

# **St. Mary Catholic School**

**217 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street**

**Wilmington, North Carolina 28401**

*Academic Excellence in a Setting of Catholic Christian Values since 1869*



## **ST. MARY** **Catholic School**

### **Parent/Student Handbook**

**2011/2012**

School Office for Grades K-8  
Telephone: (910) 762-5491 ext. 40  
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[www.thestmaryschool.org](http://www.thestmaryschool.org)

## **Our Mission**

The mission of St. Mary Catholic School is to ensure learning for all our students within the framework of Catholic Christian values.

### **We Believe...**

- ❖ Our aim is to help our students grow in a manner consistent with their needs, interests and abilities, and prepare them to live in a changing world as self-directed, caring, God-loving, responsible citizens.
- ❖ It is our responsibility to challenge our students to develop their potential in the trust-filled atmosphere of a Catholic, Christian Community, whose curriculum includes instruction in the precepts of the Catholic faith and practice in the Christian call to service.
- ❖ Parents, as primary educators, have the responsibility to take an active part in the school community and the right to help direct the education of their children.
- ❖ Every facet of life: spiritual, physical, intellectual and emotional, should be addressed in the educational process.
- ❖ The development of critical thinking skills, knowledge, and reasoning are more important than the mere accumulation of facts or data.
- ❖ Every child is unique and valuable and deserves our best efforts in learning the ultimate value of life.
- ❖ Students and teachers deserve a setting conducive to education, a calm and enriching classroom that encourages creativity and fosters learning.

*Dear Families,*

*Welcome to St. Mary Catholic School. We thank you for making this choice for your child's education. You have now become a member of our school family joining thousands who have chosen to offer their children a St. Mary School experience following the threefold mission of Catholic schools. That mission is to spread the message of God, build community, and teach service while providing an excellent academic program. Our educational program is planned to give your child a variety of experiences while discovering his/her God given gifts.*

*Here we strive to provide a safe and nurturing environment where mutual respect and integrity are evident and all attempt to follow the way Jesus taught us to live. He is an important part of our entire day.*

*Blessings to you,  
Joyce McGuire Price  
Principal*

### **Our History**

Founded in 1869, St. Mary Catholic School is the oldest Catholic school in the state of North Carolina. Four Sisters of Mercy arrived by train from Charleston to found a convent and school at the request of Bishop James Gibbons. The school became The Academy of the Incarnation. Two blocks away from the current school is the building where the boarding and day school for girls was located. Later the Sisters added a parochial school for poor girls called St. Peter's Parochial School for Girls. This school was located in the Peden House, located at the corner of Fourth and Ann Streets, on the same property which houses St. Mary Catholic School today. The Academy was later closed.

In 1876, another school was built to provide Catholic education for boys. Located on the present site of the St. Mary Church, the school began with fifty boys. Over time, the two schools merged into St. Mary Catholic School. A new church was added to the property in 1908.

During the 1950's, a new school was built at 214 S. Fourth St. During segregation, the African American Catholic children attended St. Thomas School. In the 1960's, prior to the passage of the Civil Rights Act, the Diocese of Raleigh merged segregated Catholic schools. St. Thomas School was combined with St. Mary School where their combined faculties taught for several years.

By the 1990's, St. Mary's Catholic School was filled to capacity with lengthy waiting lists. In order to expand, the church purchased an old abandoned public school on the block across the street. The Tileston School had been built in 1871. It had undergone five additions over a century of time housing an elementary, middle and high school. The city abandoned the building in the 1980's, and it fell into disrepair. Church volunteers helped to renovate the building which today houses church administrative offices, grades 5-8, the library, computer lab, science lab, auditorium, and music and art rooms. We also enjoy the Tileston Gym whose floor was recently renovated. The St. Mary Outreach Ministry occupies the lowest level of the Tileston Building serving over 9,000 people per year.

In 2002, when a new Catholic school opened in the suburbs, the enrollment at St. Mary Catholic School dropped enough to have the school condense back into the lower school building. Over the past five years, the enrollment has gradually increased and students have gradually moved back into Tileston. In 2008, a PreK-4 program was added and a PreK-3 program was added in 2009.

Today, the school looks forward to a promising future in the beautiful historic district of Wilmington. The windows have been restored in the Tileston building and the air-conditioning of the Upper Room was completed in 2009, due to the generosity of two anonymous donors. During the summer of 2011, the bathrooms in the top floor of Tileston have been updated. As we strive to maintain and restore our campus buildings, we are committed to offering a faith-based quality education to our students as we begin the 142<sup>nd</sup> year of continuous Catholic education here in historic Wilmington.

## **Accreditation**

St. Mary Catholic School is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

## **Admissions**

Applicants are accepted on the basis of both the student's and the family's sincere interest in St. Mary Catholic School, a willingness to support and cooperate with school policies and philosophy, and the ability to develop and thrive in the academic and spiritual environment. As the child's primary educators, parents are required to support their child's academic efforts and be active participants in their child's moral and social development at school. Parental encouragement and involvement are vital to the child's success.

St. Mary Catholic School welcomes boys and girls of all races, religions, and ethnic origins. In the admissions process, preference is given to siblings of students presently enrolled in PreK3 through 8<sup>th</sup> grade and active members of St. Mary Parish and all Catholic parishes including families from out-of-town parishes. Children entering Kindergarten must be 5 years of age by August 31st.

Applicants are invited to visit the school and to meet the principal and other members of the staff and student body. Previous academic records are reviewed, and parents are asked to provide as much information as possible regarding their child's educational experience, needs, and interests. In order to understand the child's educational background more clearly, the administration may contact the child's previous teachers and/or principal. Every effort is made to meet the needs of children of all learning styles and abilities. St. Mary Catholic School is limited in its resources to provide individual programs or staff for exceptional students. The principal makes final decisions.

The admissions process includes registration forms, payment of registration and book fees, and arrangements for the payment of tuition.

## **Financial Information**

Parents/Guardians are financially responsible for payment of the full amount of tuition agreed upon by the school and the parent/guardian. In the case of a delinquent tuition payment without a change-of-status agreement with the school, the student may be denied admission to the classroom until a new agreement is established. Monthly payment plans are arranged through the FACTS tuition program.

For any items paid by check, there is a returned check fee of \$25.00 and an additional late fee payment of \$25.00 after the tenth of the month.

All funds designated for the school are to be placed in a marked envelope. The envelope should include the student's name, teacher's name, and an indication of the purpose of the money

## **Transfer of Students**

Notice of the withdrawal of a student should be made by the parent in writing to the Principal in advance of the withdrawal date. This enables the school to prepare the necessary information and settle accounts.

Registration fees are non-refundable. Students who withdraw after the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter begins, but before the end of the first quarter, will owe  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the year's tuition.

If a student withdraws after the beginning of the quarter, tuition will be owed for that quarter and any previous quarters.

## **Student Records**

St. Mary's Catholic School adheres to the Buckley Amendment (Family Education Rights and Privacy) regarding access to student records. Records of students transferring to other schools will only be sent through U.S. Mail. No records will be given to parents to transport to the new school.

Parents requesting records/transcripts and/or recommendations must make a five school-day request to the School Office. All forms should be submitted to the School Office and completed forms will be sent via U.S. Mail.

Forms completed by teachers assisting evaluation of students will be mailed directly to the requesting professional.

## School Calendar – on website

### School Closings Due to Inclement Weather

St. Mary School follows the decisions made by the New Hanover County School System on all school closings, including early dismissals and delayed openings. Please listen to the local radio and television news reports for the announcements and follow the announcement for the New Hanover County Schools. Closings are also posted on the NHCS website. The school reserves the right to change this policy as circumstances and needs arise.

### Arrival and Departure

School hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. A faculty supervisor is on duty at 7:30 a.m. daily to oversee the students in the school courtyard. On rainy or very cold days children will gather in the cafeteria. There is no supervision before 7:30 a.m.

School is dismissed at 3:00 p.m. Children are supervised by on-duty staff until 3:15 p.m. Students remaining after 3:15 p.m. will be escorted to the After School Program, located in the cafeteria. Parents will be charged the drop in rate of \$15.00. Students in Grades 5-8 will be dismissed from the west stairwell.

Parents must submit written permission to the office for children to walk home from school. Parents whose children will be using van transportation to after school programs must furnish a note to the teacher. Permanent or temporary changes in your child's regular transportation throughout the school year must also be submitted in writing.

Children waiting for pick-up must always remain in an area supervised by on-duty staff. Children may not leave the immediate area to meet their ride. Drivers should find a place to park and walk to the pick-up area to get the children. We ask children not to go around the corners or beyond the walls where it becomes impossible to supervise them.

Carpool drivers should arrange a specific area where children should meet for pick-up.

Children and parents should cross the street only in the designated crosswalks with the crossing guard. Please remind your child of this important safety issue.

Parents are asked not to enter the buildings at arrival and dismissal to conference with faculty. Teachers are involved in organizing daily activities and performing special duties and must not be distracted. Please make arrangements to meet with your child's teacher at some other mutually convenient time.

Students and volunteers are not allowed to open a school door to any adult. They are to get assistance from an adult on staff.

### Late Arrivals

Students arriving after 8:00 a.m. are considered tardy. All tardy students must sign in at the school office accompanied by the driving adult. A child who is chronically late causes a disruption to the class already in progress. It is difficult for a child who is late to immediately focus on the lesson. Please do everything possible to ensure that your child arrives to school on time. The chronically late student runs the risk of being dismissed or not being considered for re-registration for the following year. **Three tardies will result in a silent lunch for the student.** Students arriving after 11:30 a.m. are considered absent for the day.

## **Absences**

Children should be encouraged to come to school if they feel well and can participate fully in the program. A child who is unusually cranky, out of sorts, or tired, could be displaying a sign of illness. Please keep your child at home when he or she exhibits symptoms such as: fever in the last 24 hours, discolored nasal discharge, sore throat, red or watery eyes, ear ache, vomiting or diarrhea during the night, or any communicable, contagious disease.

If your child is absent, please call the school office by 8:30 a.m. to report the absence and, at this time, let us know if you will be picking up the homework at dismissal time. Students are expected to complete all required class work, homework, and tests missed during an absence. It is the student's responsibility to check with his/her teacher/s regarding missed assignments.

Trips and vacations should be scheduled during the regularly scheduled school vacations noted on the school calendar. Teachers are not required to prepare assignments in advance for children on vacation during the school year. Assignments may be completed and credit granted at the teacher's discretion upon the child's return. Make up work can never cover all that is taught during absences.

A written statement giving reasons for the absence must be brought to the student's teacher upon the student's return. These notes will be retained in the office for one year. Excessive absence (40 days) or the equivalent of 40 days including tardies can be cause for a student to be retained in the current grade for one year.

## **Early Departure**

If your child must leave school before 3:00 p.m., a note must be presented to the homeroom teacher who will forward it to the school office. When arriving to pick up a child, parents are required to sign the early dismissal sheet in the school office. This sheet must also be signed in the event of early departure due to illness. For a scheduled early departure, office personnel will retrieve students from their class only after they have been signed out, so please leave a few extra minutes for the child to arrive at the office.

## **After School Program**

St. Mary Catholic School offers an After School Program for our K through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. Registration is required for full-time and drop-in students. Forms that fully explain the program and procedures are available in the school office. After School hours are from 3:00 – 6:00 p.m. on school days. On half days (except for the first two, those just before holidays, and the last day), the program runs 12-6. Children should bring their lunch.

## **Release from School**

Students will be released only to adults designated on the school emergency form. If there is a change, written notice must be sent by the parent to the office. A photo ID may be required of the person picking up the child. Parents should list a "locally" responsible adult to whom the child may be released.

## **Family/Custodial Records**

In the case of separation or divorce, the school requests that the parent who has sole custody of a student provide a certified copy of the court order stating who has custody of the student (this must be done immediately upon separation or divorce). The school also requires that the custodial parent sign a form indicating whether or not the non-custodial parent may receive information about the children, such as newsletters, standardized test scores, report cards, etc. By LAW, the school is not permitted to release a student and/or information about a student to the non-custodial parent without permission from the custodial parent. (See Appendix A). No records will be sent to transferring schools of students whose parents' financial commitment to the school is in arrears.

## **Child Abuse Laws**

St. Mary Catholic School abides by the Child Abuse laws of the State of North Carolina. This law mandates that all cases of suspected abuse and/or neglect be reported to Child Protective Services.

## **Media Release Forms**

St. Mary Catholic School requests parental permission to have their students participate in media opportunities which may include newspaper, TV, and St. Mary Catholic School website. The form is included in our registration packet.

## Field Trips

Field trips are designed to correlate with teaching units and to achieve curricular goals. Field trips are permissible for all grades when advanced planning, location and experience insure a successful learning experience. Individual teachers, in consultation with the Administration, reserve the right to restrict or deny student participation on any field trip due to, but not limited to, poor academic performance and/or poor conduct.

A written official permission slip signed by the parent is required before a child will be permitted to attend a field trip activity. Verbal permission, including a phone call, cannot be accepted.

Diocesan policy requires that buses be used for field trips. Parents are responsible for all costs incurred by field trips. Monies collected for field trips are non-refundable.

Volunteers are always needed and appreciated. The school uniform will always be worn for field trips unless otherwise announced by the teacher. A parent must accompany any student requiring the administration of a prescription medication and/or use of an Epi-pen during the duration of the field trip.

## Parent Involvement

We welcome parent involvement. We have many needs here at St. Mary Catholic School and enjoy involving our parents as much as possible. Please do not hesitate to call your child's teacher and/or the Home School Association if you are able to volunteer.

If you would like to conference with your child's teacher, please make an appointment by note, email, or phone message through the school office. Teachers are not to be distracted while they are on duty. Remember that during school hours the teacher's priority is the needs and safety of the children.

All visitors to the school, including volunteers, must enter the school office by using the main entrance at 217 S. 4<sup>th</sup>. All visitors must sign in at the office and receive a visitor's sticker before proceeding into the buildings. Lunches and other forgotten items delivered to the school must be left in the school office. Parents will not be permitted to enter the hallways to deliver items. This avoids unnecessary interruptions while class is in session and provides greater safety for all of our children. Children are instructed to check with the office (with teacher permission) for their forgotten items.

All volunteers in the school are required to have completed a Personal Information Sheet that will be issued by and kept on file in the office.

## Communications

A weekly email will be sent to all families by the principal during the school year. Teachers may send class newsletter by hardcopy or through their web pages. Each teacher has voicemail and email where parents can leave non-urgent messages during the school day. Teachers will check these during planning periods and/or after school.

Check your child's daily planner and/or weekly homework sheets regularly for other timely information. In addition, The St. Mary Parish Bulletin contains a School News page which features school events.

It is important that parents read all communication, especially since some announcements require immediate attention.

## Telephones

Classroom telephones are for the faculty and staff use only. Students are not permitted to use classroom telephones for any reason without permission of the teacher. Students may use office telephones only under the supervision of office personnel and only for emergencies. Calling parents to bring forgotten items is not considered an emergency.

**Additionally, the use of cell phones by students during the school day, in the After School Program, and during other after school activities is not allowed.** If you need to reach your child during the school day, please call the office and a message will be given to your child. **Student cell phones are to be "Off" during the school day and left in their book bags. First offense – demerits given and phone will be sent to principal's office where parent must retrieve. Second offense – demerits given and the phone will be taken away and returned on the last day of school.**

## **Change of Address or Telephone Number**

Please notify the office immediately of any change in address or telephone number. It is critical that we have emergency contact telephone numbers on file at all times. If children are staying with other family members, caregivers, or friends while parents are temporarily out of town, the office must be provided with this contact information.

## **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

There is one scheduled Parent-Teacher Conference during the school year. A good parent/teacher relationship enables both to have a better understanding of the child. Parents are encouraged to keep in touch with the child's teacher during the school year. If you find that a conference with your child's teacher would be helpful, please contact the teacher by note or through the office. School personnel are not to be contacted at home regarding your child without the consent of the teacher. Please respect our faculty as professionals.

## **Lunches**

Children may bring their lunch from home or participate in our hot lunch program. Hot lunches are served on all full days of school. A monthly calendar indicating the daily menu is issued to all students. A la carte items are available each day. Dining cards are ordered through the child's homeroom teacher. A ten-meal or twenty-meal card may be purchased. The cards are issued to the homeroom teachers who give the cards to the students each day at lunchtime. The children present the card to the cafeteria worker as they move through the lunch line. The cards are returned to the homeroom teacher for use the next day. When a dining card has three meals remaining, a reminder and an order form will be sent home.

A student without lunch or a dining card will be offered a sandwich. Parents will reimburse the cafeteria for this service. *No charges are permitted in the cafeteria.*

Parents may not bring lunches from carry-out restaurants. Students are expected to use the same manners required in the classroom during lunch. Courtesy toward other students and cooperation with the cafeteria staff are in order at all times.

## **Snacks**

Snacks are permitted in some classes. Check with your child's teacher for snack policies. Teachers will set their own policy regarding water bottles.

- Birthday treats are at the discretion of the teacher. Please check with the teacher.
- Birthday treats may not be used to substitute for lunch. If a parent wishes to bring pizza or a similar item for a birthday, it must be done at a time other than the lunchtime.
- Students may not bring lunches for other students.

## **Deliveries**

Flowers, balloons, etc. will not be delivered to students during the school day. Please do not have any deliveries made to your child at school.

## **Gifts and/or Invitations**

Students should not exchange individual gifts at school. This gesture only creates hurt feelings among other students. Invitations for parties should be sent to the homes of students via U. S. Mail unless an invitation is being given to every student in the entire class.

## **Fund Raising**

All fund-raising projects by students, teachers, classes, parents and committees must be proposed to and approved by the administration in advance of the event. All monies collected at a school sponsored event must be double counted and locked in a safe place on the school campus. No money should be held by individuals.

## **Lost and Found**

Please label all articles of clothing, lunches, backpacks, etc. so that we may return lost articles to your child. Items left at school will be put in the "Lost and Found" basket located in the cafeteria. Items that are left at school will be kept until the 30<sup>th</sup> of each month. Any items not claimed by this date will be donated to Social Ministry. Teachers are not responsible for any lost items.

## **Student Health**

Each child's personal file will include at least the following documents: a health form documenting immunizations and physician's examination, a medical care release, the parents' work and home phone numbers, names and phone numbers of individuals to contact in an emergency if the parents cannot be reached (in order of parental preference), a list of allergies (including medicines, insect bites, and food), name, address and phone number of physician, and name and phone number of the emergency room of the preferred hospital.

Minor scrapes and bruises are, unfortunately, a part of a child's life. Staff will closely supervise children and prevent accidents whenever possible. Administrative staff will offer assistance as needed and parents will be contacted when there is any indication that it is appropriate.

If a child's injury or illness requires emergency treatment, the school will first call the Emergency Medical Service (911). Parents will then be notified immediately. An alternate will be called if the parent cannot be reached. If the child is taken to an emergency room before the parent arrives, a school staff person will accompany the child and will take the child's personal folder with medical and insurance information. In the event that 911 must be called, the parent is expected to come immediately to the school or to the emergency room. An accident report will be completed and kept on file in the office. A copy of the report will be sent to the parent.

## **Medication**

A medication form with specific instructions must be on file in order for the school to administer any prescribed medication. No child will be administered any prescribed medication without specific written instructions from a physician. All medication must be in the original container. Only a parent may deliver medication to the school office to be dispensed. At no time should any medication be in the possession of a student.

*No over - the - counter medication will be dispensed by school personnel.* If a child feels unwell, a call will be made to the parent. If a parent feels that medication is necessary, the parent must come to the school and administer the medication to the child in the school office. School personnel will document the administration of the medication in the Medical Log.

## **Counseling Services**

The Office of Catholic Social Ministries of Wilmington provides counseling services for St. Mary Catholic School students under the auspices of the Diocese of Raleigh. A certified social worker is available to interview a student at the request of a student, teacher, parent, or administrator. Our school policy permits the social worker to meet twice with a student. These preliminary meetings are designed to clarify a question or concern, not for the purpose of professional counseling. If the social worker determines that counseling is advisable, parents are contacted and permission is requested. Counseling occurs only with parental permission.

## **Academics**

St. Mary Catholic School offers a rich core curriculum including Language Arts, Literature, Science, Math, Social Studies, Religion classes and weekly Mass celebrations. Additional classes include Physical Education, Spanish, Library/Media, and Technology instruction. All of this is complimented with an exceptional Fine Arts program which offers weekly classes in Art, Choir, Band, Creative Music, and Suzuki violin.

Extra-curricular activities may include Liturgical Dance, Science Olympiad, and Girls on the Run.

Middle School team sports include basketball, volleyball, tennis, lacrosse, and softball.

A student whose academic performance indicates serious deficiencies may be placed on academic probation. Academic probation impacts a student's ability to participate in extra-curricular activities and team sports.

## Academic Grading Policies

Report cards are issued to the student at the end of each quarter. Interim reports are issued to students in grades 6-8 midway through each marking period. Parents of students in grades K-5 receive graded papers on a regular basis. It is imperative that parents, as the primary educators, look over the child's work and teacher reports and discuss the results regularly with the child.

The grading system is as follows:

PreK students receive report cards during parent conferences in November and at the end of the year.

Kindergarten is graded using a v+, v, v- grading scale.

### Academic Grades:

A = 94-100

A- = 93

B+ = 92

B = 86-91

B- = 85

C+ = 84

C = 78-83

C- = 77

D+ = 76

D = 71-75

D- = 70

F = 69 and lower

### Effort Code:

1 = Excellent

2 = Good

3 = Fair

4 = Needs Improvement

5 = Unsatisfactory

A = Superior work

D = Below average

B = Above average work

F = Failing

C = Average

Letter grades are only a part of a student's overall academic evaluation. Along with letter grades, students earn numerical effort grades ranging from 1 to 5. These numbers are the prime indicators of the student's attitude toward school life and his/her approach to learning.

## Promotion and Retention Policy

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

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

## Homework

Teachers assign appropriate home study to reinforce and supplement lessons presented in class. All written work is to be neat, accurate, and complete. Students in grades 1-3 should expect approximately 10-15 minutes of homework in each subject area, Monday through Thursday. Students in grades 4-8 should expect approximately 20 minutes of homework in each subject area, Monday through Friday. Occasionally students may find it necessary to work on the weekends or holidays to complete a special project, book report, etc. Additional reading should be encouraged after written assignments are completed. We ask that parents check homework and provide assistance while allowing the child to accept responsibility for the task. Students will be provided with either an assignment book or homework sheet on which to record their assignments.

Assignments due to absence are to be completed upon the student's return. It is the student's responsibility to inquire about the assignments and tests that were missed during the absence.

Consequences for incomplete assignments will be handled according to policies set forth by individual teachers.

## **Standardized Testing in Grades 2-8**

The Diocese of Raleigh has adopted the Iowa Test of Basic Skills as the annual standardized test. The test is administered in October of each school year to all Diocesan School students in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. The Cognitive Abilities Test is administered in grades 2 and 5. The purpose of the tests is to monitor the academic growth of the school, class, and individual student over a period of several years. The Diocese has chosen to administer the tests in the fall in order to obtain results early in the school year. With these early results, the curriculum can be adjusted to address the needs of the school, a class, or individual students. A representative from Riverside Publishing Company will provide a parent information session to assist parents in the interpretation of the test scores. Parents will be notified when the session has been scheduled. Please check your monthly calendar. Test results are generally available in November. The primary focus at St. Mary Catholic School is to utilize the test results to drive curriculum development and revisions.

St. Mary School also participates in the North Carolina Catholic Schools Writing Competency Testing Program. Grade level Writing Tests are given in grades 4 and 7 in March. N.C. End of Course Tests in Algebra I and Geometry (depending on state funding) are administered in late May or early June.

## **Behavior Expectations of St. Mary Catholic School Students**

Self-discipline is the Christian ideal that all students are encouraged to achieve. St. Mary Catholic School holds high expectations for all students, particularly in the areas of morality and academics. In describing the expected behavior of St. Mary Catholic School students, we define a moral code of our school that applies to all members of the St. Mary Catholic School community. All students will strive to be:

- Aware of the presence of God in oneself and in others at all times.
- Respectful of self and others in manners, kindness, and consideration.
- Sensitive to others' feelings and opinions.
- Respectful and caring of the environment and property.
- Honest in all endeavors.
- Punctual in all commitments.
- Patient in listening to the opinions of others.
- Cooperative with classroom and school rules.

Providing a safe, calm learning environment depends on the cooperation of the student and the support of the family. As their child's primary educator, parents share the responsibility with their child in upholding the school's discipline code.

It is our belief that effective discipline occurs when each infraction is addressed fairly and promptly with respect for the dignity of the child. Students are expected to correct their inappropriate behavior and the discipline system is designed to provide ample opportunity and support to do so. In instances where counseling and guidance is determined to be helpful to the student in making positive changes in his/her behavior, the school will request assistance of a certified Counselor of Catholic Social Ministries.

## **Honor Code Policy**

Honesty is the cornerstone of a quality education and a quality life. Dishonesty, in personal actions and/or academic endeavors, is considered a serious offense at St. Mary Catholic School. The following guidelines will indicate consequences for incidents of dishonesty such as the use of unauthorized aid on a test, assignment, or homework, and plagiarism or forgery. The intent of any action is to help the student to understand the value of his/her integrity and the importance of avoiding any future incident of dishonesty.

Honor Code violations include, but are not limited to: cheating on an assignment, test or project, plagiarism, forgery or alteration of a signature or a grade, stealing, and/or lying to administration, faculty, or staff members.

### Grades 1-8:

#### First offense includes:

- Restrictions and/or loss of privileges determined by the teacher
- Notification to parents that student is placed on probation (Warning next time suspension)
- Three demerits assigned to the student's discipline record
- Student/teacher/parent/principal conference or letter from Principal
- Zero on the assignment/test/project
- Return, replace, and/or pay for stolen/misused property

#### Second offense includes:

- Notification to parent of 1-3 days out-of-school suspension
- Zero on the assignment/test/project
- Return, replace, and/or pay for stolen/misused property

#### Third offense includes:

- Zero on the assignment/test/project
- Return, replace, and/or pay for stolen/misused property
- Dismissal from St. Mary Catholic School

### **Discipline Code of St. Mary Catholic School**

The Saint Mary Catholic School norms of conduct are standards by which all students are expected to adhere in order to promote personal responsibility and demonstrate Christian values. Behavior problems are first handled by the teacher with various warnings, restrictions, and loss of privileges, and/or parent conferences. Parents are notified in writing of any infractions on the *Student Discipline Notice* and are consulted when multiple offenses occur. The St. Mary Catholic School discipline code operates on a Demerit System.

#### One demerit infractions include, but are not limited to:

- Late to class
- Unprepared for class
- Late to detention
- Gum, food, drink or candy in class without permission
- Fooling around or general disruptions in class
- Failure to return *Student Discipline Notice*
- Uniform violations

#### Two demerit infractions include, but are not limited to:

- Inappropriate, rude, bold, sassy, or discourteous behavior
- Unacceptable language or the use of profanity
- Deliberate disregard for directions
- Destruction of property
- Misbehavior in church
- Disturbing behavior during class, interfering with other's right to learn
- Unprepared for Specialty class

An accumulation of 5 demerits on a child's Student Discipline Record will result in a one hour after school DETENTION. Parents will receive written notification of the DETENTION immediately.

An accumulation of 5 additional demerits, for a total of 10, will result in a second one hour after school DETENTION. Parents will be notified. A conference may be requested.

Should events occur which would warrant an immediate detention, 5 demerits will be automatically assigned.

With a further accumulation of 5 demerits, for a total of 15, the student will be issued a 1 day IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION. At this time, a parent will be required to attend parent/teacher/student/principal conference.

A further accumulation of 5 demerits, for a total of 20, will result in the issuance of a 3 day IN - SCHOOL SUSPENSION. Another conference will be required.

An accumulation of an additional 5 demerits, for a total of 25, will result in DISMISSAL from St. Mary Catholic School.

Immediate OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION, for one day or three days, depending on the child's Student Discipline Record, will be issued for certain unacceptable behaviors. These behaviors include, but are not limited to, insubordination to a faculty or staff member and deliberate and violent physical contact with another student. The parent will be notified immediately and the child must be removed from school. The term of suspension will begin with the following school day.

Immediate DISMISSAL from St. Mary Catholic School will occur as a result of a student being in possession of a weapon or illegal drugs on the school property. Threats against a staff or faculty member will also result in immediate DISMISSAL. Violations of this nature will be reported to local law enforcement authorities.

The Pastor of St. Mary Catholic School and the Superintendent of the Diocese of Raleigh will be notified in the case of any SUSPENSIONS or DISMISSALS from St. Mary Catholic School.

Since it is impossible to foresee all violations that can arise, the administration reserves the right to use disciplinary action for any behavior that brings discredit upon the school or seriously impairs the rights of others as outlined in the Behavior Expectations of St. Mary Catholic School Students. The principal also reserves the right to review the academic and disciplinary record of a student at the end of each school year to consider if a student will be invited to return the following year. The faculty and staff of St. Mary Catholic School will work hard to help any student meet our expectations for appropriate behavior. We expect full cooperation and support of both the students and the parents.

### **Detentions**

Detentions are held on Thursday afternoons from 3:10 – 4:10 p.m. Students should meet promptly for detention in the lower school lobby. Parents should pick up children serving detention at 4:10 p.m. at the front door facing Fourth Street. Students remaining at 4:10 p.m. will be escorted to the After School Program. Parents will be assessed fees at the same rate as a late 3:00 p.m. pick up. Detention takes precedence over appointments, practices, lessons, ballgames, etc.

### **WOW Awards**

These positive awards are given by any faculty member to students who go above and beyond the expectations of behavior at SMS.

### **Safety Drills**

Fire and tornado drills are practiced regularly. Directions for these drills are posted in every classroom.

### **Crisis Plan**

St. Mary School has implemented a Crisis Plan in case of a lockdown emergency. All teachers and staff are aware of the procedure to follow to keep your child safe. In the event that we must evacuate the school buildings, we will move students to the church or First Presbyterian Church parking lot. Official school-wide emergency communications will be sent to parents using the ALERT NOW phone system.

### **School Safety/Harassment**

St. Mary Catholic School provides a safe environment for all individuals. Verbal or written threats made against the physical or emotional well being of any individual are taken very seriously. Students making such threats (seriously or in jest), including racial slurs, face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion.

Harassment of any type is not tolerated. The principal investigates all complaints of harassment. Students involved in harassing behavior face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion.

## **Internet Use Policy for Students**

Each student must sign the St. Mary Catholic School Acceptable Use Policy for Internet Usage agreement in order to be permitted to access the Internet while at school.

## **Blogs**

Engagement in online blogs such as, but not limited to, MySpace, Xanga, Friendster, Facebook, etc. will result in disciplinary actions determined by the principal, if the content of the student's blog includes defamatory comments regarding the school, faculty, administration, or other students.

## **Title IX**

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

## **School Property**

The parent of a child who carelessly destroys any furniture, equipment, buildings or personal property of others will be obligated to pay the full amount of repairs and labor or replacement. This behavior will also result in demerits, detention, or suspension. School textbooks used by the student must have a proper book cover. No writing in school textbooks is permitted. The student will pay a fine or replacement for lost or damaged books.

## **Lockers**

Each Middle School student at Tileston is assigned a locker in which to store clothing and textbooks. In order to maintain a quiet atmosphere for class, students are allowed to go to their lockers only at specified times. The school reserves the right to inspect lockers at any time. Lockers may not be decorated inside or out.

## **Student Uniform Policy**

A uniform policy is intended to promote unity and eliminate distractions. St. Mary Catholic School has adopted a uniform that is comfortable and appropriate. Parents play a major role in helping the school keep the uniform code fair and consistent in the spirit of cooperation.

All uniforms (see Appendix B) must be clean, in good repair, and properly fitted. Shirts will be tucked in and buttoned, except for the top button. Skirt/jumper length must be to the knee. Belts are to be worn at all times with shorts or slacks. Uniform infractions will be enforced through the Demerit System on the Student Discipline Record.

Students are expected to be well-groomed and maintain a neat appearance. No makeup is permitted. Girls may wear clear nail polish (no false nails), a simple gold or silver chain with a religious medallion, a wristwatch, and one pair of small post earrings. Hair accessories are limited to headbands, clips, pins, elastics, and scrunchies which match the school uniform. Girls are not permitted to wear oversized bows. Boys may wear a wristwatch and a simple gold or silver chain with a religious medallion. Boys are not permitted to wear earrings.

For all students, the style and cut of hair must be conservative. Boys' hair length should be cut above the shirt collar and above the eyebrows. For boys and girls, hair must be the student's natural color (no streaking, tipping, highlighting, dyeing, bleaching, or otherwise altering the natural hair color). Hair color that has been altered will be required to be changed back to its original color. Extreme styles or fads (shaving or cutting designs into the hair) will not be permitted. Semi-permanent tattoos and/or transfers are not acceptable. Children may not write on themselves. In any questionable instance of uniform policy, the principal's discretion will be used. Violations of the uniform policy will result in demerits and/or detention.

## **Adult Dress Code**

Faculty, staff, and volunteers who contribute to the educational experience at St. Mary Catholic School are dedicated, capable, Christian people whose main concern is for the needs of children, namely the spiritual, social and intellectual well-being of each child. Respect and professionalism are reflected in the attitude and appearance of adults who represent St. Mary Catholic School and work with our students. Clothing worn by faculty, staff and volunteers during school hours should be suitable for our environment. Apparel that is designed to be accentuating in cut, fit, or style, is considered inappropriate in the parish and school environment. Clothing should reflect self-respect as well as be a sign of respect of those we serve.

## **ST. MARY CATHOLIC SCHOOL UNIFORM**

**2011 - 2012**

**Both Boys' and Girls' uniforms are to be purchased through Schoolbelles.**

**[www.schoolbelles.com](http://www.schoolbelles.com) (School 1712) 1-888-637-3037**

**Substitutions are not permitted.**

### **Girls Basic Uniform**

Plaid v-neck jumper (grades K-5)

Plaid inverted V pleated skirt (grades 6-8)

Navy blue pants or shorts

Khaki pants or shorts

Navy blue, brown, or black belt

White or maroon pullover knit collared shirt (long or short sleeved) with St. Mary School logo

Maroon pullover v-neck sweater vest with St. Mary School logo

Maroon crewneck pullover sweater with St. Mary School logo

Maroon v-neck cardigan sweater with St. Mary School logo

SMS sweatshirt (not hoodie)

Navy blue or white knee socks, white crew socks, or navy blue tights (Navy blue socks must be worn with pants. Tights (not leggings) may only be worn with skirts or jumpers.)

Navy Blue or Black Oxford with Rubber Sole, lace-up or Mary Janes (heel limited to 1") (K-8)

No slip-ons or loafers (shoes must have laces, buckles, or Velcro)

Uniform PE Sneakers – White or Black Lace-up or Velcro Sneakers –

(Must be free of decoration or logo)

### **Girls PE Uniform (Grades K-5)**

Girls in grades K-5 will wear the basic uniform (shorts, pants, or jumper) to PE.

Girls in grades K-4 may wear any shorts under their jumper.

**5<sup>th</sup> grade girls must wear P.E. shorts under their uniform on P.E. day.**

All K-5 students will wear P.E. shoes to school on P.E. days.

### **Girls PE Uniform (Grades 6-8)**

Navy blue PE shorts with St. Mary School logo

Gray pullover PE t-shirt with St. Mary School logo

Gray PE sweatshirt with St. Mary School logo

Uniform sneakers will be worn to PE class.

## **Boys Basic Uniform**

Navy blue pants or shorts

Khaki pants or shorts

Navy blue, brown, or black belt

White or maroon pullover knit collared shirt (long or short sleeved) with St. Mary School logo

Maroon pullover v-neck sweater vest with St. Mary School logo

Maroon pullover crewneck sweater with St. Mary School logo

Maroon v-neck cardigan sweater with St. Mary School logo

SMS Sweatshirt (not hoodie)

Navy blue crew socks (must be worn with pants)

White crew socks (worn only with shorts)

Black leather laceup shoes (K-8)\*\* (No loafers or slip-ons)

\*\*Uniform PE Sneakers – White or Black Lace-up or Velcro Sneakers –  
(Must be free of decoration or logo)

## **Boys PE Uniform (Grades K-5)**

Boys will wear the basic St. Mary uniform (pants or shorts) to PE.

K-5 will wear P.E. shoes to school on P.E. days.

## **Boys PE Uniform (Grades 6-8)**

Navy blue PE shorts with St. Mary logo

Gray pullover PE t-shirt with St. Mary logo

Gray PE sweatshirt with St. Mary logo

Uniform sneakers will be worn to PE class

School shoes may be purchased from the local retailer of your choice.

## **Dress Down Day Guidelines**

- Middle school students will be required to wear P.E. uniform during P.E.
- All clothing must display only school – appropriate pictures, symbols, and language.
- All shirts and tee shirts must be of modest style and coverage (no tank tops, no exposed midriffs, waists, hips, or undergarments)
- All shorts and skirts must be of modest length and coverage (no short shorts/skirts and no exposed undergarments)
- Athletic shoes, sandals, leather shoes may be worn (no flip-flops or Rainbows)
- No leggings or skinny jeans

**This handbook and the policies stated in it are meant to be a guide to student activities and discipline. Since it is impossible to foresee all situations that may arise, the administration reserves the right to set and/or revise policy as needed throughout the 2011-2012 school year. New policy and revisions will be communicated to parents in writing. Parents and students are bound by the policies contained in this handbook and the procedures set forth by teachers.**

## Appendix A

### FAMILY CUSTODIAL RECORD

St. Mary Catholic School is finding an increasing number of families experiencing transitions in parental custodial relationships. For this reason, we find it necessary to clarify and restate the usual procedures followed by the administration and faculty in dealing with parents in such situations.

In two-parent families, it is assumed that both parents are living at the same address unless we have been notified otherwise. St. Mary Catholic School personnel will therefore send home notices, communications, etc. with the child. It is assumed that both parents are communicating regarding the child and that all information is shared *by* and *between* the parents. This information includes, but is not limited to, conference appointments, report cards, interim reports, discussions with school personnel, and tuition statements.

In families experiencing separation of parents, or pending divorce, the above information will be sent home with the child to whichever parent currently has care of the child. It is assumed that this information is shared *by* the parents and *between* the parents. Since this situation frequently impacts on a child's achievement and interactions at school, parents are asked to inform *both* the principal and teacher of this fact so that appropriate support can be given to the child. St. Mary Catholic School personnel cannot proceed on hearsay, rumors, or demands of a parent, but only with the appropriate documentation detailed below.

In cases of an actual divorce decree involving *clear custody by one parent*, the principal is to be informed by the custodial parent of this fact. A copy of the decree bearing the case number, the pages referring to custody and the relationship with the school, and the final page bearing the judge's signature are to be submitted to the principal. Unless the decree indicates otherwise, school communications will be sent home to the *custodial parent\**. Custodial parents should understand, however, that unless the divorce decree specifically limits the non-custodial parent's right to access the records, the *non-custodial parent\*\** has a right to the same access as the custodial parent. We will, unless instructed by a Court Order, release such records upon request to the non-custodial parent. "Records" includes official transcripts, report cards, health records, referrals for special services, and communications regarding major disciplinary actions. It does not include daily classwork and papers, or routine communications sent through the children to the home or residence. In these cases, the custodial parent is asked to cooperate with the school and share this information directly with the non-custodial parent. This avoids time-consuming duplication of services. Further, you should realize that unless restricted by Court Order, any non-custodial parent has the right to attend any school activity of their child, which includes sports activities and class programs. Parents should keep each other informed as to these activities to avoid duplication of communications and to allow the school to better attend to the duty of teaching your children.

In cases of "joint custody" (shared parenting agreements), entitling both parents' access to school personnel and activities, it is assumed that one copy of communications and information will be sent home with the child and that this will be shared *by* and *between* the parents.

Regarding parent conferences in all custody situations: it is preferred and will be the general procedure that *one* conference appointment be scheduled "jointly" if both parents wish to be present. It is assumed that parents are able to set aside differences and to come together on behalf of their child for this time. A joint conference further insures that both parents are given the same information at the same time, thereby avoiding misunderstandings and misinterpretations.

In cases where joint conferences are *clearly* neither possible nor desirable by all parties involved, alternate arrangements may be discussed with the principal, subject to the approval of both parents, and further reviewed by St. Mary Catholic School's legal counsel. Every effort will be made to keep communication open with both parents while at the same time avoiding duplication of services and excessive demands on the teacher's time.

Visitation should generally begin at the home of one of the parents and not at school. It is hoped that visitation arrangements would reflect the sensitivity of both parents to the consistency and routines that foster security in a child and allow for the school responsibilities and homework to be taken care of during the school week.

Thank you for your attention to these matters. If you have any questions concerning these procedures, or circumstances you feel necessitate other arrangements, please contact the principal or pastor personally.

\*The Custodial Parent is understood to mean the parent with whom the child resides.

\*\* The Non-custodial Parent is understood to mean the parent with whom the child does not reside.