorations are permitted on the device. Device sound must remain muted unless a teacher authorizes the use of audio for instructional purposes. Earbuds or headphones may be used only when explicitly directed by the teacher for class-related videos or audio activities. They are not to be worn outside the classroom, including in hallways, bathrooms, or during class transitions.

Students may be granted the privilege of listening to self-selected music during independent work periods. This music must be school-appropriate and played at a volume that is not distracting to others. This privilege may be revoked at any time if the content is deemed inappropriate or if it interferes with learning.

Only applications and websites designated by the teacher should be accessed, and only when directed. Personal use of Chromebooks, including accessing social media platforms or unrelated websites, is not permitted during class time. Students must log into their device using only their school-issued email credentials. Devices should be put away when not in use, and recreational gaming during instructional time is strictly prohibited.

Electronic Communications

All electronic communications—including but not limited to calling, texting, direct messaging, emailing, and the use of chat or social media applications—are prohibited during instructional time, regardless of the device used. Students may not send or receive personal messages during class. If a student needs to contact a parent or guardian, they must first request permission from their teacher. The school office remains the appropriate point of contact for families wishing to reach their child during the school day. Students are not permitted to take photographs, record videos, or capture screenshots on any device during the school day. This includes, but is not limited to, images of classmates, teachers, classroom activities, assignments, or assessments. All student interactions with digital content and devices must respect the privacy and learning environment of others.

Academic Integrity and Responsible Use of Technology

Technology is intended to support, not replace, student learning and original thinking. Students are expected to complete assignments and assessments with academic integrity. Any information gathered from digital or print sources must be appropriately paraphrased and cited. The direct copying of text from websites, online articles, AI tools, or other external sources without proper attribution is considered plagiarism and will result in academic and disciplinary consequences in accordance with the Student and Parent Handbook.

The use of generative AI tools (e.g., AI text generators or bots) is strictly limited to teacher-approved assignments. AI may not be used to complete work independently or in place of a student's own effort. Misuse of AI tools for academic work will be treated as a violation of the school's academic honesty policy.

Consequences for Technology Misuse

Inappropriate or unauthorized use of technology may result in disciplinary action. Depending on the nature and frequency of the violation, consequences may include, but are not limited to:

- Loss of class participation points
- Restricted or limited access to school-issued technology
- Temporary suspension of Chromebook use (requiring students to complete digital work after school or in a supervised setting such as detention)
- Detention (during lunch, recess, or after school)
- Assignment to a behavioral track or intervention plan
- School suspension for serious or repeated infractions

The administration reserves the right to determine the severity of the infraction and implement consequences accordingly

Testing Program

Standardized Tests: Students enrolled in St. Mary School participate in the STAR Assessment which is a standardized test given three times a year. Results are shared with the parents. Students, who evidence a weakness in a specific area through this test, are eligible for help in Math, Reading and Language by the specialists from Gloucester County Special Services, located adjacent to the school. These scores are also used as criteria for the HOT Program and Advanced Math. St. Mary School will also take the ARK testing in religion.

Teacher Administered Tests: Each teacher is responsible for administering the regular testing which corresponds to the subject matter and levels of learning to which the children have been exposed. Standard testing as well as performance assessments will be utilized.

Child Study Team Evaluation:

Upon recommendation from a teacher or parents, diagnostic tests are administered by the Gloucester County Special Services School District. This comprehensive evaluation is done at no expense to parents and includes an overall evaluation of the child's ability and performance. This service makes available specific information about a child's strengths and areas for improvement. If needed this enables participation in a program to provide support services by the specialists from Gloucester County Special Services.

Testing of any sort is a tool for evaluation. It is to be seen in relation to the total output and productivity of the child. It is never to be used as the ultimate criterion of a child's ability or progress.

Transportation/Conduct on the Bus

Busing is provided to some families, provided they meet state criterion. In order to receive busing, a form must be filled out and filed with the public school district each year. This is done at registration or re-registration time each spring.

The importance of proper conduct while riding the school bus cannot be overemphasized. Any behavior that distracts the driver, instantly endangers all. Any student who does anything which endangers his/her safety or that of another will be subject to serious disciplinary action. In the interest of safety, all students should understand and parents are urged to impress upon their children the necessity for strict compliance with the following rules:

- **Appropriate language is expected at all times.**
 - **Students are to get on and off the bus in an orderly manner.**
 - **Aisles are to be kept clear at all times.**
 - **Conversation should be kept to a normal tone of voice.**
 - **Nothing should be thrown either into or from the bus.**
 - **Students are required to stay seated and use seat belts.**
 - **Students are not to use headphones on the bus as they would then be unable to hear the bus driver if there was an emergency.**
 - **Cell phones and electronic games are not permitted on the bus.**
- Problems on the bus will be reported by the drivers to Mr. May and/or Mrs. Mancuso.**

A positive attitude of helpfulness and full cooperation will do much to ensure safe and comfortable busing for all. Should a student choose not to comply with these rules, he/she may be excluded from the bus transportation for a period of time.

Saint Mary School

2026-2027 School Year

Tuition Policy/Financial Matters

Parents/guardians are obligated to pay tuition in order to obtain educational services for their children. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to maintain their financial commitments to the school. In the event of a financial hardship resulting in non-payment, you must contact the principal. The school may, but is not obligated to, send reminders or other notices regarding outstanding bills. Failure to make payments when due, or to make arrangements with the school for payment of delinquent obligations, may result in the termination of POWERSCHOOL or discontinuation of educational services to your child, possibly leading to disenrollment. In those cases where students are in eighth grade, documents including transcripts and diplomas will not be provided if you have a delinquent balance with the school. All present year tuition must be paid in full before the last day of the school year or the student's placement for the upcoming school year will not be guaranteed. Unpaid bills may be referred to a collection agency. Costs associated with the collection will be added to the parent/guardian fees. There is no tuition responsibility for withdraw prior to June 30th for the upcoming school year. For withdraws on or after July 1, please see policy on next page.

Tuition payments are collected monthly through FINALSITE. Tuition is paid by automatic deduction from either your checking or savings account. FINALSITE will also accept payments using MasterCard, Discover or American Express. Please note there is a 2.9% convenience fee charged to the credit card holder. Confidentiality of all account information is guaranteed. Payments are deducted on the 5th or the 17th of each month beginning in July and ending in April. A late fee of \$30.00 will be assessed to your account if any payment is not received within 10 days from the payment due date. FINALSITE will charge a \$25.00 failed payment fee for any attempt that fails AND they will make a total of three attempts. New admissions during school year will be required to spread their payments over remaining months through April. All initial questions regarding the FINALSITE Tuition Program should be made to Mary Baron (629-6190 ext.121) in the Finance Office.

Tuition may also be paid in full through **FINALSITE Tuition only** and payment is expected before June 17th for the next school year. A late fee will be assessed if payment is not received by June 30th.

Tuition Assistance: Applications for tuition assistance must be done on-line only through FACTS. There is a \$40 non-refundable application fee to FACTS to apply for assistance.

Tuition Refund Policy

<u>Grades K-8 Refund Policy</u>		
In the event of a student leaving St. Mary School during the school year (1st day of school to the last day of school) or during the months of July and August: 1-If tuition has been PAID IN FULL, based on the time of withdraw, only a percentage of		

tuition will be refunded. See schedule below for the tuition amount that will be owed (therefore not refunded if paid in full) to St. Mary School at time of withdraw.

2- If tuition payments are being done MONTHLY (July-April) or based on the schedule agreed upon at time of enrollment, a percentage of the total amount of tuition for the year will be owed/due to St. Mary School (see table below for specific dates)—there will be no refunds of tuition already paid in the prior months to the withdraw

There is no tuition responsibility for withdraw prior to June 30th for the upcoming school year. For withdraws on or after July 1st, please see policy below.

Withdraw/Transfer Prior to:	% Annual Tuition Refundable If paid in full ONLY-NO REFUNDS FOR THOSE DOING MONTHLY PAYMENTS	% Annual Tuition Owed		
August 1	90%	10%		
September 1	80%	20%		
October 1	70%	30%		
November 1	60%	40%		
December 1	50%	50%		
January 1	40%	60%		
February 1	30%	70%		
March 1	20%	80%		
April 1	0%	100%		
Grades K-8 Partial Year Policy				

In the event of a student enrolling at St. Mary School during the year, tuition is due to the school, according to the following schedule:

* Enrollment Prior to:	% Annual Tuition Owed			
Up to September 15	100%			
October 1	90%			
November 1	80%			
December 1	70%			
January 1	60%			
February 1	50%			
March 1	40%			
April 1	30%			
May 1	20%			
* Enrollment refers to when a student registers for St. Mary School not when he/she is scheduled to begin his/her first day at St. Mary School.				

Pre-School Programs

In the event of a student leaving St. Mary School during the school year (1st day of school to the last day of school) or during the months of July and August:

1-If tuition has been PAID IN FULL, based on the time of withdraw, only a percentage of tuition will be refunded. See schedule below for the tuition amount that will be owed (therefore not refunded if paid in full) to St. Mary School at time of withdraw.

2- If tuition payments are being done MONTHLY (July-April) or based on the schedule agreed upon at time of enrollment, a percentage of the total amount of tuition for the year will be owed/due to St. Mary School (see table below for specific dates)—there will be no refunds of tuition already paid in the prior months to the withdraw

There is no tuition responsibility for withdraw prior to June 30th for the upcoming school year. For withdraws on or after July 1st, please see policy below.

For late enrollees, please see K-8 partial year policy from previous page.

Withdraw/Transfer Prior to:	% Annual Tuition Refundable If paid in full	% Annual Tuition Owed		
August 1	90%	10%		
September 1	80%	20%		
October 1	70%	30%		
November 1	60%	40%		
December 1	50%	50%		
January 1	40%	60%		
February 1	30%	70%		
March 1	20%	80%		
April 1	0%	100%		

If there is a change in the number of days a student is enrolled in preschool, the new tuition rate will become effective on the first of the month following the change. There will be no refunds of prior monies paid or increases in the month of change.

Note: For K-8 and Pre-School, registration and other fees are due regardless of date of enrollment.

Tuition Rates are determined by the Finance Committee based on information provided by the Diocesan Office. There is a Catholic and Non-Catholic tuition rate. The definition of each category is below:

Catholic: Parent/Guardian must be registered in a Catholic parish and the child must have a valid Baptismal certificate. At least one parent must be Catholic.

Non-Catholic: Religion other than Catholic. Greek Orthodox will be considered Non-Catholic. Children must still participate in Religion classes and participate in Liturgical events. Non-Catholic students participate in sacramental classes but are not eligible to make the sacrament.

Every student that enters is on a probationary period for 90 days.

Uniform Policy

Girls (K to 2)

- Blue and white plaid jumper
- Light blue long or short sleeve blouse, peter pan collar
- Navy blue pants (optional) can be worn with peter pan blouse and navy blue SMS vest
- White or navy blue tights, knee socks, or crew socks (**at least two inches above the top of the shoe**)
- Plain Black flat rubber soled shoe with either a tie, buckle, or strap. (No slip on shoes) Solid, black Vans are permitted. These may be purchased at your favorite store.
- Navy blue cardigan sweater (optional)
- Belts are optional but if chosen must be plain blue, black, or brown.

Girls (3 to 8)

- Blue and white plaid wrap around skort – **skort is to be fingertip length**
- Light blue long or short sleeve blouse with button down collar
- Navy blue pants/slacks (optional) can be worn with blouse and navy blue SMS vest
- Grades 3-5: White, black or navy blue tights (tights are not to be torn), knee socks, or crew socks (**at least two inches above the top of the shoe**)
- Grades 6-8: **mandatory** white, black or navy tights must be worn
- Navy blue vest with St. Mary School Monogram or cardigan sweater (required). Long sleeve v neck sweater optional.
- Plain black flat rubber soled shoe with either a tie, buckle, or strap. (No slip on shoes) Solid black laced Vans are permitted. These may be purchased at your favorite store.

Boys (K to 8)

- Navy blue pants (straight leg – not hanging below the waist)
- Belt – plain colored (grades 3 and up only)
- Long/short sleeve shirt with light blue oxford button down collar.
- Navy blue vest with SMS monogram (required) Long sleeve v neck sweater optional.
- White, navy blue or black crew socks (**at least two inches above the top of the shoe**).
- Plain black sneakers (no color at all on sneakers) or black tie shoe (**high-top sneakers are not permitted**).
- Plaid tie (optional K-4)
- Navy/maroon/silver stripe tie (grades 5 - 8) required.

Boys and Girls - In September/October and April/May/June - during the warm weather - short sleeve light blue knit monogrammed shirt, crew socks (**at least two inches above the top of the shoe**), and navy blue twill walking shorts may be worn. Flynn and O'Hara will also be offering girls in grades K-8 a banded bottom golf shirt for the warm weather uniform. **All other shirts are to be tucked into shorts/pants/skorts. Banded bottom shirts are available for the girls only.**

Gym Uniform

Warm weather:

- Navy blue sweat pants (**may be plain or any past or present style of spirit wear sweat pants.**), the gray sweat pants available through the spirit wear store only or gym shorts – gym shorts are to be fingertip length.
- T-shirt with the Crusader logo or **white, navy blue or gray spirit wear t-shirt (individual team apparel is not permitted)**

Cold weather:

- T-shirt with Crusader logo or **white, blue or gray spirit wear t-shirt only (individual team apparel is not permitted)**
- Navy blue cotton sweat pants. (**may be plain or any past or present style of spirit wear sweat pants**)
- Navy blue sweat shirt (no hood) with Crusader logo - optional

Cheer shorts and yoga pants are not permitted. Students are to wear school appropriate athletic sneakers. Solid colored/plain navy blue, black, gray or white crew socks may be worn. **For support and safety, sneakers must be laced properly.**

All items for the uniform are available at Flynn and O'Hara Uniform Company (1-800-441-4122) since that is the only way to be sure that the elements that make up our uniform match. The NJ store is located at 2240 W. Marlton Pike Cherry Hill, NJ 08002. Spirit wear is sold through the school in the beginning of the school year.

General Appearance

Student's hair shall be neat and well groomed. No fad haircuts are permitted i.e., extreme color (bleached, green, blue, red etc.. hair coloring or highlights), spikes, etc. **Boys' hair is to be above the eyebrows, above the ears, above the collar and well maintained/groomed.** **Ponytails for boys are not permitted. Boys are to be clean shaven.** Girl's hair accessories should not be excessive. Headbands are to be simple and not distracting. Large bows are not permitted above grade 2. Boys are not permitted to wear earrings. **Nail polish is not permitted. For safety reasons, artificial type nails are not permitted.** Make-up is also not allowed in school. Jewelry is limited to small post earrings, in the ear lobe. Necklaces and bracelets are not permitted. A chain with a religious symbol is permitted. **No jewelry may be worn on gym day or science lab day for safety. Hoodies/sweatshirts are not permitted to be worn during the day with the regular school uniform.** If your child gets cold easily, in addition to the vest, cardigans and SMS fleece jackets are available to purchase through spirit wear. **Dress code notices will be sent home for repeated offenses.**

NUT Card/ Dress Down Days

Students generally conduct themselves in a manner similar to the way they dress and groom. Therefore, even on dress down days, short shorts, spaghetti strap tank tops, ripped jeans, shirts with inappropriate slogans, and make up are not permitted. Shirts and dresses must have sleeves. The mid-section must be completely covered. **Yoga pants or leggings without a long shirt are not permitted.** Open back shoes, flip flops, sandals or any open toe shoes are not permitted for the safety of our students. Shorts may not be worn during our winter months – November thru March. If a NUT Card is used on a student's scheduled gym day, the student must wear sneakers to participate in gym. Hoodies are permitted on NUT card days but for safety reasons cannot be worn during gym class. If shorts or skirts are worn during warm weather uniform days, shorts must be fingertip length. NUT cards may only be used during the winter months. If students are not appropriately dressed we may call home for parent to bring suitable clothing or

provide a uniform piece. **NUT CARDS MAY NOT BE USED ON DAYS SCHEDULED WITH MASS OR SPECIAL EVENTS.** Birthday NUT cards may only be used during winter months.

Visitors to the School

For the safety of our children all visitors to the school, including parents/guardians, must report to the Main Office. Parents/guardians are not permitted to meet with teachers or drop off articles of clothing, lunches, etc., to the classroom, but may leave these items in the drop box outside of the school office or in the main office.

All visitors to SMS are asked to ring the bell at the Main Office on Carroll Avenue and state who they are. If permitted to enter they must sign in and wear a numbered badge while in the building. All doors are locked at all times.

Volunteers

Student Safety and Building Security

All employees and adults who volunteer at a school, including athletic coaches, must comply with all child and youth protection policies, practices, and procedures defined by the Diocese of Camden Office of Child and Youth Protection (OCYP). This includes required background checks and safe environment training.

Any adult who wishes to volunteer with St. Mary School in any capacity must sign the Disclosure and Authorization Form and give consent to the Diocese of Camden to conduct a background check. All adult volunteers must complete the Universal Fingerprint Form by IdentGo and be fingerprinted by the New Jersey State Police. Adults cannot have any contact with students in this school until the Principal or Safe Environment Coordinator (SEC) has received a copy of their clearance letter from the Office of Child & Youth Protection. In addition, the Diocese of Camden requires all adults in regular contact with minors to complete a safe environment training session called VIRTUS® Protecting God's Children (PGC). Adult volunteers are required to attend a PGC session within 60 days of initial contact with students. If a volunteer misses this deadline for whatever reason, the adult will not be allowed to volunteer until the PGC requirement is completed.

Volunteer Expectations Volunteers are vital to our school community and cleared volunteers serve at the principal's discretion. All volunteers must agree to uphold and support St Mary School's Catholic identity, mission, and values, and adhere to our parent conduct requirements. Violating conduct requirements or safe environment requirements may result in dismissal from volunteer activities temporarily or permanently.

St. Mary School Tuition Refund Policy and Remote Learning

Remote Learning Tuition Guidelines:

- Learning will continue during times of Remote Learning.
- Tuition will continue to come out as scheduled per your FINALSITE agreement.
- Tuition is for 180 days of instruction which St. Mary School will continue to provide
- There will be no refunds of previous tuition paid.
- Withdraw guidelines in the current Tuition Refund Policy will remain in effect throughout the time of Remote Learning
- If your child/ren are instructed to go onto Remote Learning because an emergency, Tuition will continue to come out as scheduled per your FINALSITE agreement. St. Mary School will continue to provide your child/ren instruction while he/she/they are on Remote Learning and withdraw guidelines in the current Tuition Refund Policy will remain in effect during the entire time of their Remote Learning.

Whether in school or remote learning, St. Mary School is committed to providing excellent education which aligns with your family values.

THANK YOU.

Diocese of Camden

Catholic Schools Office

BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

Introduction

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

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

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

Definitions

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

Aggressor means a student who engages in Bullying or Retaliation.

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

- causing physical or emotional harm to the Target or damage to the Target's property;
- placing the Target in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself, or of damage to his/her property;
- causing the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the Target's education; or
- materially and substantially disrupting the educational process or the orderly operation of a school.

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

Bullying includes Cyber-Bullying.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Prohibition against Bullying and Retaliation

Bullying is prohibited:

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

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

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

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

Prevention and Intervention Plan

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

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

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

- the range of disciplinary actions that may be taken against an Aggressor for Bullying or Retaliation; provided, however, that the disciplinary actions shall balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior;
- a provision that a student who knowingly makes a false accusation of Bullying or Retaliation may be subject to disciplinary action;
- a strategy for providing counseling or referral to appropriate services for Aggressors and Targets and for appropriate family members of such students;
- provisions establishing a Bullying prevention program or curriculum;
- provisions for informing parents and guardians about the Bullying prevention program or curriculum of the school.

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

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

Reporting

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

Investigation

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

Investigation of Complaint

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

Retaliation

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

Disciplinary Action

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

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

Non-disciplinary Intervention

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

Training

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

Publication and Notice

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

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

Notifications

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

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

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

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

Student Assistance

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

Available Consultation

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