



God has given you spiritual authority over your child and a parent's prayers have real power. Prayers do not always receive immediate answers, but we can be assured that God is always listening, and that He gives us what we need. Please pray daily for the St. Mary Staff and especially for your children who are in constant need of your direction and protection. The Staff at St. Mary School is likewise praying for you. Let us have a blessed year!

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I. CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS AND ACCEPTANCE OF TERMS

We warmly welcome you to St. Mary of Elgin Catholic School (“St. Mary School,” “St. Mary,” or the “School”) and thank you for entrusting us with the awesome responsibility of educating your child. With the Holy Spirit guiding us, we will do everything we can to make your experience at St. Mary School a positive and memorable one. To do so, however, requires complete understanding and agreement by and between St. Mary and each parent/guardian with regard to both the parent’s/guardian’s obligations and their child/children’s obligations in the provision of academic and faith formation services by St. Mary to the students. Thus, it is in this St. Mary of Elgin Catholic School Handbook that the obligations of St. Mary Staff, parents/guardians, and students are defined and incorporated in the entirety into each student’s and each parent’s/guardian’s contractual agreement with St. Mary. Accordingly, every parent/guardian is required to read the entire Handbook, discuss any questions regarding the rules and expectations set forth herein (the “Terms”) with the Principal of St. Mary, explain the terms to your child/children, and acknowledge the acceptance of the Terms on your own behalf as well as on behalf of your child/children by signing a separate form acknowledging each of these actions (“Agreement”). Unless and until a parent/guardian completes this Acceptance of Terms, St. Mary Staff will not be required to conduct any conferences or discussions with you regarding any problems you or your child/children may have with actions of St. Mary under the Terms of this Agreement.

St. Mary Catholic School follows the Diocese of Rockford Catholic Education Office Handbook of Policies and Procedures Administrative Guide

II. GENERAL POLICIES

MISSION STATEMENT

St. Mary is a Christ-centered Parish ministry dedicated to providing: (1) an extraordinary Catholic faith foundation that develops holy children; (2) an academic curriculum that exceeds Illinois and national standards and that cultivates the ability to be life-long learners; and (3) a culture dedicated to respecting the dignity of self and others. Each of these goals is delivered through alignment of curriculum and extra-curricular activities with the five pillars of St. Mary: Faith; Academic Excellence; Respect; Work Ethic; and Contribution of Self. Through this process, each student will be equipped with the academic and faith foundations to pursue with resilience, creativity, and dignity, their unique calling in life by God.

SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

We, the members of the St. Mary School Community, guided by the Magisterium, seek to preserve, and pass on the teachings and Traditions of a rich Roman Catholic faith. Therefore, we are devoted to the Sacraments, a life of prayer, on-going scripture study and the celebration of the Mass in which we grow together in faith, wisdom, and love.

We believe that each of us is called to become the person God created us to be. Therefore, we guide our students to follow His will for their lives, in a safe, nurturing, educational environment teaching children to meet and exceed expectations.

We believe parents/guardians are primarily responsible for ensuring their children are educated. Therefore, we expect parents/guardians to understand and appreciate the methods we have determined are critical to employ in allowing each student's full – both academic and spiritual – education. To assist parents/guardians in this role, we encourage collaborative partnerships among the home, school, parish, and larger community serving one another as stewards of a gracious and merciful Creator.

We believe our teachers have a dynamic and awesome responsibility for each student in their intellectual, faith, physical, and emotional development, seeking to guide the students toward achieving their unique and necessary callings by God. Therefore, we expect and entrust teachers to develop and deliver academic and spiritual lessons that fully support the St. Mary pillars of faith, academic excellence, respect, work ethic, and contribution of self.

Through this all-encompassing philosophy, St. Mary School provides the framework for developing well-rounded, disciplined students who recognize their God-given talents, enabling them to make a positive difference in the world as they strive toward their everlasting home in Heaven.

Non-Discrimination Policy

St. Mary School admits students of any gender, race, color, religion, age, disability, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students in this school. The school does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, religion, or national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational or employment policies, athletic or other school administered programs.

HOLD HARMLESS

Upon enrollment of a student at St. Mary School, parents/guardians agree that they shall defend, indemnify and hold harmless St. Mary School and its Staff and volunteers, St. Mary Parish, the Catholic Diocese of Rockford, and its representatives from any and all claims, causes of action, demands, costs, damages including both direct and consequential damages, specifically including attorneys' fees and costs, expert fees and cost and mediation and/or arbitration fees and costs incurred, arising in any way out of the actions of their student.

They further agree, at their own expense, to defend any suit or action brought against St. Mary School and its Staff and volunteers, St. Mary Parish, the Catholic Diocese of Rockford, and its representatives founded upon the claim of such damage to persons or property. This indemnity agreement applies to both active and passive negligence on the part of St. Mary School and its Staff, volunteers, and representatives to the fullest extent permissible under law. Choice of counsel remains solely that of St. Mary School.

Right to Amend

The principal reserves to right to amend this Handbook as needed. Notice of any amendments to the policies in this Handbook will be communicated in accordance with the Communication

Policy. Amendments will not be effective until the later of one (1) week after such notification or a date designated on the Notice as the effective date.

III. SPECIFIC POLICIES

Academic Year

An Academic Year is measured by August/September of the calendar year through May/June of the immediately next calendar year and is composed of one-hundred-seventy-six (176) days of instruction in Core Subjects and Non-Core Subjects.

By way of example, an Academic Year could be August 2023 through May 2024, August 2023 through June 2024, or September 2023 through June 2024. Regardless of the specific beginning and ending dates of an Academic Year, such Academic Year must include the minimum number of Days in Attendance as mandated by Illinois law.

Administration of the School

St. Mary School is in the Diocese of Rockford (“Diocese”) and therefore under the administration of the Diocese. The Diocese delegates day-to-day and general administration of St. Mary School to the Pastor of St. Mary Parish and the Principal of St. Mary School.

Admission Policy

St. Mary School, under the direction of the Diocese of Rockford, admits students of any race, gender, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally available to the students at St. Mary School. However, each student is expected to not hinder the practices, discussions, and expectations of students as instructed by the Roman Catholic faith.

Students preparing to attend St. Mary School must meet and accept all requirements of St. Mary School as detailed in this Handbook, the State of Illinois, and the Diocese. The Principal of St. Mary School makes the final determination with regard to admission.

Admission Procedure

Admission Priority. Students seeking admission to St. Mary School are considered for admission with the following order of priority:

1. Siblings of existing St. Mary students.
2. Students that are Active Members of St. Mary Parish with their parent(s)/guardian(s) for at least twelve (12) weeks preceding their request for admission. A student/Parish family are deemed Active Members if they regularly attend Sunday Mass and Holy Days of Obligation Mass.
3. Non-parishioners.

Admission Procedure

The following Admission Procedures explain age requirements and grade-level competencies for all students seeking admission, and physical requirements for students seeking admission to the preschool program.

Preschool Physical Requirements

Any student seeking admission to St. Mary Preschool must be fully toilet trained at the time admission is requested. The St. Mary preschool program is purely academic, spiritual, and social. If a child seeking admission to the preschool program is nearly toilet trained, parents should delay an admission request to the preschool program until the child is fully toilet trained.

The preschool program is structured in such a way that a delayed start for a student due to such physical issues should not hamper the child's ability to productively learn during a shorter academic year.

Age Requirements

St. Mary School generally follows the age requirements for students in accordance with Illinois law. However, St. Mary School also reserves the right to admit certain students into the preschool program, kindergarten, or first grade who will be the state-mandated age for these grades by October 1st of the Academic Year subject to certain testing and approval procedures as described herein.

Preschool Students – 3-Year-Old Preschool. All incoming 3-Year-Old preschool students must be three (3) years old by September 1st of the Academic Year for which the student seeks admission. Students who will be three (3) years old by October 1st of the Academic Year must pass a test to be administered by the Preschool Teacher, obtain a recommendation for admission by the Preschool Teacher to the Principal based on the test, and obtain approval by the Principal for admission with the Principal's decision being final. At all times, St. Mary School reserves the right to deny admission to students whose individual needs cannot be met by our educational program.

Kindergarten Students. All incoming Kindergartners must be five (5) years old by September 1st of the Academic Year for which the student seeks admission. Students who will be five (5) years old by October 1st of the Academic Year must pass a test to be administered by the Kindergarten Teacher, obtain a recommendation for admission by the Kindergarten Teacher to the Principal based on the test, and obtain approval by the Principal for admission with the Principal's decision being final. At all times, St. Mary School reserves the right to deny admission to students whose individual needs cannot be met by our educational program.

First Grade Students. All incoming First Grade students who did not attend St. Mary Kindergarten during the Academic Year preceding the Academic Year for which the student is seeking admission must be six (6) years of age by September 1st of the Academic Year for which the student seeks admission, or must be six (6) years old by October 1st of such Academic Year and pass a test

to be administered by the First Grade Teacher, obtain a recommendation for admission by the First Grade Teacher to the Principal based on the test, and obtain approval by the Principal for admission with the Principal's decision being final. At all times, St. Mary School reserves the right to deny admission to students whose individual needs cannot be met by our educational program.

Second Grade through Eighth Grade Students. All incoming students seeking admission to any grade second through eighth must prove satisfactory completion of the preceding academic grade level. Such proof generally evidences an appropriate age level for the requested grade admission based on the age requirement policies of St. Mary School or any other school previously attended by the student. Students home-schooled during the preceding academic year will also be subject to a test by the teacher assigned to the grade-level for which the student requests admission, and such teacher will provide an admission recommendation to the Principal whereby the Principal will make the final determination of admission. At all times, St. Mary School reserves the right to deny admission to students whose individual needs cannot be met by our educational program.

Proof of Grade Level Capability, Self-Discipline, and Acceptance of Handbook Terms

Because it is the mission of St. Mary School to provide extraordinary academic and spiritual formation for each and every student, and whereby the academic formation sought by St. Mary School Staff, community, and St. Mary Parish is academic formation that exceeds State and national education standards, every student must have the capability to be instructed at the grade-level for which admission is sought, and must have the ability to be self-disciplined such that the student can learn and does not hinder the learning of any other student. Accordingly, in addition to compliance with all other Admission Policies and Procedures, any student seeking admission to any grade at St. Mary School must have satisfactory proof of each of the following:

Core Subjects

1. Achievement of Passing Grades in all Core Subjects (defined immediately below) in the student's preceding Academic Year as evidenced by the Student's official academic transcript from the school or schools the student attended during the preceding Academic Year, or otherwise evidence Remediation (defined immediately below);
2. Evidence of no disciplinary problems during the preceding and current Academic Year as evidenced by the student's and parents'/guardians' acknowledgment of the Contractual Obligations and Acceptance of Terms of this Handbook as described in Section I. above;
3. The student's acknowledgment of the Contractual Obligations and Acceptance of Terms of this Handbook as described in Section I. above, through their parents/guardians as appropriate; and,
4. The student's parents'/guardians' acknowledgment of the Contractual Obligations and Acceptance of Terms of this Handbook as described in Section I.

At all times, St. Mary School reserves the right to deny admission to students whose individual needs cannot be met by our educational program. St. Mary School also reserves the right to administer tests to new students for the purpose of ensuring proper grade-level admission though such testing does not guarantee admission to St. Mary School.

Core Subjects. St. Mary School identifies the following subjects as Core Subjects: Math; Science; Reading/Literature; English/Grammar/Language Arts; Spelling/Vocabulary; Religion, and, Social Studies. The identification of these particular subjects does not suggest in any way that St. Mary School does not emphasize the importance of Music, Art, Technology, and Physical Education as extraordinarily important to the proper and necessary formation of each student. Instead, the identification of these subjects as Core Subjects recognizes that a student's inability to maintain grade-level proficiency in these particular subjects will cause the student to be unable to adequately progress in the next grade-level in both Core Subjects and Non-Core Subjects.

Non-Core Subjects. These subjects may include, but are not limited to, Music, Art, Physical Education, and Technology.

Passing Grades. Passing Grades are at least a "C" in all Core Subjects, and a "Passing" in Non-Core subjects. For students not receiving letter grades – i.e., students in Kindergarten through grade three – will be deemed to have achieved Passing Grades if the majority of their grades are a two (2) or higher.

Remediation of Failure in Preceding Academic Year. St. Mary School defines a failure to have occurred in an Academic Year where a student earns a "D" or "F" in any subject during any single quarter of an Academic Year, whether Core Subjects or Non-Core Subjects. Where a student has earned a "D" or "F" in any quarter of an Academic Year, the student must remediate their grade as follows:

1. **Core Subject Failure.** Where a student has earned a "D" or "F" in a single subject in a single quarter of an Academic Year, earning a "C" or better in that subject the following quarter will satisfactorily evidence Remediation. Where a student has earned a "D" or "F" in a single subject for at least two quarters of an Academic Year, the student must obtain third-party instruction/tutoring, at the expense of the parent/guardian, to remediate the student's failure in the subject, and in requesting admission to St. Mary School the student must provide a written communication from the student's tutor in the subject stating whether or not they have achieved grade-level proficiency in the subject and whether the tutor believes the student may advance to the next grade level. St. Mary School will provide the evaluation form to be used by the tutor in these instances and will contact the tutor to confirm that the evaluation was so provided by that tutor.
2. **Non-Core Subject Failure.** Where a student earns an "F" in a single subject in a single quarter of an Academic Year, earning a "P" in that subject the following quarter will satisfactorily evidence Remediation. Where a student has earned an "F" in a single subject for at least two quarters of an Academic Year, the student's teacher in that subject must provide a written communication stating whether or not the "F" grade is attributable to disciplinary problems and whether the teacher believes the student may advance to the next grade level. If the Non-Core Subject Failure occurred at another school, St. Mary School will provide the evaluation form to be used by the teacher in these instances and will contact the teacher to confirm that the evaluation was so provided by that teacher.

After School Arrangements

At the beginning of the Academic Year, parents must inform the School's Administrative Assistant of their family's routine after school arrangements. We are responsible for your child until he/she is in your care. Therefore, it is important for the School to know your student's transportation status – i.e., car rider or transportation to a daycare facility. If this information changes during the Academic Year, parents/guardians must provide a written communication to the School's Administrative Assistant and the student's primary classroom teacher of the change in transportation status. Additionally, we will not release your child to a non-primary caregiver without written communication from the primary caregiver (primary and non-primary caregiver status is provided on registration forms). These procedures are designed for the safety of all the children who attend St. Mary School.

After & Before Care Programs. An After Care program is available for St. Mary's Preschool-8th Grade students. The After Care program provides supervised study and play from the time of school dismissal until 5:00 p.m. Weather permitting, the students will go outside to play in one of the School playgrounds. The daily charge for After Care is \$19.00 per day for one child and a \$2.00 charge for each additional sibling per day. The daily fee is not prorated in accordance with the time the child(ren) spends in the After Care program.

A Before Care program is available for St. Mary's Preschool-8th Grade students. The Before Care program provides supervision starting at 7:00 a.m. until 7:30 a.m. when the school opens for student drop off. Before Care spots are available but limited for the school year. Permission by the School Office to attend Before Care must be approved by the School Office prior to attending Before Care. The weekly charge for Before Care is \$25 per week for one child and a \$2.00 charge for each additional sibling per week. The weekly fee is not prorated in accordance with the number of days the child(ren) spends in the Before Care program.

Families will be billed for After and/or Before Care through FACTS Incidental Billing. Payment is preferred weekly. However, parents will be given until the 10th of the following month to pay their After and/or Before Care balance in full. Families with an outstanding After and/or Before Care balance after the 10th of the following month will not be able to continue using the After and/or Before Care services until payment in full is received. If you have a past due balance from the previous academic year, students may not utilize the After and/or Before Care services.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

As noted in the Hours Policy of this Handbook, St. Mary School opens Monday through Friday at 7:30 a.m. and closes at 3:15 p.m. which allows for school prayer at 7:45 a.m. and teaching hours to be conducted following morning prayer until 2:45 p.m. Accordingly, students must arrive before morning prayer at 7:45 a.m., and will be dismissed at 2:45 p.m.

Upon arrival and dismissal from St. Mary School, all students in preschool through eighth grade will gather at assigned locations in the School gymnasium with their grade level. Students will be instructed as to their assigned arrival and dismissal locations in the School gymnasium on the first day of the Academic Year.

Alternate Student Pick-Up Plans. If the Standard Mode of Student Transportation will change for a single day or any extended period of time longer than a single day, the parent/guardian must send written notification (e-mail or a hand written note) to the School's Administrative Assistant, and the Student's Teacher by 8:30 a.m. of the first school day that the change will occur and note the last day of the change or that the change will be permanent. In the event of a family emergency requiring an unanticipated change in the Standard Mode of Transportation, please contact the School's Administrative Assistant as early in the school day as possible so that arrangements can be made and communicated to your child/children and his/her primary classroom teacher.

Student Check-In and Sign-Out. If it is necessary for a student to arrive later than 7:50 a.m. or leave earlier than 2:45 p.m., a parent/guardian must provide written notification (e-mail or a hand written note) to the School's Administrative Assistant, and the Student's primary classroom teacher as early as possible. The parent/guardian will report to the School Office to sign the student in and/or out and pick-up and/or drop-off the student. The student may not arrive or leave directly from their classroom and can only arrive late/leave early via the School Office.

Car Riders. All students in preschool through eighth grade arriving & dropped off to School by car must be dropped off in the School parking lot. Students may not be dropped off on, Prairie Street, Fulton Street, any side street or Gifford Street in front of the School per the Elgin Police Department. An alternative drop off may occur if a parent/guardian parks on any side street AND walks their student into the building. The student must be accompanied by a parent at all times until the student is physically in the building. During dismissal, the school lot will be closed for parking. If you need to park, please do so on the street or in the church lot.

Asbestos Management Plan

In October 1987, the United States Environmental Protection Agency promulgated the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act 40 C.F.R. Part 763 ("AHERA") which regulates asbestos containing building materials in schools. In 1988 and in compliance with this law, the Rockford Diocese hired Cape Environmental Management to inspect and write management plans for its parish schools ("The 1988 AHERA Plan"). The 1988 AHERA Plan gives the guidelines for operations and maintenance of the school. All work performed on school buildings is accomplished by the guidelines and regulations set forth by all of the appointed government agencies. A Management Plan is in the School Office for your review.

Attendance and Absences

Daily school attendance is necessary for students to achieve Grade Level Capability (*See Grade Level Capability Policy for explanation*), to comply with State laws,¹ Illinois State Board of Education rules, local School Board rules, and to allow our teachers to provide all students with the necessary instruction for students to achieve Grade Level Capability by ensuring a lack of disruption in the classroom caused by a student's Chronic/Habitual Truancy or other classroom disruptions.

¹ See 105 ILL. COMP. STAT. § 5/26-1 *et. seq.*

Absenteeism and Truancy Policy

The Illinois School Code requires that any school, including a nonpublic school, receiving public funds through participation in the federal /state milk, breakfast, and/or lunch programs shall develop and communicate to its students and their parent or guardian, on an annual basis, an absenteeism and truancy policy, that contains certain provisions. The following is the Absenteeism and Truancy Policy to be implemented by those schools participating in the federal/state milk, breakfast, and/or lunch programs.

Absence/Absent

A student is deemed absent if the student is not physically present for instruction in Core Subjects and/or Non-Core Subjects whether for part of the school day or for the entire school day, and whether unexcused by the student's parent/guardian or excused by the student's parent/guardian due to illness, doctor appointments, a family emergency, non-school activities, vacations, or any other reason provided by the parent/guardian.

Definitions

1. "Valid cause" for absence includes:

the student's illness, including the mental or behavioral health of the student,
the student's attendance at a verified medical or therapeutic appointment or appointment with a victim services provider,
the student's observance of a religious holiday,
death in the student's immediate family,
the student's attendance at a civic event,
a family emergency,

As determined by the school administrator, such other situations beyond the control of the student, or such circumstances which cause reasonable concern to the student's parent for the mental, emotional, or physical health or safety of the student.

If the student is an expectant parent or parent, "valid cause" for absence includes the fulfillment of a parenting responsibility including, but not limited to, arranging and providing child care, caring for a sick child, attending prenatal or other medical appointments for the expectant student, and attending medical appointments for a child,

If the student is a victim of domestic or sexual violence, "valid cause" for absence includes addressing circumstances resulting from domestic or sexual violence, including, but not limited to, experiencing domestic or sexual violence, recovering from physical or psychological injuries, seeking medical attention, seeking services from a domestic or sexual violence organization, seeking psychological or other counseling, participating in safety planning, temporarily or permanently relocating, seeking legal assistance or remedies, or taking any other action to increase the safety or health of the student or to protect the student from future domestic or sexual violence. A school administrator may require a student to verify his or her claim of domestic or sexual violence prior to approving a valid cause for an absence of 3 or more consecutive days that is related to domestic or sexual violence.

2. A “truant student” is one who is subject to compulsory school attendance and who, without valid cause, is absent from such attendance for a school day or portion of the school day, when such absence amounts to more than 1% but less than 5% of the past 180 school days.
3. A “chronic or habitual truant” is defined as a student subject to compulsory school attendance and who, without valid cause, is absent from such attendance for 5% or more of the past 180 regular attendance days.
4. “Truant minor” is defined as a chronic truant to whom available supportive services, including prevention, diagnostic, intervention and remedial services, alternative programs and other school and community resources either have been offered and refused, or have failed to result in the cessation of chronic truancy.

Policy

1. School attendance is compulsory in the State of Illinois. The responsibility of compliance with the law belongs to the parents, but the school is required to keep a record of daily attendance. The record is placed in the student’s permanent file at the end of each school year.
2. A student who is subject to compulsory school attendance shall not be absent from attendance without valid cause. A student who is absent without a valid cause is a truant student.
3. When a student is truant: The School Administrator or delegate shall be in contact with the parent/guardian and the student when a student is absent without “valid cause”, when the school has not been notified by a parent/guardian of the student’s absence and reason, when the student returns to school after an absence without a written doctor’s or with a note of questionable validity, or when the student continues to be absent for no apparent reason. The School’s contact with the parent/guardian is for the purpose of determining the reason for the student’s absence and further discussion if the absence is without valid cause. If the parents/guardians cannot be reached, the School will contact all parties listed as emergency contacts in the student’s file. If the administration is unsuccessful in reaching the parents/guardians or the emergency contacts, the School will notify police and request a well-being check on the student/family.
4. The School is to determine the reason or cause for a student’s unexcused absences by interviewing the student, his or her parent or guardian, and any school officials who may have information about the reasons for the student’s attendance problem.
5. When a student is truant or chronically truant, the School will use the following diagnostic procedures to identify the causes of unexcused student absenteeism: Interviews with the student, meetings or requests for meetings with the parent/guardian, and meetings with any school officials who may have information about the reason for the student’s attendance problem. The school is to offer the following interventions and supportive services for the truant student and chronically truant student: meet with the student, and meet with or request to meet with the student’s parent/guardian to persuade the family and the student to regular attendance, encourage heightened engagement in School activities by the

parent/guardian and student, and suggest student counseling with the school counselor if one is provided by the School, or with a specific outside provider or providers, family counseling with the Diocese of Rockford Catholic Charities counselling office or with a specific outside provider or providers, and provide parents with information about existing community services that are available to the student relative to his or her needs. The School is not required to pay for any services. Where the student is chronically truant, the above steps will be repeated.

6. When efforts to persuade the student to regular attendance fails, and the student's absences without "valid cause" exceed more than five percent (5%) of the total student attendance days in the school year, the student is deemed a truant minor and written notice shall be sent to the parent/guardian stating that the student's truancy is being reported to the Illinois State Board of Education. This may be done through the truancy department of the Regional Office of Education. Additionally, the School may drop the student from enrollment.
7. The School is required to regularly collect and review its chronic absence data and determine what systems of support and resources are needed to engage and encourage the habit of daily attendance for chronically absent students and their families to promote academic success.
8. The School is required to post this *Absenteeism & Truancy Policy* on the School's website and include it in the School's Parent/Student Handbook. School administrators are also required to notify parents where/how this policy can be accessed by providing them with the *URL* address. This policy is also published on the Education page of our Diocesan Catholic Education Website.
9. The School is required to submit its Absenteeism and Truancy Policy to the Illinois State Board of Education; and to review and re-evaluate its Absenteeism and Truancy Policy every two years and submit its revised policy or a letter to the Illinois State Board of Education stating the policy was re-evaluated and no changes were deemed necessary. This statement must be submitted electronically to the Illinois State Board of Education via their Web Application Security system no later than September 30 of the year it is due.

Chronic/Habitual Truancy. If a student meets this definition of Chronic/Habitual Truancy, St. Mary School reserves the right to expel the student from St. Mary School.

Illnesses and Health Conditions. A student is ill if the student has a fever of 100 degrees or more regardless of the length of time that fever is present, or if the student is exhibiting symptoms of any contagious disease such as cold or flu, or if the student has a health condition that is contagious (such as lice or strep throat) or is disruptive to the student's ability to learn or the ability of other students to learn or a teacher to teach. As detailed in "Returning to School After An Illness," a student may not return to School until the student is without fever, and without other signs of contagious or disruptive illness, for at least twenty-four (24) hours. See "Returning to School After Any Absence" for an explanation of the procedure to follow to obtain a student's classwork and homework for a day the student is Absent, and requirements for completing and submitting all classwork and homework following an Absence.

Students with an illness or health condition that will or could require extended medical care (e.g., cancer, organ transplant, physician diagnosed chronic health condition), whether such extended medical care is doctor appointments, medical testing, or medical treatment, parents/guardians should notify St. Mary School as soon as such extended medical care becomes a possibility. To the extent the student's parent/guardian, the medical provider or providers, the Principal, and the student's teachers expect the student will be physically able to continue academically progressing at Grade Level Capability, and the teachers and Principal of St. Mary School can identify a plan to allow the student to continue his/her studies to continue academic progression at Grade Level Capability, such plan needs to be created as soon as possible or such Grade Level Capability could be threatened. In such instance of illnesses or health conditions requiring extended medical care, St. Mary School reserves the right to request a written confirmation from the student's physician primarily responsible for the student's medical care for the illness or health condition requiring extended care of the student's need for time away from School for such medical care and the physician's belief that continuing with the student's studies during the course of the extended medical care will not be detrimental to the student's physical, mental, or emotional health.

Parent/Guardian Excused Absence. Any Absence reported to St. Mary in accordance with the "Reporting Absences by Parents/Guardians to St. Mary" detailed below and for which the parent/guardian provides a reason for the Absence and whether or not the reason for the Absence is a Valid Cause for the Absence.

Parent/Guardian Unexcused Absence. Any Absence not reported to St. Mary in accordance with the "Reporting Absences by Parents/Guardians to St. Mary" detailed below.

Valid Cause for Absence. "Valid Cause" for an Absence from School is defined as an Absence due to "illness, observance of a religious holiday, death in the immediate family, family emergency, and shall include such other situations beyond the control of the student which cause reasonable concern to the parent [or guardian] for the safety or health of the student"² including doctor appointments for general health, vision, dental.

Reporting Absences by Parents/Guardians to St. Mary. To report an Absence, parents/guardians must call the School Office (847.695.6609) or e-mail the School's Administrative Assistant before 8:30 a.m. of the day the student will be Absent, and must provide the reason for the Absence. If the Absence is not reported to St. Mary by a parent/guardian, St. Mary will, in accordance with Illinois law, attempt to contact the parents/guardians, using the telephone numbers provided to St. Mary at the beginning of the school year and as may be modified thereafter, to determine whether the Absence is due to a Valid Cause.³ If St. Mary School is unable to make contact with a parent/guardian to verify a student's Absence by 10:00 a.m. of the day of the Absence, the Absence will be deemed to be a Parent/Guardian Unexcused Absence and St. Mary School reserves the right to contact and notify the Illinois Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS) if we have any reason to believe the student may be in harm's way. If the parent/guardian reports the Absence in accordance with the foregoing, but fails to state a reason for the Absence, the Absence will be deemed to be without Valid Cause and will thus be deemed a Truancy. If a parent/guardian reports a student's Absence and provides the reason for the

² 105 ILL. COMP. STAT. § 5/26-2a.

³ 105 ILL. COMP. STAT. § 5/26-3b.

Absence, but St. Mary School has any reason to believe the student may be in harm's way, St. Mary School reserves the right to contact and notify DCFS.

Reporting Absences by St. Mary to State. St. Mary School will, in accordance with Illinois law, report a student meeting the definition of Chronic/Habitual Truancy to the school district truancy officer. Parents/guardians should note that once reported, parents/guardians could become subject to certain criminal charges waged by the State of Illinois.

Returning to School After Any Absence. Upon returning to school after *any* Absence, the Absent student's parent/guardian must present a hand written note or and e-mail to the Administrative Assistant stating the reason for the Absence. An Absent student may not participate in any St. Mary or deanery school extra-curricular activities on any school day during which the student is Absent for the entire day. A Student must be in attendance at school for at least 3.5 hours to participate in any St. Mary or deanery school extra-curricular activities.

Obtaining and Submitting Classwork and Homework After an Absence

It is always the responsibility of an Absent student and/or the student's parent/guardian to obtain the student's classwork and the student's homework for any time the student is Absent. Procedures to obtain and submit classwork and homework in the instance of an Absence are different depending on whether the student's Absence is planned or unplanned. The required procedures are as follows:

1. *Unplanned Absence.* In the instance of an unplanned Absence without Valid Cause, the procedures that apply for a Planned Absence will apply (*See* immediately below, "Planned Absence," for such procedures). In the instance of an Unplanned Absence with Valid Cause, the parent/guardian must, when reporting the Absence (*See* "Reporting Absences by Parents/Guardians to St. Mary School") provide dates and times during the School's Hours of Operation that the parent/guardian will report to the School's Administrative Assistant, or will name another individual (including another sibling or other student at St. Mary School) to report to the School's Administrative Assistant, to obtain the Absent student's classwork and homework for the times the student is and/or will be Absent. St. Mary School will confirm the time the parent/guardian or other named person can report to the School's Administrative Assistant to obtain the student's classwork and homework. While teachers will make every reasonable effort to accumulate the missed classwork and homework assigned during an Unplanned Absence by the end of the school day during which the student was Absent, teachers are not required to have the classwork and/or homework ready to provide to the parent/guardian or person named by a parent/guardian, or to the student herself/himself, until 12:00 p.m. the day after the day of the student's Absence. The student is required to submit all missed classwork and/or assigned homework after the student returns to school and has the same number of calendar days to complete the classwork and homework as the number of days the student was Absent ("Missed Classwork/Homework Completion Period"). The Missed Homework/Completion Period begins the day after the student returns to School and missed classwork/homework must be submitted the next school day immediately after the end

of the Missed Classwork/Homework Completion Period. For example, if a student is Absent on Monday, May 1st, with Valid Cause because the student has a fever, the student's teachers will have missed classwork and assigned homework ready for a parent/guardian or other named person to obtain from the School Secretary by 12:00 p.m. on the next day, Tuesday, May 2nd. If the student returns to school the next day, Wednesday, May 3rd, because the student was Absent with Valid Cause for two (2) school days, the student will have two days to complete and submit the missed classwork and assigned homework whereby the two (2) days are counted beginning the day after the student's return to school. In this example, because the student returned to school Wednesday, May 3rd, the two (2) day missed classwork/homework period begins Thursday, May 4th, thereby allowing the student Thursday, May 4th and Friday, May 5th to complete the missed classwork/homework. The student will submit the missed classwork/homework to her/his teachers the immediate next school day following the two (2) completion period which, in this example, is Monday, May 8th.

2. *Planned Absence.* In the instance of a planned Absence, whether with or without Valid Cause, the parent/guardian must provide written notice of the planned Absence to the School's Administrative Assistant at least two (2) weeks preceding the first day of the Planned Absence, and the teacher will have at least one (1) week after notification to accumulate and provide to the student the classwork and homework that will be missed. Additionally, because the Absence is planned, the student is expected to submit the classwork and homework no later than is expected of all students in class and not Absent. To meet this requirement, the student and parents/guardians should determine whether e-mail can be used to submit the classwork and homework at the same time all non-Absent students are required to submit such work, or if the work will need to be completed and submitted to the teacher before the Planned Absence begins. Vacations during School attendance days are discouraged.
3. *Late Classwork/Homework Following an Absence.* When missed classwork/homework is submitted after the time due as outlined above in "Unplanned Absence" and "Planned Absence," such classwork/homework will be deemed late.

Tardiness/Tardy. Students are expected to arrive to School by 7:45 a.m. in accordance with the Arrival and Dismissal Procedures Policy detailed in this Handbook. A student is considered Tardy if not in the School gymnasium at 7:50 a.m. A student's attendance and promptness to begin our day is crucial to the learning environment that our School seeks to foster. We recognize there are special circumstances at home where a student's arrival at school may be delayed. Excessive late arrivals, however, have a detrimental impact on not just a tardy student's performance but on that of the entire class as they distract from the learning environment already underway. If a student's tardiness becomes habitual, as determined by the discretion of the Principal, the Principal will contact the parents/guardians to discuss possible disciplinary measures.

The first such measure is that upon acquiring 3 instances of arriving later than 7:50 a.m. in one quarter, the student will be given a thirty minute detention. Other, subsequent measures can be applied at the discretion of the principal.

Awards

Awards given to students recognizing meritorious achievement include Honor Roll, High Honor Roll, and the St. Mary Student of the Year Award. Achieving placement on the Honor Roll and High Honor Roll is discussed in the Honor Roll Policy.

St. Mary Student of the Year Award. At the end of the Academic Year, one student from each grade, grades Preschool through 8th grade, will be publicly recognized as that grade's St. Mary Student of the Year. The student is nominated by his/her teacher with approval from the Principal. The St. Mary Student of the Year Award is presented to that student who most exhibits the traits of St. Mary; the student who is always thinking of other classmates, always willing to provide help to a classmate or school mate; always acting first and foremost out of kindness for others.

Celebrations

Birthdays. If a student would like to bring a birthday treat to School to celebrate their birthday with their classmates, the following rules must be followed:

The birthday treat must be sent to School with the student in the morning or dropped off with the Lunch Staff between 10:50 a.m. and 11:40 a.m. The treats must be labeled with your student's full name & grade. Parents must provide treats for all classmates in your student's grade level. The treats must be store bought & prepackaged, homemade food treats are not allowed. Please provide all that is needed to distribute the treat such as napkins, plates and/or utensils.

You may also want to consider treats in the form of a book, a new game or a video for the classroom.

Classroom Parties. Any classroom party that will be held in a classroom or elsewhere on St. Mary School premises must be approved by the Principal and arranged through the classroom teacher. Once a Classroom Party is approved by the Principal and classroom teacher, all plans for the Classroom Party are to be approved by the classroom teacher. Parties are to be planned with attention to the classroom community where bonding, fun, and spiritual festivities are the focus. Any food/beverage brought into the School for a Classroom Party must adhere to the rules outlined above for Birthdays.

Invitation Distribution. Any student hosting any type of party, including birthday parties, graduation parties, Communion parties, etc., outside of St. Mary School may distribute invitations to the party in School only if all of the student's classmates are invited. If only certain classmates and other St. Mary students will be invited to such a party, the invitations must be distributed to the intended recipients via mail or e-mail, or other means that are not on St. Mary premises.

Cell Phone and Electronic Device Usage

Cell phone and electronic device usage by students is not permitted on St. Mary School premises during the school hours 7:30am – 3:00 p.m. An electronic device includes, but is not limited to, non – school issued tablets or laptops, iPods, MP3 players, CD players, etc. Cell phones/electronic devices are collected in the morning as the student enters the school by a Staff member and are held in the classroom. They should be turned off so as not to disturb classes. Students may pick up their cell phones/electronic devices at the end of the school day but cannot turn them on until after they have been picked up by a parent/guardian. Any student who is found with a cell phone/electronic device on their person during School Hours of Operation will have the cell phone/electronic device collected and taken to the School office. Students possessing and/or using cell phones/electronic devices during School Hours of Operation will receive a conduct referral. Cell phones/electronic devices taken to the School Office as described herein will be returned only in person to the student's parents/guardians in the School office during School Hours of Operation. St. Mary School is not responsible for lost or damaged cell phones/electronic devices.

Social Media

St. Mary School may not request or require a student to provide a password or other related account information in order to gain access to a student's account or profile on a social networking website. St. Mary School may conduct an investigation or require a student to cooperate in an investigation if there is sufficient evidence to suggest the student's social network account violates the school's disciplinary policy; and St. Mary School may require the student to share content in the course of such an investigation.

Communication

St. Mary School maintains communications with students, parents, and guardians primarily through *FACTS*, a weekly newsletter, and parent/guardian teacher conferences.

Conferences. Conferences between parents/guardians and a student's teachers are formally scheduled only during the end of the first quarter of the Academic Year. If a parent/guardian wants to have a conference with a teacher in the second through fourth quarters of the Academic Year, please request a conference by directly contacting the student's teacher. If there is a matter that a parent/guardian assesses needs to be addressed with the Principal, please contact the Principal directly. All conferences are scheduled during a time when the teacher is not teaching a class or scheduled for other St. Mary School student obligations. The privacy of all matters concerning a student's personal information regarding any situation will be handled with respect and confidentiality to the fullest extent possible.

Conflict Resolution. In order to help a parent/guardian satisfy a concern that may arise in St. Mary School, we respectfully request that all matters be addressed in a professional and charitable manner that keeps in mind the common good of the entire St. Mary School community. Please follow the order of path of communication when and as necessary:

The teacher or Staff member involved;

The Principal;

The Pastor; and finally,

The Diocese of Rockford.

Back to School Night. Back to School Night is an annual School communication event for parents/guardians, held during the first month of the Academic Year. During Back to School Night the Principal will: (1) briefly explain only new school policies; (2) introduce all teachers and administrative staff; and (3) allow time for parents/guardians to listen to an overview of expectations and curriculum by teachers in their classrooms.

FACTS. *FACTS* is the primary method of communication between St. Mary School and parents/guardians. *FACTS* is used to post the following: (1) weekly newsletter; (2) students' grades; (3) report cards; (4) the School Handbook and other School policy documents; and (5) forms (e.g., registration).

FACTS is accessed at www.factsmgt.com and login credentials are e-mailed to the primary and secondary parents/guardians identified in a student's registration forms using the primary e-mail address identified in the form. New users also receive an introductory letter from *FACTS* explaining how to login for the first time and how to use the website. Students do not receive login credentials. If a parent/guardian does not have weekly access to the internet, please notify the School's Administrative Assistant and the student's teachers to identify a reasonable, alternative communication method.

Login credentials remain the same from year-to-year. If you have lost your login ID and/or your password, please contact the School's Administrative Assistant.

Student data is entirely confidential in *FACTS* and may be accessed only with login ID and password created by parents/guardians.

Contact Information

The following information may be used to contact St. Mary School Staff. Contact information for third-party education and extra-curricular activities will be provided by such persons in separate communications to parents/guardians.

Point of Contact	Contact Information
General School Contact Information shared by all St. Mary School Staff	103 S. Gifford, Elgin, Illinois 60120 Phone: 847.695.6609 Fax: 847.695.6623 Website: www.stmaryschoolelgin.org FACTS: www.factsmgt.com
Principal	principal@stmaryelgin.org
Secretary	schoolsec@stmaryelgin.org
Preschool Teacher (3 year old and 4 year old)	preschool@stmaryelgin.org
Kindergarten Teacher	kinder@stmaryelgin.org
1 st Grade Teacher	grade1@stmaryelgin.org
2 nd Grade Teacher	grade2@stmaryelgin.org
3 rd Grade Teacher	grade3@stmaryelgin.org
4 th Grade Teacher	grade4@stmaryelgin.org

5 th Grade Teacher	grade5@stmaryelgin.org
6 th Grade Teacher	grade6@stmaryelgin.org
7 th Grade Teacher	grade7@stmaryelgin.org
8 th Grade Teacher	grade8@stmaryelgin.org
Art Teacher	art@stmaryelgin.org
Music Teacher	music@stmaryelgin.org
Physical Education Teacher	gym@stmaryelgin.org

Curriculum

A well-rounded, faith-based, academically rigorous curriculum will be provided and monitored by St. Mary School. The curriculum consists of Religion, Reading, English, Vocabulary, Math, Science, Social Studies, Music, Art, Technology, and Physical Education, following Diocesan Standards. The Middle School curriculum is departmentalized in Grades 6-8 where students will have the opportunity to experience the instruction of different teachers with subject matter specialization.

Teachers deliver instruction within this educational framework via leveraging multiple instructional resources and strategies focused on continual growth and progress. Moreover, our curriculum is based on Diocesan standards that are in accord with our Catholic faith, seeking to incorporate spirituality and faith life into every aspect of the regular curriculum. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) to produce writing for any St. Mary Catholic School course is prohibited.

Extra-Curricular Activities. St. Mary School is primarily focused on educating students in the Curriculum discussed herein. St. Mary School recognizes certain activities will further promote and develop students' academic, spiritual, and community skills. Students are not allowed to participate in any co-curricular activities, however, if the student fails to maintain Grade-Level Capability at any time during the Academic Year (not only as determined by final grades issued at the end of each quarter), or fails to maintain self-discipline standards at any time during the Academic Year, or fails to follow the rules set forth in this Handbook. The student will be identified by the Principal as non-eligible for participation in St. Mary School Extra-Curricular activities unless and until such time as the student is able to correct their failure in accordance with the Remediation of Academic Failure in Preceding Academic Year Policy (this remediation policy is applied to a student at any time during the Academic Year as necessary and not only based on grades issued at the end of each quarter).

Dress Code

Students are required to adhere to St. Mary School Dress Code standards at all times during not only the school day but also during before and after School events, off-premises events and field trips, and any time the student is associated with St. Mary School in any way.

If the uniform violation is determined egregious enough to not permit the student in class, as determined by the Principal, the parent/guardian will be contacted to immediately pick the student

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up from School and correct the violation before returning to School. The student will wait in the School Office for the parent/guardian to pick the student up from School. The student is responsible for requesting missed classwork and homework assignments in accordance with the “Attendance and Absences” Policy during the time he/she is away from School.

If there is any question regarding whether an item that is wearable on the body may be worn by a student, the item should not be worn.

All items worn must be free of holes, shredding, or other noticeable wear and tear.

All items worn must be clean, in visibly good condition, and neatly presented.

School Day Uniform. Preschool students are not subject to the uniforms described in the table below. Students in Kindergarten through 8th grade are required to be in uniform every day to attend classes. The skirt and dress/jumper can be purchased through certain Lands’ End stores (check Lands’ End online or call them at 1-800-469-2222 to check for store locations), as well as Lands’ End’s online store (www.landsend.com/school). When purchasing online, please reference St. Mary School Code 900160664 to ensure the correct skirt and/or jumper design and color is purchased. All other uniform clothing may be purchased at stores such as Kohl’s, Target, Walmart, etc.

PERMITTED ITEMS ARE LISTED HERE	GIRLS	BOYS
Pants	Navy knit cotton pants are permitted all year. A solid navy, black, or cordovan colored belt without design is required to be worn if the pant has belt loops. The top of the pant may not be any lower than at the student’s natural waist. Pants must not be tight on the student. <u><i>Dress Down/Non-Uniform Day</i></u> Only full-length (i.e., to the top of a standard shoe) cotton dress pant or jeans without holes or shredding may be worn on dress-down days. No leggings, sweatpants, yoga pants, spandex pants, or similar pant of sort are permitted.	
Shorts	Navy Blue shorts that are at least two inches above the knee may be worn by girls and boys. The dates that the shorts may be worn are from the first day of school in August through October 10th. The shorts may also be worn from May 1st to the end of the school year. <u><i>Dress-Down/Non-Uniform Days: Shorts may be worn. They must be no more than two (2) inches above the knee.</i></u>	
Skirts and Dresses/Jumpers	<u><i>Grade K-4</i></u> “Big Navy Plaid” dress/jumper, skirt, or skort permitted all year. Must be no more than two (2) inches above the knee.	Not applicable.

	<u>Grade 5-8</u> “Big Navy Plaid” skirt or skort permitted all year (no dress/jumper). Must be no more than two (2) inches above the knee. <u>Dress-Down/Non-Uniform Days</u> Dresses, skirts, and skorts where the short is not at all visible, are permitted. Dresses, skirts, and skorts must be no more than two (2) inches above the knee. Dresses must have sleeves or be worn with a cardigan or sweater if the dress has spaghetti or tank-style straps, strapless dresses are not permitted.	
PERMITTED ITEMS ARE LISTED HERE	GIRLS	BOYS
Shirts	Navy blue shirts only. The shirt style may be knit polo-style, and may be a short or long sleeved. Solid colored shirts only, no design or lettering of any sort should be on the shirt. Shirts with buttons must be buttoned entirely except the very first button at the top of the shirt may remain unbuttoned. Shirts must be tucked-in and loose fitting. <u>Jeans Days/Non-Uniform Days</u> If a shirt has straps but no sleeves, a cardigan or sweater must be worn over the shirt. Shirts should be free of any words or pictures that are not supportive of the Catholic faith or that may be offensive to a reasonable person, a violation of which will be determined by the Principal and where such determination may not be contested. Crop tops are not permitted.	Light blue shirts only. The shirt style may be knit polo-style, and may be a short or long sleeved or long-sleeved. Solid colored shirts only, no design or lettering of any sort should be on the shirt. Shirts with buttons must be buttoned entirely except the very first button at the top of the shirt may remain unbuttoned. Shirts must be tucked-in and loose fitting. <u>Jeans Days/Non-Uniform Days</u> Shirts should be free of any words or pictures that are not supportive of the Catholic faith or that may be offensive to a reasonable person, a violation of which will be determined by the Principal and where such determination may not be contested.

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<i>PERMITTED ITEMS ARE LISTED HERE</i>	GIRLS	BOYS
Sweaters	White, navy, or red knit cardigan or pull-over sweaters. Solid colored sweaters only, no design or lettering of any sort should be on the sweater. Cardigans may be a button or zipper close. Pull-over sweaters may have a V-neck or crew neck. Hoods/Hoodies are not allowed in the classroom. Hoods/Hoodies are only allowed during recess.	
Socks, Tights, and Leg Coverings	Matched navy solid, red solid, or white solid socks, knee socks, tights or leggings (worn as socks, not pants). Socks and tights may have a cable-knit or other traditional pattern so long as the sock is solid in color.	Matched navy blue solid or black solid color socks. Socks may have a traditional cable-knit or other traditional pattern so long as the sock is solid in color.
Shoes	Gym Shoes may be worn all year long. Shoes must be in good repair. <u>Jeans Days/Non-Uniform Days</u> Any heel may be no more than one (1)" in height. The heel and toe of the shoe must be closed. No sling-back shoes are allowed.	Gym Shoes may be worn all year long. Shoes must be in good repair. Boots are not permitted except during inclement weather when worn to/from school.
<i>PERMITTED ITEMS ARE LISTED HERE</i>	GIRLS	BOYS
Accessories	No tattoos or other markings may be worn anywhere on the body. Light cover up make-up is permitted as reasonably needed. No hats may be worn except for winter hats or rain hats worn to/from school as necessitated by the weather. No perfume, cologne, or other scented body spray is permitted. Deodorant is permitted, and encouraged for Grades fourth (4) through eight (8) and younger students as necessary. <i>Jewelry, Grades K-8</i> – Only pierced stud-earrings (no more than one set of earrings worn traditionally), one thin single-chain necklace no longer than	No tattoos or other markings, including make-up, may be worn anywhere on the body. No nail polish is permitted. No hats may be worn except for winter hats or rain hats worn to/from school as necessitated by the weather. No perfume, cologne, or other scented body spray is permitted. Deodorant is permitted, and encouraged for Grades fourth (4) through eight (8) and younger students as necessary. No jewelry is permitted except boys are permitted to wear a single and simple religious medal supportive of the Catholic

	10” in length, one thin single-chain bracelet (no bangles), one simple ring, and one basic watch are permitted.	faith, one simple ring, and one basic watch.
Hair	Hair must be combed neatly without permanent or temporary dye, bleach, or coloring of any sort.	Hair must be combed neatly without permanent or temporary dye, bleach, or coloring of any sort. Hair must be above the eyebrows and ears and may not extend below the top of the collar. Facial hair must be clean shaven when it becomes necessary.
Physical Education	Students in grades 4th through 8th will change clothes for physical education class. Students may wear any type of St. Mary Spirit Wear t-shirt or a navy or royal blue solid colored t-shirt. Students should wear athletic shorts and must be no more than two (2) inches above the knee. Spandex “Volleyball” shorts, or similar material of sort are not permitted. St. Mary P.E. uniforms are available to order through the School Office. It is not required for students to order a St. Mary P.E. uniform to wear for physical education class.	
A student’s appearance, including dress and hygiene, must not disrupt the educational process or compromise standards of health and safety. The School will not prohibit hairstyles historically associated with race, ethnicity, or hair texture, including, but not limited to, protective hairstyles such as braids, locks, and twists. Any student's appearance that disrupts the educational process or compromises health and safety standards must modify their appearance.		

Field Trips

A parent/guardian-signed permission slip is required to be submitted before a student is allowed to attend a field trip. Field trips are considered to be educational learning opportunities. Therefore, all students should attend and must maintain regular School discipline and exemplary behavior in accordance with the policies set forth in this Handbook. If a student is unable to attend a field trip, the parent/guardian of the student must arrange care for the student during the time the students/teachers are not on St. Mary School premises.

Field trip chaperones must comply with the Volunteer Requirements Policy (e.g., Certification of Attendance at "Protecting Gods' Children" class, criminal background check clearance).

Financial Obligations

Saint Mary School's operating income is generated primarily from the charge of tuition and fees paid by parents/guardians, and to a lesser extent by a percentage subsidy based on normal Parish income during the year. Annual tuition, fee, and fundraising obligations are posted on *FACTS* and may change from year-to-year.

This Financial Obligations Policy is not applicable to the costs charged by third-party extra-curricular providers that offer St. Mary School student's additional academic, faith, and social development (e.g., Band, etc.). Instead, fees charged by such third-party service providers will be determined between the service provider and the parents/guardians without involvement of St. Mary School.

Payment. St. Mary School uses *FACTS* for tuition and incidental billing expenses and payments. Families have the option to pay tuition in full or utilize a 10 month payment plan.

Discounted Tuition. Any student's tuition paid in full by August 31st of the new school year is discounted by five percent (5%).

Non-Refundability. All tuition and fees charged by St. Mary School are non-refundable.

Fundraising. Each St. Mary School family has an annual \$200 fundraising obligation which is charged on *FACTS*. St. Mary School provides fundraising opportunities throughout the Academic Year. Credits will be issued to accounts for monies raised from the Home & School Walkathon (up to \$100 credit) and/or the annual Christmas Cash Raffle. The maximum credit is \$200 per family each Academic Year.

Family Financial Crisis. St. Mary School understands that a family may experience a crisis or serious financial difficulty that may cause the family to be unable to meet its Financial Obligation for a certain period of time. In such an instance, the parents/guardians must promptly notify the Principal to confidentially explain the reason they cannot meet their Financial Obligation as acknowledged in our annual Tuition Agreement. During this meeting, the Principal and parents/guardians will agree, when possible, to a modification to the standard Tuition Payment Timing policy such that the family may be provided relief to their financial crisis while allowing St. Mary School to meet its own financial obligations to its teachers, staff, and third-parties that allow for the day-to-day operation of the school.

While St. Mary School will diligently and respectfully work with a family in financial crisis, it may be determined that St. Mary School is unable to meet its own financial obligations if a family cannot make payments even with a modified Tuition Payment Timing plan, and in such cases may regrettably be asked to withdraw their student(s) from St. Mary School.

Grade Level Capability

See the Admissions Procedure for the explanation of each student's requirement to achieve Grade Level Capability and remediation requirements for failure to do so.

Grading Scale

Preschool. Students in Preschool receive an Assessment from the Preschool teacher.

Kindergarten through Third Grade. Students in grades Kindergarten through third grade receive numerical grades for all homework, quizzes, tests, projects and other work subject to grading. Numerical grades will be assigned as follows:

1	Below Basic
2	Emergent
3	Proficient
4	Advanced

Fourth Grade through Eighth Grade. Students in grades fourth through eighth receive letter grades for all homework, quizzes, tests, projects and other work subject to grading. Letter grades will be assigned as follows:

A+	99-100	B+	90-92	C+	82-85	D+	74-75	F	0-69
A	96-98	B	87-89	C	81-79	D	72-73		
A-	93-95	B-	86	C-	76-78	D-	70-71		

Honor Roll

The St. Mary School Honor Roll recognizes students' academic excellence and effort. The Honor Roll includes the High Honor Roll and the Honor Roll. Each of these Rolls is available to students in sixth through eighth grades every quarter during the Academic Year who achieve a certain grade average or display effort without fail in all their Core and Non-Core Subjects classes at St. Mary School. Specifically, earning placement on the Honor Roll is achieved as follows:

High Honor Role	An average GPA of at least 3.75 in all Core Subjects.
Honor Role	An average GPA of at least 3.5 in all Core Subjects.

Health Requirements

St. Mary School's Health Requirements Policy addresses both the requirements set forth under Illinois laws, as well as those requirements established to protect the safety and welfare of all students, teachers, staff, volunteers, and visitors of St. Mary School. Failure to comply with these Health Requirements can result in the dismissal of the student from St. Mary School.⁴

Admissions Requirements. Illinois law requires students entering Preschool, Kindergarten, and 6th grade to undergo general well-health medical exams and receive all immunizations required by law, vision exams, and dental exams.⁵ St. Mary School will also require any student new to St. Mary School to be subject to these requirements as well. These exams must be completed at some time during the one-year period preceding the first day of school of the Academic Year, with proof of such exam and immunizations as described in the table below submitted to the School's Administrative Assistant as part of the student's Registration process, and updated as necessary no later than October 15th of the Academic Year.⁶

EXAM TYPE	GRADES	DESCRIPTION
General Well-Health Medical Exam and Proof of Immunizations	PreK3 PreK4 Kindergarten 6 th Grade	Illinois Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS) State of Illinois Certificate of Child Health Examination Form (Form CFS 600). These forms are available at pediatricians' offices and are completed by the pediatrician or the nurse working with the pediatrician.
Vision Exam Kindergarten & New Student	Any student entering St. Mary School for the first time as a new student	Optometrist or ophthalmologist issued form evidencing complete eye health and vision examination.
Dental Exam 2nd & 6th Grade & New Student		Dentist issued form evidencing complete dental health examination.

Medical Delay for Admissions Requirements. If for medical reasons one or more of the required immunizations must be given after October 15th of the Academic Year, then the parents/guardians must submit one (1) month prior to the first day of the Academic Year to the School's Administrative Assistant for approval by the Principal, a schedule for the administration of immunizations and a statement of the medical reasons causing the delay, both the schedule and the statement being issued by the physician, advanced practice nurse, physician assistant, registered nurse, or local health department that will be reasonable for administration of the remaining required immunizations.

⁴ 105 ILL. COMP. STATS. § 5/27-8.1.

⁵ 105 ILL. COMP. STATS. § 5/27-8.1.

⁶ 105 ILL. COMP. STATS. § 5/27-8.1.

Noncompliance with Admissions Requirements. Failure to comply with this policy may result in the student's suspension beginning October 16th of the Academic Year until the earlier of compliance or October 23rd and dismissal on October 30th for failure to comply by such date. During a student's exclusion from school for noncompliance with the well-health medical exam and immunizations policy, the student's parents/guardians shall be considered in violation of § 26-1 of the Illinois statute in title 105, chapter 5, and subject to any penalty imposed by § 26-10.

Notification of St. Mary School Community of Noncompliance with Admissions Requirements. During the time of a student's noncompliance with this policy, parents/guardians of all St. Mary students have a right to be notified in the event that there are children attending St. Mary Catholic School that have not been immunized.

Students with Contagious Condition May Not Attend School. Students are not permitted on St. Mary School premises at any time the following symptoms are present and for the twenty-four (24) hour period following the time the symptom no longer exists, and following any additional readmission requirements noted here:

Temperature exceeds 100 degrees Fahrenheit;
Vomiting and/or nausea;
Sore throat;
Signs of upper respiratory infection (e.g. difficulty breathing, coughing);
Signs of flu including muscle aches;
Any fluids that are not normal tears draining from one or both eyes;
Open sore or rash that looks suspicious (will require diagnosis written release from physician); or,
Infestation with lice, nits in the scalp, or persistent itching anywhere that is undetermined until the condition no longer persists.

Students will not be readmitted to St. Mary School if a student has been diagnosed with a contagious illness by a physician without a note from the physician identifying when the student may be safely readmitted to school. In addition to the re-admission guidelines above, the following guidelines for certain contagious illnesses will also be adhered to by St. Mary School:

Chicken Pox	Physician's written release, and no earlier than the later of six (6) days after chicken pox appeared or all pox are fully scabbed
Strep Throat	The use of physician-prescribed antibiotics for at least twenty-four (24) hours and is without fever and other symptoms for at least twenty-four (24) hours
Impetigo	The of physician-prescribed antibiotics for at least twenty-four (24) hours
Conjunctivitis ("Pink Eye")	The of physician-prescribed antibiotics for at least twenty-four (24) hours

Administering Medicines to Students. St. Mary School is subject to the Illinois law with regard to the administration of medication to students. The applicable Illinois law is the same law applied to hospitals and other institutions as follows: Medication of any type will be administered to a student by St. Mary School only with the written order of the student's physician *and* parents/guardians. Additional policies apply to asthma rescue inhalers, epi pens, prescription medicine, ibuprofen/Tylenol, over-the-counter medicine other than ibuprofen/Tylenol.

1. *Asthma Rescue Inhalers.* A student with diagnosed asthma, and who has a prescribed asthma rescue inhaler, must provide a copy of the prescription and physician's note to the School Office, and notify all St. Mary teachers that instructs the student at any time. Any time a student in possession of an asthma rescue inhaler as described herein uses the asthma rescue inhaler he/she must notify the School Administrative Assistant. Any other asthma treatments will continue to be held in the School Office. St. Mary School does not have any staff members trained in the administration of asthma treatments and will, therefore, not administer any asthma treatments to students. A student may use asthma treatments held in the School Office only if each of the following have been submitted to the School Administrative Assistant: (1) a copy of the physician's prescription for the asthma treatment completed on the Medication Permission Form; (2) proof that the student has been trained in the usage of the asthma treatment; (3) the parent/guardian has personally delivered the asthma treatment to the School Administrative Assistant; (4) written notice of the need for the asthma treatment has been provided to the School Administrative Assistant and all teachers that instruct the student at any time; and (5) original packaging with issuing pharmacy contact information, physician contact information, and dosage label from issuing pharmacy.
2. *Epi Pen.* A student with a physician-prescribed Epi Pen may carry the pen on their person if they (1) have been trained in its usage, (2) have a written physician prescription and provide a copy of the physician prescription to the School Office, and (3) provide written notice to all the teachers who instruct the student at any time that the student will have possession of the pen on their person.
3. *Prescription Medication.* All physician-prescribed medications, other than Asthma Rescue Inhalers and Epi Pens separately addressed herein, will only be administered by the School Administrative Assistant or other School Office Staff after each of the following conditions are fully satisfied: (1) a copy of the physician prescription is submitted to the School Administrative Assistant; (2) the student's parents/guardians have submitted to the School Administrative Assistant a fully-completed and executed "Order for Administration of Medication" form, including specification of the dosage of the prescribed medicine that the student may receive which must be no more than the dosage directed on the physician's prescription; and, (3) the prescribed medicine must be brought to School by a parent/guardian in the original container containing the issuing pharmacy's dosage label with directions, the student's name, the physician's name, and the pharmacy's name and contact information.
4. *Ibuprofen or Tylenol Pain Medications.* The *only* over-the counter pain medications to be administered by the School Office Staff are Ibuprofen or Tylenol. This is only available for students in third grade or above, and only if the student's parents/guardians have submitted to the School Office a fully-completed and executed "Order for Administration of Medication" form, including specification of the dosage of Ibuprofen or Tylenol the student may receive which must be no more than the dosage directed on the Ibuprofen or Tylenol packaging. Parents must provide the Tylenol or Ibuprofen to the School Office.
5. *Non-Pain Over-the Counter Medicine other than Ibuprofen or Tylenol.* Over-the-Counter pain medication other than Ibuprofen or Tylenol will not be administered by St. Mary School. Non-pain over-the-counter medications such as allergy medication will be administered by the School Office Staff to students only if the student's parents/guardians have submitted the following to the School Administrative Assistant: (1) a fully-completed and executed "Order for Administration of Medication" form including specification of the dosage of medication that the student may receive which must be no more than the dosage directed on the medication's packaging, and including a physician's signature on the form.

Medical Cannabis Policy.

The only medical cannabis that is permitted to be administered on the premises of the school are cannabis-infused products limited to foods, oils, ointments or other products containing usable cannabis that is not smoked. The principal may prohibit the administration of medical cannabis if doing so would create a disruption to the school environment or would cause exposure of the product to other students.

A parent or guardian or any other individual who has been registered with the Department of Public Health as designated caregiver of a student who has been registered as a qualifying patient is permitted to administer to that student a medical cannabis-infused product, on school premises, while at a school sponsored activity. After the parent/guardian/other individual administers the medical cannabis-infused product to the student, the parent/guardian/other individual shall promptly remove the product from the school premises.

No employee or volunteer of the school shall be required to administer a medical cannabis-infused product to a student.

Before allowing the administration of a medical cannabis infused product by a parent or designated caregiver the student's parent or legal guardian must provide written authorization for its use, along with a copy of the registry identification card of the student (as a registered qualifying patient). The written authorization must specify the times where or the special circumstances under which the medical cannabis product must be administered. The written authorization and a copy of the registry identification cards must be kept on file in the school office. The authorization is effective for the school year in which it is granted and must be renewed each subsequent school year.

Homework

Homework is mandatory for all students because it reinforces teaching that occurs during classes. Without completion of homework on a timely basis, a student's learning will lag and may cause the student to not achieve Grade Level Capability (*See* "Grade Level Capability" Policy). St. Mary School does not have a formulaic-time component assigned to homework and instead allows teachers to assign homework deemed necessary to reinforce classroom learning and allow a student to achieve Grade Level Competency. If a student's homework appears overwhelming and exceptionally detrimental to family life, please speak to the assigning teacher in accordance with the Communication Policy about this situation in order to work toward an understanding of solutions to helping your child be successful with homework and achieving Grade Level Capability.

Homework must be submitted in a timely fashion. Please see the Attendance and Absences Policy regarding the student's and parent's/guardian's responsibility in planning for and managing homework timeliness in the case of student Absences. Teachers are not required to remind students to submit late homework because homework is the student's responsibility.

HOURS OF OPERATION

St. Mary School opens Monday through Friday at 7:30 a.m. and closes at 3:15 p.m. which allows for teaching hours to be conducted from 8:00 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. The School is closed for holidays and teacher in-service days as identified in the calendar for the Academic Year.

Emergency Closings. When school must be closed due to snow, ice, freezing temperatures, other weather-related issues, and any other emergency basis, the determination to close the School will be made known to school families by a FACTS cell phone text message, FACTS email, and a Parent Facebook Group post. On days when the weather turns severe while School is already in session, or in other emergency situations, parents/guardians must make certain that they can be reached at all times. Students will not be released to anybody not listed on the student's emergency list.

Insurance REQUIREMENTS OF PARENTS

Medical Insurance. Parents/guardians are responsible for the primary insurance for their children. St. Mary School does not carry insurance for students. Students participating in extra-curricular sports activities must present proof of insurance to St. Mary School. All injuries of substance on St. Mary School premises must be reported to a School Staff member immediately.

Non-Class Time: Lunch, Snack, and Recess Time

Lunch and Recess Timing. Lunch at St. Mary will take place in two shifts in the School gym with ½ the grades eating during the first shift and the other ½ of grades eating during the second shift. Recess will occur during these same shifts for the students not assigned to eat their lunch in the gym.

Students Responsibility for Cleaning Lunch Area. All students in all grades are responsible for cleaning up the garbage resulting from their lunch including throwing out the garbage and cleaning their area on the lunch table and surrounding area of the floor. Five minutes before the end the lunch period, there will be a "five minute warning" to signal the students to finish lunch, clean up their eating area on both the table and floor, and wipe off the table.

Behavior. Students are expected to follow the school rules of common courtesy, respect and the use of good manners at all times including at lunch and recess. Students are expected to remain seated while eating lunch.

Lunch and Recess Supervisors. Parents/guardians volunteer to monitor the gym during lunch and the playgrounds during recess. These supervisors are entrusted with the general welfare and safety of the students. The supervisors are not expected to help students prepare their lunch in any way and are not expected to clean up after the students as such clean-up is each students' responsibility. All parents/guardians must complete the volunteer process in order to volunteer at the school.

Ordering Special Lunches Provided Organized by School Organizations. Notices will be distributed in the *FACTS* online weekly newsletter regarding special hot lunches (e.g., Friday Pizza Lunch).

Forgotten Lunches. If a student forgets his/her lunch at home, the lunch supervisors will do their best to find and offer nourishing food to the student.

Microwave Usage. Students should not bring food that needs to be heated by microwave as there are no microwaves available for student use.

PERSONAL PROPERTY

Lockers. Students will be assigned lockers or cubbies depending upon the resources available in each classroom. Students assigned lockers may place a temporary and removable locker shelf in the bottom of the locker for gym shoes, and/or magnetic attachments to the inside of the locker that does not interfere with the easy opening/closing of the locker door and does not interfere with other students' storage of books, bags, and coats in any way. Stickers and other permanently affixed items may not be placed on any locker or cubbie by any student. Birthday decorations on lockers or cubbies may not include balloons.

Lost and Found. If a student has misplaced any items, please check at the Lost and Found outside the School Office. All articles such as clothes, books, school supplies, boots, gym shoes, and all other items of personal property should be labeled. Periodically, the lost and found will be cleared out and items in the lost and found will be given to a charitable organization.

Registration

A student may be registered at St. Mary School beginning in February/March for the next Academic Year, and will issue the applicable forms and procedures also in January/February. Please refer to the Admissions Policy for all age, health, grade level capability, self-discipline and behavior policies required of students and parents/guardians. Please also refer to the Financial Obligations Policy for required fees and payment timing related to a student's registration. St. Mary School is not obligated to accept a student's registration when these, and any policies in this Handbook, have not been complied with by the student and/or his/her parents/ guardians.

Report Cards

Report Cards are issued four times a year via *FACTS*. Following each nine-week grading period, students and parents/guardians will have a formal indication of student development in academic, personal and social growth areas. These student evaluations, which are Diocesan policy, will measure student growth and progress in the areas of Religion, Reading, English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Spelling, Handwriting, Physical Education, Music, Technology, and Art. An achievement, effort and conduct grade will be given in each subject area as well. If there are

any outstanding fees (tuition or school fees, etc.), access to *FACTS* will be denied until arrangements are made to satisfy the debt.

RETENTION at Current Grade Level

A student may be retained in a grade for purposes of repeating that grade to achieve Grade Level Competency as discussed in the Admissions Policy.

Sacramental Programs

Receiving the Sacraments is the best way to open us to God's grace. The Sacraments allow us to grow in our Faith and in our relationship with Jesus Christ. Sacramental preparation is a partnership with the classroom teacher and with the parish Director of Religious Education.

Reconciliation. Students will prepare for First Reconciliation in second grade and will receive the Sacrament in the second semester of school.

Holy Eucharist. Students will prepare for the Sacrament of Holy Communion in second grade and will receive the Sacrament in the spring.

Confirmation. Students will prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation in eighth grade, which will include mandatory Confirmation Retreats. Confirmation dates are assigned by the Bishop of the Rockford Diocese.

Search and Seizure

In order to maintain order, security, and safety in the School and during any School activity or event, teachers and the Principal are authorized to conduct searches of students and their personal effects, as well as the property of St. Mary grounds. St. Mary School may also ask for the aid of law enforcement officials for the purpose of conducting reasonable searches of students and school grounds, but is not required to request such assistance. Searches of a student or a student's belongings may occur as follows:

1. A student and/or student's personal belongings may be searched when there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that the search will produce evidence that the student has violated or is violating the law or school rules;
2. A student's belongings that may be searched include but are not limited to backpacks, purses, wallets, lunch boxes, etc.;
3. School property such as classrooms, lockers and desks are likewise subject to search; and,
4. If any illegal activity or possession of an illegal substance is found, law enforcement officials will be notified.

STAFF

The Staff of St. Mary School includes the Pastor, Principal, Deacons, all teachers, support staff, the Director of Religious Education, and the Business Manager.

Student Records

Parents/guardians may request a copy of student records by written communication. The request will be granted within seven (7) days of the request.

Certified copies of transfer students' records are requested within 14 days of enrollment; the schools sends unofficial records of students transferring to other schools within 10 days of written request.

Violations – Conducts Referrals, Detentions, Suspensions, and Expulsions

There are four types of disciplinary action that may be taken with regard to a student for non-compliance with the policies set forth in this handbook as well as for violation of generally accepted rules of respect and courteousness: Conduct Referrals, Detention, Suspension, and Probation.

Conduct Referrals, and Detentions may be issued to a student at the discretion of teachers and any St. Mary Staff member. Suspensions and Probations will be issued by the Principal based on the policies set forth here.

Conduct Referral. Teachers and St. Mary School Staff may issue a Conduct Referral to a student for each of the offenses listed. The following offenses may result in the issuance of a Conduct Referral, and in some cases Detention:

1. Acting disruptively during class or Mass;
2. Failure to follow classroom and school rules after warnings by teachers and/or Principal;
3. Failure to behave in accordance with the Catholic faith;
4. Use of artificial intelligence to produce writing for any St. Mary course;
5. Chewing gum; and/or,
6. Tardiness – issued after 3 tardies per quarter.

Detention.

The following offenses may result in the issuance of detention upon a single occurrence:

1. Cheating including the use of AI;
2. Dishonesty;
3. Stealing;
4. Destruction of personal property of any sort and in any manner;
5. Bullying (defined below);
6. Fighting;
7. Use of obscene language, gestures, materials, or obscenities in any form;
8. Inappropriate verbal or written communication between students, including gossip;
9. Talking back or showing disrespect in any manner to staff or volunteers;
10. Forgery of a parent/guardian signature;
11. Possession/use of tobacco or tobacco-related products;
12. Leaving school grounds without permission;

13. Leaving the student's assigned field trip group/chaperone during offsite field trips and other School events;
14. Inappropriate touching of other students;
15. Possession and/or use of cell phones or other electronic devices; and,
16. Failure to behave in accordance with the Catholic faith.

Detention will be given a school community improvement assignment as determined by the issuing teacher/St. Mary Staff member (e.g., cleaning desktops, whiteboards, sharpening pencils, organizing gym equipment, etc.). In addition, students that receive any detentions will be precluded from participating in any extra curricular activity.

The student's parent/guardian will be notified of the Detention within a reasonable amount of time after the student receives the Detention and will be expected to arrange pick-up of the student at 4:00 p.m. on the day of the detention.

Suspension. A student may be suspended (1) upon determination of the Principal with consultation with a student's teachers that offenses generally addressed with conduct referrals, and/or detention rise to the level of requiring suspension from school; and/or (2) the student commits any of the violations listed in this Suspension section. If a student is Suspended from School, the length of the suspension will be identified by the Principal and the *Attendance and Absences* policies will be applied to the student's absence from School. The following offenses may result in an immediate Suspension for School, and may rise the level of Expulsion as determined by the Principal in consultation with the student's teachers:

1. Possession and/or use of a dangerous or potentially dangerous object;
2. Willful, malicious damage or vandalizing of any property belonging to the school, church, staff member or student (this offense also carries a monetary charge equal to the cost to the School to restore the property to the condition of the property immediately preceding the damage to the property, or the cost to replace the property as necessary);
3. Activation of a fire alarm;
4. Extortion and intimidation;
5. Jeopardizing the safety of students, staff and volunteers;
6. Extreme disrespect to a teacher, staff member, adult volunteer, students, or anybody on School property or in the presence of a School field trip or event;
7. Use of foul or abusive language toward a teacher, staff member, adult volunteer, students, or anybody on School property or in the presence of a School field trip or event;
8. Use by a student of any false or malicious written or printed statements, signs, pictures or effigies exposing another student or staff member to public ridicule, hatred or contempt, or to injure his/her reputation or the reputation of St. Mary in any way;
9. Use of St. Mary's name or image in any negative manner in any public medium including but not limited to television, radio, periodicals, the internet, and social media;
10. Verbal threat to another student or staff member; and,
11. Failure to behave in accordance with the Catholic faith.

Expulsion. A student will be permanently expelled from St. Mary School if the student exhibits excessive disciplinary issues for which Conduct Referrals, Detentions, and/or Suspensions are normally issued as an appropriate disciplinary action. The existence of a student's excessive

disciplinary issues will be determined based upon discussions between the student's teachers and the Principal.

Bullying. Bullying behaviors include repeated physical aggression, social alienation, written/verbal aggression, intimidation, and sexual harassment. Each of these types of behaviors are described below. However, the descriptions provided here are not exclusive behaviors and are provided to illustrate the behavior types that qualify as bullying and subject to the disciplinary actions described above.

1. Physical Aggression
 - a. Physical acts that are demeaning and humiliating
 - b. Physical violence against another person
 - c. Threatening with a weapon
 - d. Threatening physical aggression
2. Social Alienation
 - a. Gossiping
 - b. Ethnic slurs
 - c. Rumor Spreading
 - d. Causing a student to be intentionally and maliciously excluded from social interactions and groups
3. Written/Verbal Aggression
 - a. Mocking/taunting
 - b. Name calling
 - c. Intimidating phone calls, e-mails, notes or instant/text messages
 - d. Verbal/written threats of aggression against property, friends or family
 - e. Verbal/written threats of violence or infliction of bodily harm
4. Intimidation
 - a. Graffiti
 - b. Defacing property or clothing
 - c. Extortion
 - d. Threatening harm
5. Sexual Harassment
 - a. Sexual or dirty jokes
 - b. Inappropriate remarks, gestures, sounds
 - c. Physical acts that are degrading/demeaning

Weapons

It is a violation of the school's policies for a student to possess a weapon on school premises or at any time. Included within the prohibitions of this Policy are the possession, sale, distribution, manufacture, receipt, seeking the sale or trade or use of any firearm, knife, martial arts device or other object which, in the School's discretion, may be considered to constitute a weapon. Violations of this Policy may result in action up to and including expulsion from the School.

Parental Cooperation

St. Mary Catholic School, Elgin has adopted the Rockford Diocese's Parent Grievance Process, Policy #2713 and the Parent and Guardian Code of Conduct, Policy #2715 as part of our St. Mary of Elgin Catholic School Handbook. These policies are effective July 31, 2025.

Parent Grievance Process. Schools are advised to prepare a process by which to elevate grievances they may have with a school. Unless a school implements a different policy, the policy in place in the Diocese of Rockford will be as follows:

There are times when disagreements occur between parents and school personnel, or times when a procedure or a policy needs clarification. The following are the steps for addressing concerns which should occur in this order of escalation:

Parent-teacher meeting. If the concern involves school personnel, the parents are to arrange a meeting to discuss their concerns. If the results of the meeting are disputed, the results of that meeting are to be in writing, with all parties signing. If communication takes place by telephone, the school personnel are to write down the results of the conversation, including date and time, and send a copy to the parents, who should amend (if necessary), sign and return to school personnel.

Parent-principal meeting. If the parent-teacher meeting fails to resolve the disagreement, the parents are to call the Principal and arrange a time for a meeting. The parents should provide a copy of the results of the first meeting. The express purpose of this meeting is to bring about a resolution. Again, notes should be taken, with all parties present signing and copies distributed.

Parent-pastor meeting. If the parent-principal meeting fails to resolve the disagreement, the parents are to call the Pastor and arrange for a meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to resolve the situation. The results of this meeting are to be in writing with all parties signing, and copies distributed.

Parent-superintendent meeting. If the parent-pastor meeting fails to resolve the disagreement, the parents are to write a letter to the Superintendent of Catholic Schools, briefly stating the problem and providing copies of all written documents from the meetings held. The Superintendent will review all documentation and decide on a course of action after consultation with the Pastor and Principal.

In such disputes, the Catholic Education Office reserves the right to interpret school rules and guidelines fairly, based on truth and justice. The goal is the child's well-being and the provision of an optimal learning environment.

Parent and Guardian Code of Conduct Policy. Our Catholic identity calls all members of our community-students, parents, staff, and clergy-to live and act in accordance with the Gospel values of charity, respect, humility, and truth. As such, the cooperation of parents and guardians is essential to the integrity of our mission and the success of each child's formation.

Condition of Enrollment. It is an express condition of enrollment that parents, guardians, and students conduct themselves, both on and off campus, in a manner consistent with the Catholic principles of the school as determined by the school in its sole discretion. These principles include,

but are not limited to, the teachings of the Church and any expectations set forth in the Student and Parent Handbook, Code of Conduct, or other school policies.

Core Expectations.

Parents/guardians are expected to:

- Collaborate courteously and constructively with school personnel to support the Christian, academic, moral, and behavioral development of their child(ren);
- Address any concerns regarding their child or the school directly and respectfully to the appropriate school personnel;
- Refrain from any conduct-whether verbal, written, digital, or physical-that is disruptive, hostile, divisive, or contrary to the mission and values of the school;
- Avoid confrontational communications with other parents or students about disciplinary or school-related matters;
- Respect the authority and dignity of all school employees, volunteers, coaches, clergy, and students.

These expectations apply during school hours, at all school-sponsored events (including athletics, field trips, co-curriculars, and extended care), and in any context that could reasonably be associated with the school.

Unacceptable Conduct.

Although the following list is not exhaustive, the following are examples of conduct that will not be tolerated:

- Disrespect toward any school staff member, student, volunteer, or fellow parent;
- Raising voices, name-calling, profanity, or verbal abuse directed at any individual;
- Threats, physical intimidation, or any form of violence;
- Defamatory, rumor-driven, or scandalous speech or social media posts;
- Any action deemed by the school administration to be inconsistent with Catholic values or disruptive to school operations.

The school reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to determine whether conduct violates this policy and to assess the severity of the conduct.

Disciplinary Consequences

Failure to meet these standards may result in corrective action, including but not limited to:

- Verbal or written warning;
- Required meeting with administration;
- Temporary or permanent exclusion of the parent/guardian from school grounds or events;
- Suspension of volunteer privileges;
- Requirement to withdraw the student from the school.

While the school will make reasonable efforts to issue a warning before more serious action is taken, **advance notice is not guaranteed**. Particularly severe or repeated misconduct may warrant immediate exclusion or withdrawal without prior warning.

Aggravating factors-such as prior incidents, severity of the behavior, presence of children during the conduct, or a pattern of inappropriate behavior-will be considered in determining the appropriate response.

Appeals

Any disciplinary decision under this policy may be escalated according to the diocesan grievance policy.

We thank all parents and guardians for partnering with us in fostering a respectful, faith-filled, and Christ-centered school community.

Volunteer Requirements

Protecting God's Children. As mandated by the Diocese of Rockford, St. Mary School volunteers who work with students under the age of 18 must participate in the "Protecting God's Children" Program. The program must be completed before any volunteer work may be performed by an individual at St. Mary School. This applies to lunchroom supervisors, field trip chaperones, room moms, coaches, classroom volunteers, etc. Opportunities for attending the program or completing it are posted online at the Diocese's website. The certificate of completion must be provided to St. Mary School in order to serve as a volunteer with the School.

Background Check. As mandated by the State of Illinois, all volunteers need to complete an Illinois Background Check before working with students at St. Mary School. The state-mandated form to be completed by potential volunteers is available in the parish business office. The School Administrative Assistant will notify potential volunteers when all required paperwork is completed.