

**“Be it known to all  
who enter here that  
CHRIST  
is the reason for this school.**

He is the unseen but  
ever-present teacher in its classes.  
He is the model of its faculty and  
the inspiration of its students.” —ANONYMOUS



St. Mary's School  
Middle School Handbook  
2023-2024

### **St. Mary's Middle School Mission is:**

To provide a well-rounded educational experience which will support the social, emotional, spiritual as well as the academic development of each individual student, helping them to be a disciple of Christ.

### **St. Mary's Middle School Vision is:**

To prepare students for their future through a highly supportive and Christ-centered community of learning that promotes discipleship as well as academic, social, spiritual, and emotional growth.

### **St. Mary's Middle School: The Big Four:**

1. Love God Above All
  - Do all things for God
  - Pray often
  - Make Jesus our model
2. Build Virtue in Myself
  - Learn from my mistakes
  - Always do my best
  - Always be kind
3. Build Virtue in Others
  - Respect your classmates and teachers
  - Encourage others
  - Be a role model
4. Show Pride in my School
  - Participate and have school spirit
  - Wear uniform properly
  - Take care of our school

### **Arrival and Dismissal**

- Doors open at **7:40 a.m.** Students should not arrive before this time. Students will proceed directly to their homeroom.
- The bell rings at **8:00 a.m.** Students will be marked late if they are not in the classroom by this time.
- Dismissal from school is at 3:05 on full days of school and at 11:30 on half days of school.
- Dismissal changes should be communicated to the main office by your parent. A phone call, email, or note is sufficient before the end of the school day.

## **Attendance Policy**

- When absent from school, regardless of the reason, the parent must email or the student must bring a note stating the reason for the absence to the office the morning he or she returns to school. Absences for more than 3 days must have a doctor's excuse.

## **Absences and Missed Work**

- If a student is absent for more than one day and you wish to obtain his/her missed work, you may email the main office to request missed work. Most assignments are already posted in Google Classroom.

## **Bullying**

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior that is intentional, repeated, and causes another injury or discomfort. St. Mary's Middle School expects all persons to conduct themselves in a manner in keeping with their level of development, maturity, and demonstrated capabilities with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of others. Appropriate behavior includes treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment or bullying. Consequences of bullying can include suspension or expulsion from school.

## **Cell Phone Policy \*Applies to all electronic/communication devices**

- **Cell phones are not to be used to contact parents during the school day. Students needing to call home can seek the help of the guidance counselor or the principal to call home. Parents needing to contact their children should call the main office to get a message to their student.**
- Cell phones should be turned off and placed in backpacks during school day and at dismissal locations
- Cell phones are never permitted in restrooms
- Pictures and videos on cell phones or electronic devices are not allowed to be taken on school premises due to student privacy policies. Any recording devices on laptops, chromebooks, apple watches, or cell phones are not permitted to be used on school property without permission from the teacher.
- St. Mary's School is **not** responsible for damaged, lost or stolen cell phones/devices.

Violations of the cell phone policy will result in the following consequences:

First Infraction: Student will have the cell phone taken away and returned at the end of the day.

Second Infraction: Students will have their cell phone taken and locked up in the office until a parent can come to school to retrieve it.

Third Infraction: Student will no longer be allowed to bring a cell phone to school until a parent conference with the principal is held.

Students may not bring any other electronic devices (MP3 player, Ipod, camera, etc) to school.

### **Code of Conduct Guidelines**

It is the responsibility of all members of a class to ensure the positive learning environment for all present. Each individuals' behavior either adds to or takes from the learning environment. Students will be held accountable for their behavior and are expected to display behavior that is thoughtful, respectful, and positive in the learning environment.

Certain infractions or violations of the code of conduct can result in immediately being sent home for the remainder of the day, in-school suspension, or out of school suspension. Assault of a staff member or student, fighting, hitting or punching, possession of weapons, possession of drugs, possession of tobacco, vandalism, vulgar language and major disrespect can all result in immediate removal from school.

Repeated violations can result in expulsion from school.

## Major/Minor Behavior Grid

	<b>Expected Behavior</b>	<b>Warning/Reteach</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>Major</b>
	Acting in a cooperative manner that is respectful of school and classroom expectations; responding appropriately when addressed	Teacher handled, no documentation required, teacher discretion for consequences and documentation to student file regarding the incident/consequences	Teacher handled, teacher assigns lunch detention	Referral to office. Administrator assigns consequence (with teacher input).
<b>Inappropriate Language</b>	Language that is socially appropriate and respectful	Offensive remarks or gestures, sexual connotations, putdowns, swearing, using the Lord's name in vain	Repeated pattern of any inappropriate language	Continued repeated use of inappropriate language
<b>Fighting/ Physical Aggression</b>	Respect others' personal space  Walk away from and report possible conflicts	Rough play, play fighting	Aggressive physical behavior	Hitting or kicking, encouraging another to fight, retaliating, shoving, tripping
<b>Defiance /Disrespect/ Insubordination</b>	Act cooperatively in school  Respond appropriately when addressed by students and those in authority	Passive refusal to participate, extremely slow response to request, testing limits, noncompliance, back talking	Ignoring reasonable request to stop low-level disruption, overt refusal to participate	Repeated refusal, ignoring reasonable request that leads to escalation and/or unsafe situation
<b>Disruption</b>	Cooperative behavior Take turns Contribute appropriately to discussions and activities Cell phones off and away in school	Noise-making, outside talk, attention getting behaviors, class clowning, bugging others	Repeated pattern of any disruptive behavior	Behavior that stops the learning in the class, defiant repetition of behavior following correction
<b>Harassment/ Teasing/ Taunting</b>	Language that honors and validates the God given human dignity of others	Annoying on purpose, altering names, name calling	Put downs, threatening or disrespectful body language/posturing ; targeted insults	Threats, racist remarks, continued pattern of minor offenses, cyberbullying

	<b>Expected Behavior</b>	<b>Warning/Reteach</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>Major</b>
	Acting in a cooperative manner that is respectful of school and classroom expectations; responding appropriately when addressed	Teacher handled, no documentation required, teacher discretion for consequences and documentation to student file regarding the incident/consequences	Teacher handled, teacher assigns lunch detention	Referral to office. Administrator assigns consequence (with teacher input).
<b>Property Damage</b>	Respect for personal and school property  Using equipment and technology appropriately	Not returning items to appropriate places  Casual misuse of technology  Defacing school property	Thoughtlessly or "accidentally" damaging property	Purposefully damaging or defacing property
<b>Lying/ Cheating/ Theft</b>	Produce your own work  Honesty in words, actions, and academics	Borrowing without asking	Taking another's property (minor value), refusing to return a borrowed item, claiming another's work for your own	Taking another's property, not telling the truth, claiming another's work for your own, using answer keys or cheat sheets for assignments, Plagiarism

## **Possible Consequences**

- Warning from teacher
- Letter of apology
- Loss of privilege
- Lunch detention
- After school detention
- In school suspension
- Out of school suspension
- Expulsion

## Conferences

We are committed to providing our students with the best educational environment; we strive to minimize interruptions and distractions. We welcome open communication and parent conferences. Teachers may reach out to parents for conferences at any time during the school year. Families should feel free to contact teachers directly through email to schedule conferences when needed.

## Crisis Plan and Drills

St. Mary's School's crisis team has developed a plan to keep the students and staff of SMS safe in the event of a crisis. Periodically, St. Mary's School will conduct drills to ensure that the students and staff can execute our plan in case of an emergency.

## Dress Code/Uniform

The following requirements are in effect from the first day of school.

We ask your cooperation in adhering to the school uniform code. St. Mary's School will conference with families of students in grades K-4 not adhering to the uniform policy to ensure the children can learn the responsibility of proper school attire.

Students in grades 5 through 8 not complying with the uniform policy:

- The first offense will result in an email notification sent to the parent.
- The second offense will result in lunch detention.
- Additional offenses will result in lunch detention and loss of out of uniform day privilege.

It is the responsibility of each student and family to assure that all students are prepared to adhere to the Uniform Policy of the school. **Uniforms will be checked by the homeroom teacher each morning.** The full uniform policy is below;

### Uniform Reminders

1. All clothing should be properly labeled with the family name and should be clean and neat in appearance. Items are held in the Lost and Found for a reasonable time. If articles are unclaimed, they are donated to charity.
2. Jewelry is not part of the school uniform, however:
  - Girls may wear one pair of post earrings (hoops and dangling earrings are unsafe), one ring, one religious necklace, and one wristwatch.

- Boys may wear one religious medal, one ring, and one wristwatch.
3. Make-up is not permitted during school hours.
  4. Fake nails are not permitted during school hours. Only clear polish is permitted.
  5. For safety purposes backless shoes, flip-flops, Heelys sneakers or platform shoes may not be worn.
  6. Proper grooming is expected of every student. Fad haircuts are not acceptable. Boys' hair should not cover the eyebrows or ears and should be trimmed above the shirt collar.
  7. No color altering chemicals may be used to alter the student's natural hair color. Girls' hair should be maintained neatly and not covering the eyes.
  8. No defacing or altering uniform; including shoes. Shoes that have been decorated/colored will need to be replaced.
  9. Skirt length is to be no more than 3 inches above the knee.
  10. Hats or hoods are not to be worn in the building
  11. Blankets, pajamas or robes are not to be worn to school

### **Boys Formal Uniform**

**Khaki Cotton Twill Walking Shorts, not more than 3" above the knee.**

**Khaki Cotton Twill Pants**

**Navy Blue (dark) or White Polo Shirt WITH St. Mary's School Logo**

**St. Mary's School Logo Sweatshirt, Logo Hoodie Sweatshirt or Navy cardigan, crew or v-neck sweater or sweater vest.**

**Shoes – ALL Black or ALL White Sneaker, Brown or Black Bucks or Oxfords, Brown Boat Shoes, Black or Brown Tie-Up Dress Shoes.**

**Socks – Solid-Colored White, Black or Navy Blue–Must Cover the Ankle.**

**Belts required on Pants with Belt Loops and Belts should be Black, Brown or Navy Blue.**

### **7-8 Grade Boys Options (Summer & Winter)**

**Navy Blue (dark), White, and *Pastel Blue or Pastel Yellow* Polo Shirt WITH St. Mary's School Logo**



## All Student PE/Gym Uniform

Light Blue T-Shirt WITH St. Mary's School Logo

Navy Blue Mesh Shorts WITH St. Mary's School Logo

PE SHOES – All Black or All White (small logo acceptable)

SOCKS – Solid-Colored White, Dark Blue or Black and COVER the ANKLES

WINTER: Navy Blue Sweatshirt and Sweatpants WITH St. Mary's School Logo

## Girls' Formal Uniform

Navy Blue (dark) or White Polo Shirt WITH St. Mary's School Logo

Shoes – ALL Black or ALL White Sneakers, Brown or Black Bucks or Oxfords, Brown Boat Shoes (no patterns), or Black “Mary Jane” type shoes with Rubber Soles.

NO Ballerina Flats, Vans, TOMS.

Socks that Cover the Ankle or Solid Colored Tights– White, Dark Blue or Black

Leggings- may be worn under uniform skirt- Solid Black or Navy Blue.

St. Mary's School Logo Sweatshirt, Logo Hoodie Sweatshirt or Navy cardigan, crew or v-neck sweater or sweater vest.

Belts required on Pants with Belt Loops and Belts should be Black, Brown or Navy Blue.

## 5-8 Grade Girls

Khaki Walking Shorts not more than 3” above the knee,

Khaki Cotton Pants with Front Fly, or

St. Mary's Plaid Uniform Skirt not more than 3” above the knee. (shorts, tights, or leggings must be worn beneath uniform skirt)

## 7-8 Grade Girls Options

Navy Blue (dark), White, and *Pastel Blue or Pastel Yellow* Polo Shirt WITH St. Mary's School Logo

## **Dress Up/Dress Down Days**

On specified occasions and the student's birthday, students may dress out of uniform.

### **Dress Up Days**

Girls may wear dresses, skirts, or walking shorts no more than 3 inches above the knee, dress slacks (no low-waist pants) or jeans (without rips, tears, or holes) with a modest top. Shoulders covered.

Boys may wear suits, ties, casual button up or polo shirts with collars, sweaters, tailored slacks, jeans or walking shorts.

Tight or revealing clothing is inappropriate and may not be worn to school.

### **Dress Down Days**

Casual clothing may be worn such as jeans, sweatshirts, sweatpants, tee shirts, and sneakers (without rips, tears, or holes).

Inappropriate messages, inappropriate graphics, or immodest attire may not be worn to school. Shorts/skorts should be no more than 3 inches above the knee. Students will call parents to bring a change of clothing if out of uniform clothing does not meet the criteria stated in the handbook.

**Yoga pants, leggings and spandex may not be worn to school for Out of Uniform Days.** Students not in compliance with this Dress Down Code will be required to wear a spare school uniform in order to return to class. Please ensure that your child is upholding their responsibility to come to school dressed appropriately.

\*\*Administration reserves the right to address issues that may arise on a case by case basis

## **Dropping Off Items for Students**

- If a student needs an item dropped off (instrument, binder, lunch, money, etc), please make sure you have already labeled the item with your student's name prior to dropping it off at the front office.

## **Hallway Procedures**

- Walk quietly
- Respect the learning of others
- Keep hands and feet to yourself
- Stay to the right side of the hallway while walking
- Recall "The Big Four"

### **Inclement Weather**

- Information on school closures will be made via email, text, as well as announced on local news stations. St. Mary's School follows MCPS weather decisions.

### **Insubordination/Minor disrespect**

Students are required to do the following:

- Follow the teachers' instructions and accept correction
- Have appropriate materials
- Cooperate with the activities of the class

### **Lockers**

- Lockers and combinations to locks are not to be shared.
- SMS is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged property.
- Lockers remain the property of St. Mary's School and are subject to search

### **Valuable Items**

- St. Mary's School will not be responsible for lost, broken, or stolen items.
- Do **NOT** bring large amounts of money or valuable items to school.

### **Visitors**

- All persons visiting the school will first check in at the office.
- Identification is required.
- Non-students are not to visit students enrolled in this school.

### **Field Trips**

- Purpose is to enhance learning and/or reward students for academic excellence
- The teacher is responsible for guidelines and can prohibit students from attending the field trip based on, but not limited to, excessive absences, extreme or excessive discipline issues, and lack of academic effort.

### **School Dances**

- Throughout the year, students may attend dances at the school.
- Attire should be school appropriate.
- Parents must pick students up by the end time given. If students are picked up late, they may not be allowed to attend the next school dance.
- If a student is absent the day of a dance, they will not be permitted in the dance.
- Students who have extreme or excessive discipline issues and/or lack of academic effort will not be permitted in the dance.

- Administration and teachers reserve the right to make decisions on dance attendance on a case-by-case basis.

### **Integrated Social Emotional Learning**

- St. Mary's School advocates for all students.
- The purpose of SEL is to foster productive relationships between students, staff, and families.
- Every student has a right to be heard and treated with respect.
- Every student's well-being is our priority.
- Focus on helping students reach their potential and succeed to the best of their abilities.

### **Technology Agreement**

Archdiocesan parents, educators, and administrators work together every day to ensure the safety and security of all God's children. With our schools' ever-growing and abundant technology resources, it is more important than ever that we communicate clear expectations of our students. The following guidelines were developed from Archdiocesan curriculum and have been adapted, with permission, from the International Society for Technology in Education. For more information regarding each school's individual rules, please refer to your school policy. Thank you for your consideration and cooperation.

Our schools provide students with an opportunity to access computers and computer networks, including the Internet. Our goal in providing this service is to promote educational excellence in our schools. Access to this technology is a privilege, not a right. All students are expected to abide by the following technology rules and to sign the user agreement.

### **Students' Responsibilities**

1. Students will cultivate and manage their digital identity and reputation and demonstrate awareness of the permanence of their actions in the digital world.  
T.PK8.DC.1.

All Students:

- a. Shall always represent themselves in a manner that respects the values of the Catholic Church when using electronic devices, network and the Internet and demonstrate an understanding that digital content is everlasting, even when deleted or within privacy settings.
- b. Shall only use accounts assigned to them or authorized by the school, supporting others' positive digital identity by not accessing the accounts of others or falsely representing themselves as others.

c. Shall keep all accounts and password information private and secure.

2. Students will engage in positive, safe, legal and ethical behavior when using technology equipment, including social interactions online or when using networked devices. Students will demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property. T.PK8.DC.2, T.PK8.DC.3.

All Students:

a. Shall always demonstrate kind and respectful behavior towards others when using electronic devices, network and internet; following school policy agreements and anti-cyberbullying laws at the local, state and federal levels.

b. Shall immediately report any known cyberbullying behavior to a teacher or supervising staff member.

c. Shall protect the rights and privacy of others, by never photographing or filming an individual without consent, and never posting and/or distributing videos or photographs without consent of the school and the persons depicted.

d. Shall behave in a safe manner when using technology by protecting and not sharing personal information and personal images in the public domain. While on school property, students will only use technology to communicate with individuals within the school community or organizations/experts approved by teachers. While on school grounds students shall only use communication platforms approved by the school and all communication shall be only for educational purposes.

e. Shall abide by all copyright and intellectual property laws, avoiding plagiarism by using proper citations or permissions. Students shall only use work product that is their own, not taking credit of the work of others.

f. Shall immediately report to a teacher or supervising staff member any inappropriate material or misuse of technology equipment of which the student becomes aware.

3. Students will manage their personal data to maintain digital privacy and security and are aware of data collection technology used to track their navigation online.

T.PK8.DC.4.

All Students:

a. Shall protect and manage personal data in a safe manner by never posting, or otherwise distributing personal information such as photographs, home addresses, telephone numbers, parents' work addresses or telephone numbers or the name and location of the school.

b. Shall respect networking protections and security within the school infrastructures by working within the designated login and security parameters and never reconfiguring or hacking any school hardware, software, or network settings.

c. Shall use school issued email accounts for authorized educational purposes only; d. Shall respect the right of the school to monitor student use of technology.

4. Students will treat all technology equipment including issued devices, software and networking systems with care and respect, whether at school, at home, or elsewhere.

All Students:

a. Shall demonstrate proper physical care for technology equipment.

b. Shall protect the proper functioning of technology equipment by downloading only teacher approved files and not intentionally writing, producing, generating, copying or introducing dangerous codes or programs designed to cause harm, including, but not limited to viruses, bugs, 'worms', etc.

c. Shall respect the digital property of others by not accessing or searching files, directories, or folders for which the student does not have authorization, and by not intentionally erasing, renaming, moving, or disabling anyone else's files or programs.

d. Shall maintain the settings of any issued device by not manipulating any device settings or functionality.

5. Students understand and acknowledge that:

a. Any violation of this policy may result in permanent revocation of their technology privileges and other disciplinary action may be taken in the sole discretion of the principal.

b. Schools may require that technology used in a bring your own device program must meet certain compatibility requirements, use certain security measures, and include certain hardware, software, or applications, which may include applications that grant the school control over the content on the technology.

c. Use of all technology may be monitored, and there is no expectation of privacy for issued devices, or for any information stored on any technology used on school grounds, including any information or files stored in students' personal accounts (such as social media or file sharing accounts) that are accessible via such technology.

d. The school reserves the right to maintain, access, or retrieve an issued device at any time, at its sole discretion; the school reserves the right to access a student's computer files or any other technology equipment when required for the maintenance of the school's technology equipment, in emergencies, in the course of investigation of possible wrongdoing, or at the discretion of the principal.

## **Parents' Responsibilities**

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) shall support both school and ADW-wide policies and procedures as they relate to the use of technology and our Catholic Identity.

1. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will monitor online behavior and social media within the home and notify the school in the event of any incident contrary to the school policy, providing evidence when applicable.

2. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will monitor their child's use of the Internet when the school networks and accounts are accessed from home or a non-school location.

3. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) agree that students' schoolwork should be limited to school authorized accounts only (if provided by the school).

4. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) shall respect the right of the school to monitor student use of technology.

5. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are responsible for all fees as determined by school policy related to loss, damage, or misuse of school technology.

Additional resources related to digital safety and digital citizenship;  
<https://adwcollaborators.weebly.com/parentresources.html>

## **Textbook Agreement**

- Each student will be furnished sufficient books for each class. Textbooks remain the property of St. Mary's School and students are responsible for caring for their borrowed books.
- All issued books must be returned in good condition at the end of the school year.

**If a book has been defaced, lost, or damaged, the student and family will be responsible for the charge of replacing the textbook.**

# SMS Middle School Handbook Agreement Signature Page

After reading the information contained in the handbook and reviewing with your parents, complete the section below. Return the entire page to your homeroom teacher.

My child and I have read and reviewed the **St. Mary's Middle School Student Handbook**. We understand the contents of this handbook and agree to abide by it.

Student's Name/Signature

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Parent's Name/Signature

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