



Saint Mary School
RIDGEFIELD

Parent-Student Handbook 2023 - 2024

183 High Ridge Avenue
Ridgefield, CT 06877
(203) 438-7288
www.smsridgefield.org

*Saint Mary School is Accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges and is a
National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence*

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SMS General Information

Saint Mary School

Saint Mary School is a Preschool through Grade 8 Catholic School, and operates under the guidance of the Diocese of Bridgeport and the Office of the Superintendent of Schools.

Saint Mary School History

In 1954, Saint Mary Parish purchased land on High Ridge Avenue for a school, and opened Saint Mary School with first through third grades in temporary quarters. The Marianite Sisters of the Holy Cross staffed the school. The new school building, completed in June 1956, was designed for 400 pupils. With an addition put on, it held 600 students by the late 1960s. The school was closed due to a lack of teaching nuns in June, 1971.

In September, 1996, 20 children entered Kindergarten at the rededicated Saint Mary School. One grade was added each year, and in 2005, the first 8th grade class of the "new" Saint Mary School graduated. We have had 19 graduating classes since the re-opening, and 319 Grade 8 graduates.

On September 9, 2010, Saint Mary School in Ridgefield was honored to be named a Nationally Recognized Blue Ribbon School of Excellence by the United States Department of Education.

Saint Mary School Mission

Saint Mary School is a community rooted in the Catholic faith that is committed to developing the whole child.

Our Beliefs:

- We believe that God's love empowers children to thrive and sets them on a lifelong path of academic excellence, spiritual growth, and personal achievement.
- We believe that each person is a child of God and should be treated with respect.
- We believe that parents and guardians are an essential element of the school community and we recognize their role as the primary educators of their children.
- We believe that service to others is rooted in our love for God and motivates us to love one another.

- We believe that through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother and Patroness of our school, we may Know and Love Jesus her Son and follow Him in all things.

Student Mission Statement

I am a part of the Saint Mary School Family. I will honor God's love and the gifts He has given me by working hard and being kind so that together, we can make our light shine bright in the world.

Saint Mary School Motto

Have faith, work hard, and shine bright!

Saint Mary School Vision

Our vision is A Community of Faith - Learning for Life

In pursuit of our Vision, Saint Mary School will:

- Provide an environment where every student is truly known and is given the opportunity to develop as a life-long learner, a person of faith, a leader, and a team member.
- Value innovation and adapt to a changing world.
- Attract, develop, and retain faculty and staff who are passionate about our mission, and who are called to serve our students and families.
- Garner the philanthropic support from 100% of its parents, faculty, and staff, and support from alumni, alumni parents, and friends in support of our mission.
- Be in a financial position to provide a Catholic education to any accepted student who needs assistance so they may be educated Preschool-Grade 8.
- Be seen as a resource to the greater Catholic community and our local Ridgefield community and Catholic community in neighboring towns and parishes.
- Honor our traditions and seek new opportunities to strengthen our bonds in order to create a lifelong connection to the Saint Mary Family.

Saint Mary School Philosophy

Saint Mary School is a Catholic school where shared visions and goals provide the framework for a child-centered, safe environment for learning and growing. While our commitment to educational excellence is a priority, our students' total well-being is just as important. We strive to educate every child in faith, community, and service. Each student is encouraged to "have faith, work hard, and shine bright." The SMS teachers, staff, and clergy guide our students with the love and vitality of Christ's presence, where hearts, souls, and minds are developed.

Communication between home and school is vital in our quest to educate each

child. Recognizing that parents/guardians are the primary educators, we work to reinforce the education that parents have initiated. Each child comes to our school with a distinct set of values, emotions, personality, and family background, so we encourage an inclusive curriculum which provides for the development of the whole child - spiritually, intellectually, physically, socially, and emotionally. We seek to instill in our school community a strong sense of Christian morals and ethics, enabling each to become a contributing member of our global society.

Accreditation

- Saint Mary School is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.
- Saint Mary School is a member of the New England League of Middle Schools.
- Saint Mary School has been designated as an Approved School by Connecticut’s State Department of Education.

Saint Mary School Contact Information

School Phone Number (203) 438-7288

School Fax Number (203) 431-8742

Main Office Extensions:

Mrs. Ambrosio, Principal	x230
Carolyn Canavan, School Nurse	x253
Mrs. Harco, Family and Staff Services Manager	x200
Mrs. Harron, Business Manager	x239

First Student Bus Company (Ridgefield) (203) 431-2913

Katonah Lewisboro Transportation (914) 763-7231

Brewster Central Schools Transportation (845) 279-4700

North Salem Central School District Transportation Department (914) 669-5854

Bedford Central School District Transportation Department (914) 241-6174

Saint Mary School Faculty and Staff 2023 - 2024

School Administration

Principal	Rachel Ambrosio
Director of Instruction and Curriculum	Jeanette Campo
Director of Mission Advancement	Amy Dowding
Business Manager	Monica Harron

Family and Staff Services Manager
School Nurse
Technology Integrator
Guidance Counselor

Wendy Harco
Carolyn Canavan
Lori Dight
Kira Knox

Preschool Teachers

Pre-K 3's Lead Teachers

Cathleen Curtin
Carolyn Swan

Pre-K 3's Assistant Teachers

Erin Caviola
Danielle Constantine

Pre-K 4's Lead Teachers

Tricia Misurelli
Taylor Sechi

Pre-K 4's Assistant Teachers

Lisa LeFebvre
Laura Peterman

Transitional Kindergarten Lead Teacher
Transitional Kindergarten Assistant Teachers

Jennifer Santangelo
Carrie DeStefano
Veronica McNicholas

Elementary School Teachers

Kindergarten
Kindergarten Assistant
Grade 1
Grade 1 Assistant
Grade 2
Grade 3
Grade 4
Grade 5
Elementary Support

Joanne Seavy
Jean Lombardo
Jody Lampasso
Dawnmarie Gili
Cassidy McDonald
Sandy Amenta
Brenda Chapman
Joanne Greco
Beth O'Brien

Middle School Teachers

Grade 6 Homeroom
Grade 7 Homeroom
Grade 8 Homeroom
ELA
Math

Alexis Chipouras
Jennifer Kasinskas
Laura Arnold
Jennifer Kasinskas
Alexis Chipouras
AnneMarie Richards
Patricia O'Shea

Campus Ministry /Religion (Grades 4, 6, 7, 8)

Social Studies
Science

Laura Arnold
Melissa Kennedy

Specialty Teachers

Art
Music
Library Media Specialist
Spanish (Grades 1, 3, 5)
Spanish (Middle School)
French
Physical Education
Learning Specialists

Katie Sica
Rebecca Vaccaro
Mary Tappan
Monica Harron
Amanda Berardi
Justine Baum
Garreth Horrocks
Elizabeth Nesbitt
Kimberly Condon
Rebecca Gallagher

Parents' Role in Education

We, at Saint Mary School, consider it a privilege to work with parents in the education of children because we believe parents are the primary educators of their children. Therefore, it is your right and your duty to become the primary role models for the development of your child's life—physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally, and psychologically. Your choice of Saint Mary School involves a commitment and exhibits a concern for helping your child to recognize God as the greatest good in his/her life.

Good example is the strongest teacher. Your personal relationship with God, with each other, and with the Church community will affect the way your child relates to God and others. Ideals taught in school are not well rooted in the child unless these are nurtured by the example of good Catholic/Christian morality and by an honest personal relationship with God in your family life.

Once you have chosen to enter into a partnership with us at Saint Mary School, we trust you will be loyal to this commitment. During these formative years (Preschool-Grade 8), your child needs constant support from both parents and faculty in order to develop his/her moral, intellectual, social, cultural, and physical endowment. Neither parents nor teachers can afford to doubt the sincerity of the efforts of their educational partner in the quest of challenging, yet nourishing, the student to reach his/her potential. It is vital that both parents and teachers remember that allowing oneself to be caught between the student and the other partner will never have positive results. To divide authority between school and home or within the home will only teach disrespect of all authority. If there is an incident at school, you as parents must make investigation of the complete story

your first step. Evidence of mutual respect between parents and teachers will model good mature behavior and relationships. Talking negatively about a child's teacher at home will only create an attitude of distrust toward the teacher, the school, and the parent.

Students are naturally eager to grow and learn. However, sometimes in the process of maturation new interests may cause them to lose focus. As this natural process occurs, the student needs both understanding and discipline. At times, your child may perceive discipline as restrictive. However, it is boundaries and limits which provide a young person with both guidance and security.

It is essential that a child take responsibility for grades he/she has earned and be accountable for homework, long-term assignments, major tests, service projects, and all other assignments. Parents are encouraged to let their child experience a logical consequence for an inappropriate action or behavior. This responsibility also extends to times of absence.

Together, let us begin this year with a commitment to partnership as we support one another in helping your child become the best person he/she is capable of becoming.

School's Right to Amend

Saint Mary School reserves the right to amend this handbook. Notice of amendments will be sent as necessary through email communication. This handbook is also available on the Saint Mary School Parent Portal home page.

Student Admission

Admission Policies

Roman Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport base their educational purpose and all their activities on the Christian teaching of the essential equality of all persons as rooted in God's love. Thus, with discrimination so repugnant to their nature and mission, Catholic Schools in this Diocese do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin, and gender in administration of educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school administered programs. We expect Saint Mary School students to participate in the programs, privileges and required practices of the school.

Registration is ongoing at Saint Mary School. Students wishing to transfer can apply at any time. Admission is generally based on previous school records demonstrating the student's ability to achieve the academic, moral and social standards of our school, along with an assessment made by Saint Mary School teacher(s)/learning specialist(s). It can also be based on the availability /space in a given class and the specific needs of the children who are already enrolled.

All candidates for admission are required to provide a birth certificate, Baptismal Certificate (if applicable) and record of immunizations.

Age Requirements

The age requirements for admittance to kindergarten shall be that the child reach age 5 on or before January 1 of the school year of attendance. Schools may not admit students who are below the established age without approval for the Superintendent of Schools. Saint Mary School uses a screening process before acceptance to determine readiness.

Entrance to preschool programs follow the same standard. Students enrolling in PK-3s must reach age 3 on or before January 1, students enrolling in PK-4s must reach age 4 on or before January 1, and students enrolling in Transitional Kindergarten must reach age 5 on or before January 1.

Preference for Enrollment

Preference in admission shall be granted to siblings of currently or formerly enrolled students and to practicing members of the Catholic faith.

Acceptance of Mission

By applying for admission to a Diocese of Bridgeport Catholic school, parent(s)/guardian(s) acknowledge and agree that they will support the school's mission and commitment to the Catholic faith.

Non-Discrimination Policy

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

Registration Timelines

Current families are asked to enroll for the following year in December, and are given priority until the end of January. Siblings of current students are given preference in that same timeframe. Beginning in February, available spots may be given to new students. Qualified students are accepted on a rolling basis. Families must complete all enrollment requirements in the timeframe stated in their acceptance.

Before a new child is accepted into Kindergarten-Grade 8, a screening is scheduled which is designed to determine a child's school readiness. Following an evaluation of the materials, the parent will be notified about the status of the child's acceptance.

Students applying for admission in Grades 1-8 must present a copy of the current report card and standardized test results. These will be reviewed to determine whether the program at Saint Mary School will meet the educational needs of the students. Testing in some academic areas will be held for new incoming students in Grade K-8.

Application Process – Preschool Programs

In order to apply to a Preschool Program, the following steps are required:

- Attend an Open House / Tour SMS (suggested but not required)
- Complete an Application for Admission via our online admissions portal and non-refundable \$50 fee/per child
- Provide Copy of Birth Certificate
- Arrange for Preschool Observation Form (TK only)

If there is a spot available for the requested program and your child is accepted the following steps are required:

- Complete online Registration Form and provide a non-refundable \$300 registration fee
- Submit completed State of Connecticut Early Childhood Assessment Record
- Complete registration materials to include Emergency Contact form, medication forms, etc.
- Register for our FACTS Tuition Management system

Application Process – Kindergarten – Grade 8

In order to apply to Kindergarten – Grade 8, the following steps are required:

- Attend an Open House / Tour SMS (suggested but not required)
- Complete an Application for Admission via our online admissions portal and non-refundable \$50 fee/per child
- Provide Copy of Birth Certificate
- Arrange for completion of Teacher Observation Form (Kindergarten Only) or two Teacher Recommendation Forms (Grade 1-Grade 8) via our online admissions portal
- Complete an Authorization for Release of Records (Grade 1-Grade 8) to obtain transcripts
- Arrange for student to visit SMS for Principal Interview, Shadow Day, and Academic Screening

If your child is accepted, the following steps are required:

- Complete online Registration Form and provide a non-refundable \$300 registration fee
- Submit completed State of Connecticut Early Childhood Assessment Record
- Complete registration materials to include Emergency Contact form, medication forms, etc.
- Register for our FACTS Tuition Management system

Please note, students may apply mid-year where there are openings, but additional steps may be requested.

Conditional Acceptance

All new students are admitted on a conditional basis, and will be given a trial period of 30 days in which to prove himself/herself both socially and academically. If during this trial period there are any problems, a student may be asked to withdraw

his/her attendance at Saint Mary School. The recommendation and decision of the school is final. Saint Mary School is limited in its human capital resources and will make reasonable accommodations for learning differences where possible. Saint Mary School cannot accommodate students who have extraordinary learning differences.

Student Records

Saint Mary School adheres to the Buckley Amendment (Family Education Rights and Privacy) regarding access to student records. Records of students transferring to other schools will only be sent directly to the school. No records will be given to parents to transport to the new school.

Students requesting records/transcripts/recommendations must make a five school-day request to the school office. All forms should be submitted to the school office for distribution. Transcripts are sent via email, and health records for CT schools are sent via US Mail. Special handling will require that all postal fees be paid by the parents. No records will be sent to transferring schools of students whose financial commitment is in arrears.

Withdrawals / Transfers

Notice of withdrawal of a student should be made by the parent in writing to the Principal in advance of the withdrawal date. All books must be returned. All bills must be paid before records are transferred to another school.

When a student withdraws before the end of a marking period, the grade will be reported as of the date of withdrawal. This grade will be indicated on the child's report card.

Tuition Policies:

1. Once the school year begins, we require a 30-day notice period if you plan on withdrawing your child(ren). All notices must be sent in writing. Following that notice period, you will be reimbursed for any remaining tuition, less fees.
2. Any student who is withdrawn from school and wishes to return during the same school year must pay the re-enrollment fee of \$100 if a spot is available. If you wish to return in a subsequent school year, you must follow the application process.

Tuition Schedule – 2023 - 2024 School Year

Tuition billing for Saint Mary School is managed by FACTS Tuition Management, offering a variety of payment plan options, and 24/7 customer care. FACTS Tuition Management can be reached at 1-866-441-4637 or via the website at <https://online.factsmgt.com/signin/3DOLY>.

Preschool Tuition

PROGRAM	# OF DAYS	HALF DAY / FULL DAY	TUITION
3 Year Old	3 Days	Half Day	\$5,115
3 Year Old	3 Days	Full Day	\$6,755
3 or 4 Year Old	4 Days	Half Day	\$5,985
3 or 4 Year Old	4 Days	Full Day	\$7,720
3 or 4 Year Old	5 Days	Half Day	\$6,755
3 or 4 Year Old	5 Days	Full Day	\$8,720
Transitional Kindergarten	5 Days	Half Day	\$6,925
Transitional Kindergarten	5 Days	Full Day	\$9,235

K - Grade 8 Tuition and Fees

# OF CHILDREN	TUITION
1	\$9,880
2	\$18,030
3	\$26,180

4	\$34,330
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Fees: (all fees are non-refundable)

Application Fee	\$50 per student (new student only)
Enrollment Fee - New Family	\$300 per student
Enrollment Fee – Current or Returning Family	\$150 per student

Book / Technology Fee	\$300 per student (K-8 students only)
Home School Association Fee	\$125 per family
School Security Fee	\$325 per family

An Important Note about the Saint Mary Fund: Please note, tuition alone does not cover the full cost of educating our children. We rely on the Saint Mary Fund to supplement tuition. For more information on our Saint Mary Fund Program, please [click here](#).

Report cards will be held at any point during the year if tuition or fees are outstanding.

Parent Partnership

Parents as Partners

Just as the parents look to the school to provide the facilities and the trained personnel that are essential to their child's proper development, so the school looks to the parents to assume active responsibilities that cannot be delegated to others. No school can be wholly effective in teaching the values of religion and the virtues of honesty, respect for authority, consideration for the rights and property of others, and standards of personal morality and integrity unless these principles have been established, upheld, and valued in the home. If parents cooperate with the school, instill respect for the authority the home, this is likely to be reflected in the positive attitudes of their children.

Parents are asked to take an active role in their child's education by:

- Supporting the religious and academic goals of the school
- Assisting their child in his/her academic and moral development by carefully reviewing class work, test results, progress reports, and report cards; supervising home study; and reinforcing school policies
- Explaining and reviewing periodically the school behavior code with their child. (Parents should discuss school disciplinary episodes in relation to the school behavior code.)
- Recognizing their child's talents and interests so they may be developed in cooperation with the classroom teachers
- Seeing that the dress code, including gym uniform and spring/winter uniform, is enforced, and insisting that children dress in a modest, age appropriate manner
- Creating a home routine which encourages wellness through proper nutrition and a good night's sleep which will support regular school attendance and punctuality and on complying with attendance rules and procedures
- Reading school notes and newsletters and showing an interest in the student's total education
- Completing and returning any requested information promptly
- Informing the school of any special situation regarding the student's well-being, safety, and health
- Making all tuition and fee payments on time
- Teaching their child respect for law, for authority, for the rights of others, and for public and private property (This includes showing respect for the work of others by not cheating in any circumstance.)

- Arranging for a time and place for their child to complete homework assignments, and allowing students to take responsibility for grades earned and accountability for homework, long term assignments, major tests, service projects and all other assignments.
- Allowing students to experience a logical consequence for an inappropriate actions or behaviors.
- Working with the school in a cooperative effort to carry out recommendations made in the best interest of their child, including those related to educational evaluations and counseling
- Attending Parent-Teacher Conferences and Home-School Association meetings
- By always interacting in a respectful manner when speaking with or about the administration, teachers and staff of the school (physical harassment or verbal abuse may result in your child being required to withdraw from the school immediately or not being allowed to re-register for the following year.)
- Refraining from engaging in social media and online blogs such as but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, Snap Chat, etc. if the content includes defamatory comments regarding the school, the faculty, other students, or the parish.
- Refraining from opening a social media account under the name of Saint Mary School, a particular grade, or organization. The only official Saint Mary School accounts are managed by Saint Mary School.

The education of a student is a partnership between the parents and the school. Just as the parent has the right to withdraw a child if desired, the school administration reserves the right to require the withdrawal of a student if the administration determines that the partnership is irretrievably broken.

Home School Association (HSA)

The Home School Association provides an effective channel of communication between parents and teachers for the benefit of the students and the whole community. Every parent is a member of the HSA. The HSA sponsors events throughout the year for students, parents and faculty, such as the Father Daughter Dance, Mother Son Bowling, Gala, Golf Outing, Teacher Appreciation Week Events, and . There is a monthly meeting following First Friday Mass in the Day Chapel. Please contact the President to request an agenda item.

HSA Co-Presidents	Allison Carballo & Ann Russell
Vice Presidents	Marcy Miller
Secretaries	Kristy Pylypshyn
Treasurer	Janine Simon
Room Parent Coordinator	Jillian Elliott (K-8) & Meghan Newman (PK)

Charitable Service:
HSA Advisor:

tbd
Tricia van Brakel

School Advisory Board (SAB)

The School Advisory Board represents the educational institutions of the Diocese of Bridgeport and is under the authority of the Office of Education of the Diocese of Bridgeport. The SAB will provide the leadership to foster an environment which provides underlying Catholic values, long-term strategic planning, and financial stability. This role of the SAB complements the school's mission.

While the school Principal remains directly responsible for the school's curriculum, programs and personnel, reporting directly to the Superintendent of Schools with respect to those matters, the school Principal will work interactively with the SAB to fulfill the SAB's responsibilities in strategic planning, finance, facilities, marketing and development activities.

Listed below are the School Advisory Board Members for the 2022 - 2023 school year:

Msgr. Kevin T. Royal, Pastor
Rachel Ambrosio (Principal)
Amy Dowding (Director of Mission Advancement)-non-voting member
Beth O'Brien (SAB Chair)
Allison Carballo and Ann Russell (HSA Co-Chairs)
Suzanne Curra
Michael Gray
Lisy Martinez
Arthur Melkonian
Measi O'Rourke
Rob Wolf

Buses

The State of Connecticut mandates that all students in primary and secondary schools receive bus transportation. The bus schedules are published in The Ridgefield Press, the local newspaper, approximately one week before school opens. A child's method of transportation cannot be changed without a written note from the parent.

Any requests to add or delete stops or to modify a bus route should be made in writing to the bus company. Reports of unsafe conditions or failure to follow schedules or routes should be communicated in the same way.

Plan to inspect your child's bus stop to ensure that there is a place to wait for the bus that is off the road and safe. If there are any problems with bus stops, please call First Student Bus company (Ridgefield only), Katonah-Lewisboro Transportation, North Salem Central School District Transportation Department, Bedford Central School District Transportation Department or Brewster Central Schools Transportation.

Child Custody / Buckley Amendment

Saint Mary School adheres to the Buckley Amendment (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act) in regard to privacy of student records and the rights of non-custodial parents. It is the responsibility of the parents to share any official custodial information decided through court actions. Official custodial agreements will be kept in a confidential file in the office of the principal. In the absence of any court document, the school will view each parent as having full legal custody of his/her child. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, non-custodial parents have the right to receive records about their child's academic progress or lack thereof. The school reserves the right to charge a shipping and processing fee for extra records sent to more than one home address.

Be advised that if a teacher is subpoenaed to testify in a child custody case, the parents will need to pay the cost of a substitute teacher and any other costs associated with the testimony (mileage, parking, food, etc.).

Communication

Since as parents you are your child's first teachers, you are our partners in education. Therefore, regular communication with you is an essential part of your child's school experience. Scheduled parent conferences allow teachers and parents to discuss student achievement as well as to develop means to assist students in areas of difficulty.

A parent may request a meeting with a teacher at any time by simply sending an email to that teacher and the teacher will arrange for this meeting (outside of class time) at a mutually convenient time. A parent who is refused such a meeting should notify the principal. The meeting should take place in the classroom, via Zoom, or someplace that insures privacy, never in the hallway or on the street.

Communication Guidelines:

- **Classroom teachers should always be the first point of contact with issues or concerns.**

- The Principal should not be contacted prior to the classroom teacher. The Principal is happy to meet with parents once an initial communication has happened with the teacher.
- Teachers and staff will reply to emails and phone calls within 24 hours during the school week. Teachers and staff are not required to check and/or respond to voice mail or emails on non-school days.

Change of Address

The Main Office must be informed immediately if there is a change of home address, email address, or telephone number for the purpose of mailing and/or emergency.

Notices

In an effort to reduce paper waste, email communication with parents is used extensively. We send a newsletter each week on Thursdays. Please check your email daily to ensure proper communication between home and school. When need be, print out notices that need to be returned to the Main Office. If you do not have the ability to print, extra forms are available in the Main Office.

School Calendar

A tentative calendar is sent home during the summer months. If changes are made or additional items are scheduled, parents are notified via the newsletter or email. The calendar on the Parent Portal is updated and kept current.

Teacher Appreciation

Teacher Appreciation is celebrated in the month of May as it is nationally.

Virtus Training

Diocese of Bridgeport Policies and Procedures Relating to Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons or by Lay Employees or Volunteers

The Diocese has mandated that all volunteers receive a copy of Policies and Procedures Relating to Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons or by Lay Employees or Volunteers, and sign and return the receipt included at the end of the packet.

In addition, as of the fall of 2004, all parents who volunteer in the school must submit to a background check, and attend the Virtus Training Program, as mandated by the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Virtus is a mandatory 3-hour training program required for every person age 18 and over who works or volunteers within the Diocese of Bridgeport. This training teaches adults how to identify early warning signs of child sexual abuse and how to prevent it. Log on to www.virtusonline.org to register.

As of spring 2015, all volunteers whose Virtus certification is five years old or older, must be recertified. Recertification is all done on line.

Visitors

We welcome parents, guardians, and grandparents to our school. However, for the safety of all the children in our school, anyone entering the building must sign in at the Main Office and pick up a Visitor's Pass. They must also sign out when they leave the school building. Visitors may be asked to show identification in the form of a driver's license or other government issued identification. Please contact the principal to set up an appropriate time for a visit.

No person is allowed to publicly address students or staff unless permission has been given by the Principal. Suspicious looking person/s sighted either in the school or on school grounds must be reported to the Main Office immediately.

Volunteers

We welcome and appreciate any time that parents/guardians are willing to share with us. Volunteer efforts provide an educational advantage to our students. All volunteers must be Virtus trained. Please stop by the Main Office for further information on this training. Proof of training must be submitted to the Main Office before anyone may volunteer.

Parents who volunteer may not drop in on a classroom to see their child during the day, or request time with a staff member without an appointment. This is an interruption to the teacher and to the educational process.

Please note that all parents/volunteers/adults in the building must use adult restrooms only so as to be in compliance with Safe Environments. Adults may not use student restrooms during school hours or school functions.

Daily Protocols

Daily Schedule

Kindergarten – Grade 8

7:10am	Students may enter school
7:30am	School Begins
7:33am - 8:23am	First Period
8:26am - 9:06am	Second Period
9:09am - 9:49am	Third Period
9:52am - 10:32am	Fourth Period
10:35am - 11:15 am	Fifth Period
<i>Lunch K-2/Recess 3-5</i>	<i>10:35am - 10:52am</i>
<i>Lunch 3-5/Recess K-2</i>	<i>10:55am - 11:15am</i>
11:18am - 11:58am	Sixth Period
<i>Recess 6-8</i>	<i>11:18am - 11:38am</i>
<i>Lunch 6-8</i>	<i>11:38am - 11:58am</i>
12:01am - 12:41pm	Seventh Period
12:44pm - 1:24pm	Eighth Period
1:27pm - 2:07pm	Ninth Period
2:07pm - 2:15pm	Homeroom / Dismissal

Preschool

Half Day Programs	8:30am - 12:00pm
Full Day Programs	8:30am – 2:00pm

Emergency Closings / Delayed Openings

In the event of a closing, delayed opening, or early dismissal, we will follow the Ridgefield Public School System. If they close due to weather, we also close. You will be notified via automated call/text message/email. This information is also available by viewing local television news reports.

In the event of a 2 hour *delayed opening*, school begins at 9:30am for students in Kindergarten – Grade 8. Before Care opens at 9:10am. Preschool will begin at 10:30am. Half-day preschool students are invited to stay the full day when there is a delayed opening.

In the event of a 3 hour delayed opening, school begins at 10:30am for students in Kindergarten – Grade 8. Before Care opens at 10:10. Preschool will begin at 11:30am. Half day preschool students are invited to stay the full day when there is a delayed opening.

In the event of an *early dismissal*, students in Kindergarten – Grade 8 are dismissed at 10:30am. In the event of a weather related early dismissal, students in Kindergarten – Grade 8 may be dismissed at 10:30 or 11:30. Preschool students are dismissed at 11:00am. On days when there is an early dismissal there is no After Care.

Snow Days

Saint Mary School will add up to two snow days to the school calendar at the end of the year. The two days that will be made up will be true “snow days” where students will not have any online learning, either synchronous or asynchronous. We will do our best to announce our “snow days” the night before a closing so that students and families can take advantage of sleeping in and enjoying the slow pace of a snow day. All other weather related closings will be synchronous remote learning days. The middle school will announce a standard snow day schedule for synchronous classes that will be posted to Google Classroom sometime in the fall. Elementary classes will outline a plan/schedule to their classes as well that will include whole class live meets in Reading/ELA and Math as well as small group live meets. These will be posted on Google classroom along with any other relevant asynchronous assignments. Preschool classes will hold whole class live meets and post asynchronous activities for students to complete at home. Specials classes will not meet on virtual days.

School Office Hours

The school office is open on all school days from 7:00am-3:00pm.

Drop Off/Dismissal Procedures

Beginning of Day Procedures:

- If your child is absent, please complete the online form on our website under the Parent heading by 9:00 am.
- Preschool students: parents will park their cars and will walk their children to the designated drop off spot for their class.
- K-8 students: parents will pull in the High Ridge entrance and proceed to the sidewalk. The first car will pull up all the way to the main entrance of the school. Parents will not leave their cars. Students will exit their cars as long as the car is along the sidewalk. Students and parents should exchange their hugs at home so that this process is very swift.

- All K-8 students will enter school by the main office. Saint Mary staff will be outside to greet students. Students may exit their car and walk to the main entrance once the car is along the sidewalk in front of the building.
- Parents should follow along around the school building and exit via Greenfield Avenue, which is behind the gym.
- Parents should not pass cars pulled over in front of them to exit. It may take us a week or so to perfect the process, but everyone will be encouraged to move swiftly and safely.
- No child is permitted, for any reason, to be left by a parent, unattended, outside the school building prior to 7:10 a.m., after dismissal at 2:15 p.m. or after an After-School Enrichment class has ended.
- Announcements / Morning Prayer and Rosary will begin at 7:30 am. All students should be in their classroom at this point.
Buses will drop the students off at the back door on the lower level of the school building. A faculty or school staff member will admit the children from buses on the lower level of the building each day.
- Students are not permitted to enter the building with drink items other than water bottles due to possible allergies contained in drinks from Starbucks, Dunkin, etc. Parents are expected to respect this as a way to maintain a healthy learning environment for all students. Furthermore, these types of drinks distract from a focused learning environment as they are often high in sugar and sweeteners that affect the learning environment. A healthy breakfast before school is encouraged. Students entering school with such drinks will be asked to dispose of them or finish them in the office to avoid spilling in the classroom.

End of Day Procedures:

- You will be asked to set a "default" dismissal plan for your student indicating whether they will go home via bus, car pick up, or be dismissed as a "walker". If you need to make a change to the default instructions, please email attendance@smsridgefield.org by 1:00 pm that day. Late changes can be extremely difficult, time-consuming and problematic after this point and have the potential to create a safety problem for the students.
- If two students are having a "playdate" and are traveling via bus or car pick up, both parents need to advise attendance@smsridgefield.org of that plan.
- Students in grades 5-8 may walk to town after school with written parent permission.

For those students who will be picked up by car, we ask you to abide by the following procedures:

- Preschool students: parents will park their cars and will pick up their children at the designated pick up spot for their class. Teachers will review this spot during the Meet and Greet visits this week.
- All K-8 families will be given a carline sign that should be placed on the passenger-side dashboard. Signs will be handed out to the youngest student at the Ice Pop Social or the first day of school.
- Should you need a second sign for another parent/nanny/grandparent, please email dowdinga@smsridgefield.org.
- Please enter via the High Ridge entrance to the parking lot beginning at 2:10 pm. Because preschool dismisses at 2:00 it is imperative for the safety of our young students that no car arrives prior to 2:10 pm.
- The first car should pull around the front of the building along to the side entrance to the Hall (you will be guided by staff/signage).
- School staff will communicate with staff in the hall via walkie-talkie and your child/ren will be dismissed to you via the side hall entrance.
- Parents are asked to remain in their cars at all times.
- Once your child is safely in your car AND the car in front of you departs, you will exit via the Greenfield Ave exit.
- Any student whose parent is late will be taken to the Main Office. If we are unable to reach the parents or they arrive more than 10 minutes late, the student(s) will be placed in the care of school personnel and parents will be billed \$35.00/hour.

Early Pick-Up

If it is necessary to pick up your child before 2:15p.m., please email attendance@smsridgefield.org. Children dismissed early must be signed out at the Main Office. When you arrive to pick up your child, they will be called to the office.

Tardiness

Student lateness interrupts the learning process for your child and all other children in that classroom. Any student arriving at school after the published opening time is considered late. Students arriving late to school must report to the Main Office to be admitted to class. Parents of students with 10 tardies in a quarter will be asked to meet with the Principal.

Lunch Program

We will offer hot lunch from local restaurants five days a week. Parents will be asked to order on a monthly basis. Once the ordering period is closed, we cannot make changes.

If you order lunch and your student is absent on a day that you ordered, we will donate that lunch to a staff member unless you contact Mrs. Harco (harcow@smsridgefield.org) with other instructions prior to 10:15 am. We are happy to give to a sibling or save until the next day, but we don't want any food to go to waste!

If there is a snow day, we have instructed our vendors to donate our orders to Ridgefield Fire and Police Departments and Social Services. There will be no refunds for snow days.

Before and After Care

These programs will provide a structured, safe environment that will be supervised by one or two staff members depending on the number of students. Students will have fun while encountering friends; both new and old. This program is offered for Pre-K-3 through 8th grade, which will foster the development of social skills where students will learn more about peer relationships with students of different ages. Students who participate in the Before and After Care programs must follow the program's rules and regulations. We reserve the right to expel a student if we deem that his/her behavior is unacceptable. This program is only offered for Saint Mary School Students.

The Before Care session will be offered to Preschool students only and will be offered on school days **Monday through Friday** beginning at 7:10 am and ending when their scheduled preschool program begins. After Care sessions will run from 2:15 until 5:30pm, **Monday through Friday**. Due to teacher's schedules for Professional Development on early dismissal days, the After-School program will not be offered. If there is an early dismissal due to weather or any another emergency, the program is automatically cancelled.

Fees:

Before and After care require a once a year registration and \$50 fee. Before Care will be charged a flat fee of \$15 per child per if you child is dropped off prior to 8:00 am. If you drop off at or after 8:00am the fee will be a flat \$8 provided the registration fee was paid. Aftercare is \$12.50 per hour. Students participating in after school enrichment clubs may go to After Care when they are dismissed. The office will bill you monthly and prompt payment is expected. Delinquency will jeopardize attendance. In the event that you arrive after 5:30 pm, you will be charged \$20 for every ten minutes you are late by our clocks.

The students should bring a "nut-free" snack with a reusable water bottle each day that they participate in the After-Care Club. We will provide a supervised homework period of time. Staff is available for guidance; however we cannot

guarantee that all homework is completed and students will not receive special academic attention, such as tutoring. We will have a variety of indoor/outdoor games and activities.

Birthdays

Students celebrating birthdays are recognized during morning announcements. We do not allow parents to bring in food items. Students in Grades K-8 may come to school dressed out-of-uniform on their birthday or half-birthday (if their birthday falls during the summer months). If a birthday falls on a weekend or day off of school, students may coordinate with the teacher to choose an alternate day. Please note, if the day falls on a date in which the students are attending Mass, an alternate date must be arranged with the teacher. Students must comply with our dress code. Parents of students in Grades K-5 may consult with the teacher to see if they can be a "Mystery Reader". No "goody bags" may be handed out. This includes food and non-food items.

Invitations for birthday parties may be distributed at school ONLY if the entire class is invited; otherwise should be mailed.

Field Trips

Field trips must serve as an educational purpose and their values should be an integral part of the school's instructional program. They broaden the students' educational experiences. Field trips are privileges given to students; no student has an absolute right to a field trip, or opting out without a valid reason.

- Field trips are designed to correlate with teaching units and to achieve curricular goals.
- Field trips vary on each grade level. There are no "traditional" field trips. Class participation in a particular field trip over consecutive years does not mean that this trip has become a school tradition.
- Field trips are permissible when advanced planning, the location, and the experience ensure a successful learning opportunity.
- Individual teachers in consultation with the administration reserve the right to restrict or deny student participation on any field trip due to, but not limited to, poor academic performance and/or poor conduct.
- An official permission slip, signed by the parent, is required before a child will be permitted to attend a field trip. Verbal or faxed permission cannot be accepted. Permission slips are due in the Main Office 48 hours before the day of the trip.

- Parents may refuse to permit their child from participating in a field trip by stating so on the proper form. Students who do not attend a field trip will remain at home with the parent and will be marked absent for the day.
- All monies collected for field trips are **non-refundable**.
- **Cell phones** are **not allowed** on field trips unless otherwise directed by the teacher and/or administration.
- All chaperones must be 25 years of age or older.

As a volunteer chaperone, you must have VIRTUS training. This is the mandatory 3-hour training program required for every person age 18 and over who works or volunteers within the Diocese of Bridgeport. This training teaches adults how to identify early warning signs of child sexual abuse and how to prevent it. Log on to www.virtusonline.org to register.

The number of chaperones and the choice of chaperones are left to the discretion of the teacher organizing the field trip. If you are interested in chaperoning a class trip, you will be expected to assist the teacher in the supervision of his/her students. The safety of the children should be the top priority of a chaperone. Therefore, siblings are not permitted to participate in class trips. If a child has an allergy that needs to be monitored, parents are asked to accompany them on the trip.

Library

The Saint Mary School Library contains both reading and research materials. Our Library Media Specialist is assisted by many volunteers. Students in Kindergarten through Grade Five have a set library period each week. Students in Grades, Six, Seven and Eight do not have a formal library class, but the library is available to them. Books may be borrowed for one week. Books are checked out to the child so that he/she will have the experience of signing out a library book and abiding by due dates. Borrowed books are to be returned on time and in good condition. All lost library books must be paid for so that the school can purchase an additional copy. If the book is located after a new order is placed, the child will be allowed to keep the old book since he/she has paid for it.

Liturgy

All students Kindergarten through Grade 8 will attend First Friday Mass and Holy Day Masses and other special services. Students who have not received First Holy Communion or are non-Catholics are welcome to go up for a blessing at Communion during any Mass. Their arms should be crossed to let the priest know to give a blessing.

Lockers

Students in Preschool – Grade 5 are assigned cubbies in which to store clothing and school supplies. Students in Grades 6-8 are assigned lockers. The school reserves the right to inspect cubbies and lockers at any time without probable or reasonable cause. The locks are the property of Saint Mary School. Students will be responsible for replacement of any lost lock.

Lost and Found

Lost and found items are sent to the office. Please attach name labels or mark your child's clothing and other personal belongings. This makes it possible for children to identify their items. Lunches and lunch boxes should be marked with a permanent marker. Any unclaimed items are periodically donated to charity.

Students who lose a library book, textbook or workbook must pay the replacement cost of the book plus shipping in order to receive a new copy.

Items brought to School

Saint Mary School is not responsible for loss or damage to any items brought to school by a student. This includes, but is not limited to all electronic devices.

Parties

Classroom teachers may arrange parties with Class Parents at the beginning of each school year. Class parents will communicate those dates to the class. Parties will last no more than one hour, and may include games, crafts and snacks. Any food being served must be communicated with all parents due to allergy and medical issues. Parents of children with food allergies must provide snack items for their student for parties.

Sacramental Program

The sacramental life of the students of the Catholic tradition is an important part of the religion program at Saint Mary School. In conjunction with the Saint Mary Parish Religious Education department, we prepare students for the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Communion, and begin the preparation for Confirmation. Students receive Reconciliation and First Communion in Grade 2. This year, students in Grades 6 and 7 will receive Confirmation. This will move to Grade 6 in subsequent years.

Academics

Academic Expectations

Saint Mary School expects students to perform to the best of their ability. Teachers are expected to evaluate student progress on a regular basis. Students will be given assessments regularly.

Curriculum

The Diocesan curriculum guidelines, consistent with the State of Connecticut guidelines, are followed for the teaching of all secular subject areas. The entire curriculum for the Diocese of Bridgeport is posted on the diocesan website.

Homework

Homework is assigned to help students become self-reliant and self-directed, and is an essential part of the instructional program and reinforces learning. It serves as a means for clarifying and reviewing material learned in class, for providing motivation and opportunity for individual growth, and for creating experiences of in-depth study and supplementary reading.

The time allotments for homework (written and study) are as follows:

Kindergarten	15-20 minutes/night
Grade 1	20 minutes/night
Grade 2	20 minutes/night
Grade 3	40 minutes/night
Grade 4	40 minutes/night
Grade 5	50 minutes/night
Grade 6, 7, and 8	1 to 1 ½ hours/night

These time allotments are GUIDELINES ONLY. It is impossible to predict the amount of time an individual student will need to complete his/her work, and homework will vary throughout the year.

Missed Homework

The school calendar provides for extended weekends throughout the school year. Parents are encouraged to schedule trips or family outings during these times so as to eliminate the need to interrupt a child's learning process. Students who are absent from school due to planned vacations have an unexcused absence, and teachers are not expected to prepare homework packets.

Elementary School (K-5)

If your child is sick, all assignments can be found on Google Classroom. Students are responsible for making up work when they are absent. Absentees during the school day may not participate in afternoon or evening extracurricular activities. Teachers are not expected to prepare homework packets for children who miss school for vacations.

Middle School (Gr. 6-8)

Middle School students may check their homework assignments on Google Classroom. A full explanation of Google Classroom will be given to Middle School students the first week of school. Students are responsible for making up work when they are absent. Absentees during the school day may not participate in afternoon or evening extracurricular activities. Teachers are not expected to prepare homework packets for children who miss school due to illness or for vacations. If Middle School students need a book to complete homework, a parent may come to the school between 2:30-3:00 to go into his/her child's locker to collect the necessary items.

Report Card Distribution

Report cards are distributed four times a year for grades K-8 and twice a year for Preschool students. Report cards will be emailed to parents beginning in the 2023-2024 school year. Hard copies will be furnished upon parent request.

Report cards will be withheld if financial obligations have not been met, fees are outstanding, and/or textbooks and library books have not been returned. Report cards may not be given before the assigned date.

Promotion / Retention

At the end of each school year, most students are promoted as a result of their academic achievement and developmental readiness for the next grade level. In some cases, retention is a consideration. Although the classroom teacher is generally the first person to raise the issue of retention, once raised there is a Child Study Team which discusses the possibility and monitors the student's progress. This Child Study Team includes the homeroom teacher, the school principal, the receiving teacher, and one of our learning specialists. If a teacher has concerns regarding a student's placement for the following year, that concern should be raised to the Child Study Team and the child's parents by March 1st. The following factors are taken into consideration when discussing the issue of retention: academic achievement as measured by a variety of tools, physical, social and emotional development, chronological age, learning differences, and attendance

record. Retention decisions are never made based on a single indicator. A decision regarding retention will be made by the Child Study Team and in conjunction with the Office of the Superintendent, in consultation with the student's parents, and finalized by June 1st.

All homeroom teachers are required to sign each student's report card certifying that the student was PROMOTED to the next grade, ADVANCED to the next grade, or RETAINED in the grade.

PROMOTED – means the student has completed the grade's work and has attained a minimum of a "D" average in all major subject areas. Major subjects are: Religion, Math, Science, Social Studies, English/Language Arts.

ADVANCED – means a student has failed to meet the minimum level of achievement of grade level. After consideration of all factors (social, emotional, physical, academic, age) and in consultation with the Administration and Classroom Teacher, a decision will be reached and parents notified.

RETAINED – means the student has failed two or more major subjects based on the final average. Major subjects are: Religion, Math, Science, Social Studies, English/Language Arts.

If consideration is being given regarding the advancement or retention of a student, the parents shall be notified where possible in writing NO LATER than March of the school year. Prior to this time frame, teachers should have been in frequent contact with parents and administrators to discuss the difficulties the student might be experiencing.

Written notification of the determination to advance or retain a student shall be sent to the parents by the administrator no later than May 1st of the school year.

Assessments

Children take part in the Diocesan testing program each year. The testing program measures the child's general ability as well as achievement in core subjects. Test results are used for diagnostic purposes. Over time, results can be useful in revealing individual and group trends. Like all assessment measures, standardized tests are most helpful when viewed in conjunction with many other factors.

Please be sure your child is well-rested, eats breakfast, and attends school consistently on the standardized testing days.

Semester Examinations (Midterms and Finals)

Semester Examinations will be administered to students in grades 6, 7, and 8.

The purpose of these examinations is four-fold:

1. To improve study skills;
2. To cultivate organizational skills;
3. To develop the skill of retaining information; and
4. To prepare students for high school.

The following guidelines apply to semester examinations:

1. Time allotment for each exam will not exceed ninety minutes.
2. The materials tested
 - The first semester exams will include all work covered in the first and second marking periods.
 - The second semester examinations will include work covered in the third and fourth marking periods.
3. First semester exams are to be given one week before the second marking period ends. Second semester exams are to be given within two weeks prior to the closing of the fourth marking period.
4. First semester exam grades are averaged in with the first and second marking period grades to determine the midyear (first semester) grade. Second semester exam grades are averaged in with the third and fourth marking period grades to determine the second semester grade.
5. Exams will be given in all of the major subjects: Religion, Mathematics, English/Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, and World Languages.
6. The format of the examinations will be left to the discretion of the teacher and submitted for review by the Principal. The teacher must assure that the exam is comprehensive in nature, of a format appropriate to the academic subject, and is of sufficient length and scope to cover the semester's work.
7. The semester exams will be weighed according to the following weight schedule:
 - Grade Six Exams count as 4% of the semester grade.
 - Grade Seven Exams count as 6% of the semester.
 - Grade Eight Exams count as 10% of the semester grade.

Exam grades are to be reported separately on the report card.

Guidelines for the Education of Non-Catholic Students

Parents must be made aware of the intentional Catholic witness in our schools. Saint Mary School as a Catholic school within the Diocese of Bridgeport has as its

primary mission the formation of children in the Catholic faith. All children will participate in the total academic life of our school, including religious education. According to the norms of our Church, it is expected that non-Catholics participate as fully as they can in the liturgical and prayer life of the school.

The religious educators of our schools are committed to teaching the fullness of revelation as it is taught by the Roman Catholic Church. While our teachers value ecumenical education, and respect the traditions of other ecclesiastical communities, they always teach within the context of fidelity to the doctrine and traditions of our teaching church.

Special Learning Needs

Students with learning differences are children of God and members of the Church. Saint Mary School makes every effort to meet individual student needs. Sometimes, however, a student may have needs that do not permit him or her to benefit fully from the program. In those cases your child's teacher and/or principal may schedule a meeting with you to discuss having an evaluation of your child's learning needs. Such evaluations can be done through the local public school district, i.e., Committees on Special Education (CSE's), or privately. Once the results of the evaluation are available the teacher and principal will meet with the parents to discuss the results of the evaluation and the recommendations. Saint Mary School is limited in its human capital resources and will make **reasonable** accommodations for learning differences when possible. Saint Mary School cannot accommodate students who have **extraordinary** learning differences.

Title IX

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

Student Conduct

Expectations and Responsibilities for Students

Students attend Saint Mary School in order to fully develop their God-given talents and capabilities.

To accomplish this, students are asked to:

- Do their best at all times.
- Treat all members of the school community (i.e., teachers, staff, priests, parents and students) with respect. This includes respecting the work of others by not cheating.
- Cooperate with the spirit and philosophy of the school which are designed to foster mature development and personal responsibility. The Principal reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of an action in any doubt arises.
- Obey all school rules and regulations, including those forbidding the use of drugs, alcohol, cigarettes or disruptive behavior.
- Items which detract from a learning situation are not allowed at school at any time. This includes smartwatches and tablets.
- Develop personal standards of conduct that reflect Christian morals and behavior, and refrain from the use of inappropriate language, verbal threats and sexual behavior (including touching, gestures, writing, and dress).
- Speak in a well-modulated tone of voice.
- Observe the school dress code, including the standards for no-uniform days.
- Help care for school property and keep the school free from damage and defacement.

Announcements

Informational announcements are handled through the school P.A. Courteous attention is expected when any message is presented over the P.A. system. Students are expected to exhibit proper respectful and reverent behavior when prayers are said at the beginning and end of the day. Students will stand during prayers. Each student should have a rosary for morning prayer.

Attendance

Student attendance in Catholic schools of the Diocese of Bridgeport shall be in accordance with the General Statutes of the State of Connecticut. Students who have four unexcused absences in one month, or ten unexcused absences in a

school year, are considered to be truant.

A daily accurate attendance record for all students will be kept by each school's Administrative office.

Each school shall establish a system of monitoring absences of children whenever a child fails to report to school and no indication has been received that the child's parent or guardian is aware of the absence. This system must include a telephone call from the school to the parent or guardian within the first hour of the start of the school day.

A written explanation from parents or guardians for a student's absence is mandatory upon return and should be kept on file in the Main Office for at least one year. In the case of an absence of three days or more, a doctor's note will be required. Daily attendance records should be kept indefinitely.

Excessive tardiness may be reported to the CT Department of Children and Families.

Students may not participate in any school-sponsored event if they are not in school on the day of the event without the express permission from the Principal.

Family vacations should not take place when school is in session. Should such a vacation occur during school time, such vacation will be deemed as an unexcused absence. It is expected that all missed assignments will be made up in a period of time determined by the teacher and approved by the Principal. Teachers will not provide work before a vacation.

Dress Code

Your school uniform confirms your attendance at Saint Mary School and is a symbol of unity within the school community. It minimizes distractions in the learning process. It is important that you take pride in your appearance by wearing your complete uniform, always remembering that by wearing it inside and outside the classroom and the school, you are representing the school, and your behavior should be a credit to both yourself and the school community.

Saint Mary School uniform pieces may be purchased through Lands' End. There are two options for purchasing uniforms. You may order online via their website, www.landsend.com. Our School ID is 900172610. There are detailed measurement charts, and uniform sizing is consistent with regular Lands' End sizing. You may also access the Saint Mary Lands' End site via our website under Parents / Uniform

Policy. Additionally, "Uniform Swaps" are held several times a year, and donations are accepted at specified times during the year.

We have two sets of uniforms per age group, Winter/Full Dress Uniforms (November 1st – April 14th) and Spring/Fall Uniforms (April 15th – October 31st). Full Dress Uniforms are also worn for school pictures in Grades K-7 and for Graduation. On days students have physical education, they wear their physical education uniform the entire day. Our Grade 8 students have the privilege of wearing a special sweatshirt at any time.

There are occasional "dress down" days, usually to celebrate seasonal holidays. During Catholic Schools Week, there are thematic dress down days. Each class has its own "class color" and class color t-shirts are available for purchase once or twice a year to be worn on days such as Class Spirit Days, Field Day, and at the Spring Concert. There are monthly School Spirit Days where students may wear their class color, SMS Spirit wear, or PE uniforms.

GIRLS Grades K-4

WINTER/DRESS (November 1st - April 14th)

- White uniform Peter Pan Collared Blouse (Long or Short Sleeves)
- Navy logo uniform Jumper (Length of jumper must fall at least 1" below hands)
- Navy Logo uniform Cardigan Sweater or Uniform Fleece Zippered Jacket or Vest (Optional)
- Navy Leggings or Bike Shorts (Optional under jumper only)
- Navy Knee Socks/Tights
- Black, Brown or Navy Flat Shoes (No Sneakers)
- Navy Slacks (Optional) (no leggings)

SPRING/FALL (April 15th – October 31st)

- White mesh or interlock logo uniform Polo Shirt (Short Sleeve only)
- Navy button front uniform Skort
- Navy logo uniform Cardigan Sweater or Uniform Fleece Zippered Jacket or Vest (Optional)
- White or Navy Socks
- Black, Brown or Navy Flat Shoes or low top sneakers

GIRLS Grades 5-8

WINTER/DRESS (November 1st – April 14th)

- White logo uniform Oxford Shirt (Long or Short Sleeves)
- Blue logo uniform Oxford Shirt (Long or Short Sleeves) (Grades 6-8 ONLY)
- Navy Chino uniform skort (Length of skirt must fall 1" below hands)
- Navy logo uniform Cardigan Sweater or Uniform Fleece Zippered Jacket or Vest (Optional)
- Navy Knee Socks/Tights/Leggings
- Black, Brown or Navy Flat Shoes (No Sneakers)
- Navy Slacks (Optional)

SPRING/FALL (April 15th – October 31st)

- White mesh or interlock logo uniform Polo Shirt (Short Sleeve Only)
- Blue mesh or interlock logo uniform Polo Shirt (Short Sleeve Only) (Grades 6-8 ONLY)
- Navy uniform Skort
- Navy logo uniform Cardigan Sweater or Uniform Fleece Zippered Jacket or Vest (Optional)
- White or Navy Socks
- Black, Brown or Navy Flat Shoes or low top sneakers

BOYS Grades K-4

WINTER/DRESS (November 1st – April 14th)

- White logo uniform button-down Oxford Shirt(Long or Short Sleeves) (White logo uniform Long-Sleeve Polo Shirt for K)
- Navy uniform Pants
- Navy logo uniform Cardigan Sweater or Uniform Fleece Zippered Jacket or Vest (Optional)
- Uniform Tie (Not required for Kindergarten)
- Navy or Black Belt (Not required for Kindergarten)
- Navy or Black Socks
- Black, Brown or Navy Shoes (No sneakers)

SPRING/FALL (April 15th – October 31st)

- White mesh or interlock logo uniform Polo Shirt (Short Sleeve only)
- Navy uniform Shorts
- Navy logo uniform Cardigan Sweater or Uniform Fleece Zippered Jacket or Vest - Optional
- Navy or Black Belt (Not required for Kindergarten)
- White, Navy or Black Socks
- Black, Brown or Navy Shoes or low top sneakers

BOYS Grades 5-8

WINTER/DRESS (November 1st – April 14th)

- White logo uniform Oxford Shirt (Long or Short Sleeves)
- Blue logo uniform Oxford Shirt (Long or Short Sleeves) (Grades 6-8 ONLY)
- Navy uniform pants
- Navy logo uniform Cardigan Sweater or Uniform Fleece Zippered Jacket or Vest (Optional)
- Uniform Tie
- Navy or Black Belt
- Navy or Black Socks
- Black, Brown or Navy Shoes (No Sneakers)

SPRING/FALL (April 15th – October 31st)

- White mesh or interlock logo uniform Polo Shirt (Short Sleeve Only)
- Blue mesh or interlock logo uniform Polo Shirt (Short Sleeve Only) (Grades 6-8 ONLY)
- Navy uniform Shorts

- Navy logo uniform Cardigan Sweater or Uniform Fleece Zippered Jacket or Vest (Optional)
- Navy or Black Belt
- White, Navy or Black Socks
- Black, Brown or Navy Shoes or low top sneakers

Physical Education Uniform

Grades K-5 - BOYS AND GIRLS

- Gray logo uniform T-shirt
- Navy logo mesh athletic shorts (Spring/Fall) (no bike shorts)
- Navy logo uniform sweatpants (Winter) (no leggings)
- Navy logo uniform sweatshirt (Optional)
- White, Navy or Black Socks
- Sneakers with non-marking soles

Grades 6-8 - BOYS AND GIRLS

- Gray logo uniform T-shirt
- Navy logo uniform gym shorts (Spring/Fall) (no bike shorts)
- Navy logo uniform wind pants (Winter) (no leggings)
- Navy logo uniform half zip pullover (Optional)
- Navy uniform active zip bottom pants (Optional)
- White, Navy or Black Socks
- Sneakers with non-marking soles
- For Grades 6-8 ONLY, students may also wear navy logo uniform T-shirt with grey logo uniform gym shorts

Additional Uniform Requirements:

- No item that is torn should be worn to school.
- Shoes are to be flat to 1-inch high. Shoes may not be backless.
- Shirts are to be tucked in at all times with Winter Uniforms.
- Shoes with laces must be tied at all times.
- No dangling earrings may be worn.
- No hats or bandanas may be worn in class.
- No tattoos are permitted.
- Boys' hair should be no longer than the collar of their shirt.
- Gym uniforms and sneakers are not permitted on days when students attend Mass.

Students, who repeatedly violate the uniform policy, will be denied participation in the next out of uniform day or will serve a detention.

Parents may be called and expected to deliver appropriate clothing to school if a student is out of uniform. On Mass days, parents will be called to deliver proper uniform including shoes. Students who do not have appropriate Mass attire will stay in the office during Mass.

Dress Down / Non-Uniform Days

On special occasions throughout the year, students will be awarded the privilege of partaking in Dress-Down/Non-Uniform Days.

DRESS-CODE:

- Clothing worn should be neat and clean
- Neat Jeans (no baggy jeans, ripped jeans, or very tight jeans may be worn)
- Shorts must be "Bermuda" style length. When a student stands with his/her arms at his/her side, the length of the shorts must be no shorter than where his/her fingers lie.
- MODESTY in clothing worn is a must (length of clothing; tank tops, halter tops, spaghetti straps, bare midriffs, spandex shorts or pants are not permitted).
- No tee shirts with inappropriate language, slogans or designs
- Undergarments must be covered by clothing

Administration and faculty maintain the right and responsibility to deem clothing inappropriate. Students who come to school inappropriately dressed will have to call home to request their uniforms be brought to school and, in addition will forfeit the privilege of partaking in future dress-down days.

Parents will be notified if a child comes to school consistently in an unkempt manner. If no improvement is noticed within a reasonable amount of time, an appointment with the parents will be made by school administration

Bus Behavior

Students and parents should consider riding on the school bus as a privilege and an extension of the school. Thus, students are to demonstrate a respectful, Christian, and safety-conscious attitude on the bus at all times.

Students are expected to:

- Be respectful and obey the bus driver and bus monitors at all times
- Be on time and at the correct stop
- Wait away from the road until the bus has completely stopped and the door has been opened
- Board the bus in single file, be seated promptly, WEAR SEAT BELTS, and remain seated while on the bus
- Keep all body parts, and all belongings inside the window
- Keep all belongings out of the aisles
- Respect the rights of other passengers at all times

- Treat the bus property with respect
- Speak quietly – DO NOT SCREAM
- Stay in the seats until the bus comes to a complete stop
- Do nothing to cause annoyances or distraction to the bus driver, as this places safety of all in danger

Misbehavior on the bus leads to bus conduct referrals and possible bus suspension.

Lunchroom Behavior

- Students are to sit at the table while eating.
- We promote and expect a nut-free environment.
- Students are to make sure that their table is clean after lunch. All uneaten food and trash is to be put in the appropriate recycling/garbage cans.
- Students may not bring any play/toy item into the cafeteria.
- All rules and policies of the school regarding appropriate language, behavior, and treatment of others, which are outlined in the parent-student handbook, are to be followed.
- Students must ask an adult for permission to leave the cafeteria.
- Students are not to engage in any game-like play in the cafeteria.

Recess Policies

Outdoor Recess:

- Stay within the playground boundaries or gated areas. If a ball goes outside of the playground, always ask permission retrieving it.
- Children must respect the judgment of the teachers on duty.
- Report to the adult on duty if you need to enter the building to go to the restroom or the nurse's office. Report back when you return. (Only one person may accompany a child to the restroom or nurse's office.) Report any injuries to an adult on duty immediately
- Respect each other's personal space and treat each other with respect and dignity. Exhibit good sportsmanship at all times. Appropriate language becoming of Catholic School students is required. Use of profanity is prohibited.
- Share equipment and use it properly. Remember to go up the ladder and all the way down the slide. Slide feet first. Hands above the climbing bars – bodies below.
- Students are not to push, wrestle, tackle each other or play games that involve any of these activities. If football is played, it is to be two-hand touch or flag.
- No rock throwing or kicking. In the winter, snowball throwing is forbidden.

- Students are responsible for returning equipment to storage containers at the end of recess. Please clean shoes on the mats before entering the school.

Indoor Recess:

- Students will go to the gym unless it is not available, and will be monitored by the on-duty teacher.
- If students have to be in their classrooms, they will participate in various activities.
- Students will use indoor voices.
- There is to be no yelling, running, etc.
- Balls or other outdoor equipment will not be used during indoor recess in the homerooms.

Money

Money that is brought to school for a specific purpose (dress down days, book fair, etc.), must be put into an envelope with the child's name and grade and amount. If a student does bring money to school the money should be kept on the student's person and not left in a backpack, coat pocket, lunch box, or desk. The school cannot be responsible for lost money.

Discipline Policy

General Discipline:

Our basic approach to discipline at SMS aligns with the "gospel values" which teach responsibility in order to foster a caring climate. Our philosophy has more to do with restoring justice, than punitive punishment. Encouraging empathy and compassion motivates good choices.

A fundamental approach to discipline is understanding that discipline can be a "teachable moment." Restorative discipline seeks concurrent accountability and behavioral changes. We want to prevent the recurrence of negative behavior by helping students learn from their mistakes. Essential to this process is to help the student who has engaged in unacceptable behavior to:

- understand why the behavior is unacceptable
- understand the harm it has caused
- take responsibility for their actions
- be given the opportunity to learn strategies for making good choices and skills for future use
- understand that there will be more stringent consequences if the behavior reoccurs

Protocol for handling Student Behavior issues:

1. Teachers will be the first authoritative figure to address any unacceptable behaviors that they have witnessed or have been informed about. The teacher will speak with the student(s) involved, emphasize responsibility for the action, and work with the student(s) to brainstorm strategies to make good choices.
2. Depending on the seriousness of the situation, parents may be contacted.
3. If a student continues to exhibit behavior issues and the teacher has exhausted his/her strategies, the administrator will be contacted. At this point, the student's parents will be contacted by the principal so that appropriate actions can be taken.
4. Any serious incidents will immediately be brought to the principal's attention for review, investigation and appropriate actions.

*Please note: Parents of the children who may have been involved in these incidents will not receive detailed information about actions against other students involved due to family confidentiality laws.

All responses to unacceptable behavior are determined on a case by case basis by the administration and staff according to the following:

- the student's age and maturity
- the student's disciplinary record (including the nature of any prior misconduct)
- the nature, severity and scope of the behavior
- the circumstances/context in which the conduct occurred
- the frequency and duration of the behavior
- the number of persons involved in the behavior

The following are prohibited at Saint Mary School:

- knives
- firearms
- drugs/any illegal substance
- alcohol
- cigarettes / e-cigarettes

The Principal and/or his/her designee may search students desks, lockers and personal belongings, including but not limited to handbags, briefcases, purses, backpacks, clothing and other items in a student's possession. This includes cell phones and other electronic devices.

The Principal has the right to suspend those pupils whose presence in the school has become a serious impediment to the school operation. In extreme cases, the Principal may contact the Office of the Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Bridgeport. All suspensions are reported to the Office of the Superintendent of Schools.

The Principal has the right to discipline its students for off-campus behavior that is not in line with the behavior expectations of its students during the course of the school day. This off campus behavior includes, but is not limited to cyber-bullying.

Bullying:

Bullying is prohibited in all Catholic schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport. It must not be tolerated during the school day or during any school-sponsored activities on or off school grounds. Bullying and intimidation are actions that are contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Any behavior deemed by the school administration to be considered as bullying shall result in disciplinary actions, which may include detention, suspension and expulsion from school.

Any student who retaliated against another student for reporting bullying may be subject to disciplinary actions, which may include detention, suspension and expulsion from school. These determinations will be made in conjunction with the Office of the Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Bullying is defined as the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyber bullying, directed at or referring to another student (B) a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student, that: (i) Causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property, (ii) places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property, (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for such student, (iv) infringes on the rights of such student at school, or (v) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, oral or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics; school employees, students, and parents who become aware of any act of bullying must report the incident to the school administrator for further investigation.

Students may report acts of bullying to a teacher, staff member, or the Principal. Upon learning about the bullying incident, the administrator shall thoroughly investigate the circumstances. Their investigation may include interviews with students, parents/guardians, and school staff, review of school records, and

identification of family issues.

If it is concluded that an act of bullying has occurred, the parents or guardians of the student who committed such acts and the parents/guardians of the student against whom such acts were directed shall be notified. Consequences for students who bully others shall depend on the results of the investigation and include parent conferences, professional counseling, detention, suspension, or expulsion. Depending on the severity of the incident, or the series of incidents, the administrator may also take appropriate steps to ensure student safety. These may include implementing a safety plan, separating and supervising students involved, providing staff for students as necessary, reporting incidents to law enforcement if appropriate, and establishing a supervision plan with the parents. Bullying incidents that demand suspension or expulsion shall be reported to the Superintendent before any final decision is reached.

Clarification of terms:

"Cyber bullying" means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications;

"Mobile electronic device" means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk, or equipment on which digital images are taken or transmitted;

"Electronic communication" means any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo-optical system;

"Hostile environment" means a situation in which bullying among students is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the school climate;

"Outside of the school setting" means at a location, activity or program that is not school related, or through the use of an electronic device or a mobile electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the school.

"School climate" means the quality and character of school life with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community between and among students and adults.

Drugs and Alcohol:

If a teacher suspects that a child is under the influence of either drugs or alcohol, the matter will be referred to the principal immediately. The principal will verify teacher observation and will notify parents who must pick up the child immediately. Should it be determined that the suspicion is accurate, parents will be expected to follow the recommendations of the school principal if the child is to continue in the school.

Any student who appears to be under the influence of alcohol or any drug, and appears at a school function in questionable condition will be barred from attending or participating in that ceremony, party, dance, or school outing. Parents will be notified and appropriate action will be taken which may include suspension or mandatory withdrawal from the school. Similarly, parents who are under the influence of alcohol or other substances are not permitted at school or school events.

Electronic Devices:

Use of any electronic device such as cell phones, beepers, hand-held and other personal electronic devices that may distract the student, other students, or the class as a whole during the course of the school day is prohibited. If a student needs to bring such device, it must stay in his or her backpack for the entire school day. Failure to abide by this will result in immediate confiscation. Parents should contact the principal to make arrangements to pick up the item.

Middle School Cell Phone Policy : Each morning when students arrive at homeroom they will place their cell phones in their designated pocket which will be kept near the teacher's desk. Each student will be assigned a specific pocket by the teacher so that the teacher can keep track of the phones. The cell phones will be kept in the homeroom classroom in the pocket holder for the duration of the school day. They will not move with students from class to class. Teachers will monitor that the cell phones are placed in the holders at the start of the day and remain untouched in those pockets throughout the day. At the end of the day before dismissal, teachers will return the phones to students.

Students involved in possession or transmission of inappropriate photos on their cell phones or other electronic devices face suspension and/or expulsion. In accordance with the law, the Ridgefield Police Department will be notified.

Harassment Policies:

Harassment regulations need to be grounded in the belief that all persons have a right to be treated with dignity. All demeaning behavior is prohibited.

Saint Mary School attempts to provide a safe environment for all. Verbal or written threats made against the physical or emotional well-being of any individual are taken seriously. Students making such threats, even in jest, face appropriate disciplinary action including detention, suspension or expulsion. Harassment of any type is not tolerated. The principal investigates all complaints of harassment. Students involved in harassing behavior are subject to detention, suspension, or expulsion and where appropriate, will be referred for counseling services. If you believe that your child is being harassed, please notify the principal immediately. Teachers, also, should report threats made against them to the principal.

Student Health and Wellness

State of Connecticut Requirements

It is Connecticut State Law that the school has a completed Connecticut Health Assessment Record on file for all students entering Kindergarten and Grade 7. It is also a state mandate that certain immunizations must be completed for entry into specific grades. Immunization requirements are listed on the Saint Mary School website, www.smsridgefield.org. The School Nurse (Ext. 253) can answer any questions you may have regarding these requirements.

For legitimate educational interest, it is sometimes necessary to exchange medical information with school personnel and health care providers.

Emergency Information

Every year, we require parents to fill out an Emergency Contact Form prior to the opening of school. Our primary goal is the safety of your child. This form authorizes the pick-up of your child by others, and will be strictly adhered to. If there are any changes, parents must notify us in writing, signed and dated as soon as possible. If there is an emergency and you have to alter your child's dismissal plans, please call the Main Office by 1:00 PM. In addition, please highlight on the contact form any allergies to medicine, food, latex and/or insects.

Illness Guidelines

A primary step in preventing the spread of infection is keeping your children at home when they are ill. Parents are the best observers of their children and know when they are out of sorts. In this early stage, children are infectious and it is important that they be kept out of school at this time. They will get better faster and not spread infection to others. We know this puts a burden on parents, as they may have to use time from their work and scheduled activities to be with their sick children. While we are sympathetic to working parents, our first concern is the sick children and all of our other students. If a child appears to be ill, they will be taken to the school nurse for evaluation.

Here are some guidelines to follow if your children are ill. If you see any of these symptoms, it is best to keep your children at home.

- Fever of 100.0 or more (taken orally)
- Vomiting two or more times in a 24-hour period
- Severe coughing
- Eyes that are pink/red, with drainage

It is best to check with your doctor if you have any questions about your children's condition.

The next decision is when your children should return to school. Children should be fever-free for 24 hours without any fever-reducing medications and be able to resume their normal diet and activity. Certain other conditions require children to stay at home or be under a doctor's care according to school policy. These conditions are:

- Chicken pox (Varicella): May return to school when all blisters have scabbed over, approximately six days.
- Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis): May return after treatment has been started with antibiotics and doses given for 24 hours.
- Fifth Disease: May return to school on doctor's recommendation.
- Impetigo: Exclude from school until evaluated and treated by a health care professional.
- Head Lice: Exclude from school until under medical treatment and have been checked by school nurse.
- Ringworm: Seek medical care. If unable to cover site, exclude from school until receiving medical treatment and considered non-infectious by doctor.
- Scabies: Exclude from school until considered non-infectious by doctor.
- Scarlet Fever, Scarletina, Strep: May return to school no sooner than 24 hours after the start of medication or upon doctor's recommendation.
- Widespread Rash: Exclude from school pending diagnosis by doctor.

It is important to let the school nurse know if your children are not feeling well, are being treated for a medical condition or are taking any medication for illness. Having this information will enable the nurse to better assist your children while they are in school.

Medication Administration

If any medication, including over the counter medications (i.e. Tylenol, antacids, etc.) must be administered at school, an Authorization for the Administration of Medication by School Personnel form has to be completed by the parent and health care provider. This form is on the Saint Mary School website, and is supplied by the school nurse upon request.

Injuries and Exemptions from Physical Education

Attendance at Physical Education (PE) is state mandated and compulsory unless a health care provider gives a written excuse for the absence. A note from a parent may excuse a student in Kindergarten through Grade 5 for two gym classes. Middle School students must have a doctor's note if missing any gym classes. If your health care provider writes a PE excuse, please indicate the first and last day of exclusion. If the last day of exclusion is not known, please indicate the next follow

up visit, and submit a new PE Excuse. Notes of exclusion should be given to your child's homeroom teacher.

Food Allergy Guidelines

The objective of these guidelines is to assist an identified allergic student in avoiding exposure to allergens and to provide for a supportive learning environment. Saint Mary School will work with parents and students with allergies in order to minimize or avoid, as much as possible, the chances of an allergic reaction with a threat to the student's well-being.

Saint Mary School is taking what it considers to be reasonable measures to guard against an allergic reaction. However, since each individual (student, parent, and visitor) must accept responsibility for compliance, the school cannot guarantee that a student will not come in contact with a product he/she may be allergic to in the course of a school day or during a school-related event, which could include but is not limited to school dances, Heritage Night, etc.

The school nurse will work with parents, students, faculty, staff and the school chef to outline a plan to address the needs related to a child's allergies. Appropriate information and precautions will be communicated accordingly by the administration and/or faculty and staff.

Students, faculty, staff, and parents are asked not to bring any peanuts, peanut products, tree nuts or tree nut products to our school or to school-sponsored excursions including athletic events. Additionally, signage is posted at school that indicates Saint Mary School promotes a peanut/nut free environment.

Severe food allergies can be life threatening. In some cases, allergic reactions occur as a result of ingestion of allergens, while others are simply the result of physical contact with the allergens. The risk of accidental exposure can be reduced if everyone in our school community works to minimize risks and provide for a safe environment for our severely food allergic students.

Smoking

Connecticut Law prohibits smoking in a school building and on school property. Smoking of any type is prohibited at all times in the Saint Mary School building, on its parking lot and playgrounds. This prohibition applies to faculty, staff, parents, and all visitors to the school

Student Safety

Security

Saint Mary School employs a full time security guard during school hours and for afterschool and evening activities where students are present. There is a video monitoring system. During the school day, classrooms are locked and a continual inspection of the building occurs. All egress doors are locked during the school day. To assure the security of the building and the safety of each child, Saint Mary School strongly enforces its policy of requiring all visitors, even parents, to report to the Main Office. To avoid interruption of the learning process, no one may enter a classroom without permission of the principal. In the event that the school suspects danger to a student or the school community, the school reserves the right to call the police.

Bus Safety Drills

Emergency bus exit drills will be conducted at school by personnel from the First Student Bus Company twice a year in accordance with CT state law.

Child Abuse Laws

Under Connecticut State Law, school officials are legally obliged to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the proper agency. In so reporting, no allegation is made against a parent or caregiver. Rather, it is a judgment by the school that the child may be presenting signs of abuse or neglect.

If a teacher or the school nurse suspects abuse or neglect, he or she must immediately confer with the principal for further discussion and to determine which person on the school staff will report the alleged abuse to the proper agency.

Confidentiality

There is a professional and moral ethic that requires all persons to safeguard all information of a privileged nature. It is imperative that such information be regarded as a sacred trust.

If there is evidence of knowledge that could impact the health or safety of any person, the teacher has the responsibility to share the information with the principal.

Under Section 423 of the Child Protective Services Act, school officials are required to report when they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child coming before

them in their professional or official capacity is an abused or maltreated child (see section on Child Abuse).

The rules that govern privileged information apply, as well, to any personal or academic information that is discovered through daily classroom instruction or other social interaction with students, parents or peers. Always the sense of the sacred should prevail.

Crisis Plan

Should a crisis require evacuation from the Saint Mary School building, students will be brought to a safe place. Parents will be notified of evacuations via their cell phone, e-mail, and/or home phone, and given the location for student pick-up.

Fire Drills / Lockdown Drills

Fire drills and lockdown drills at regular intervals are required by the law and are an important safety precaution. It is essential that everyone react appropriately, promptly, and follow the practice plans as quickly as possible. Students are not permitted to talk during drills. Teachers will direct the students.