

August 31, 2009

Dear Families,

Welcome to a new school year! May it be one filled with blessings and success for each of us. You are about to read our school handbook. Our school is guided in many ways by our handbook. Outlined in this handbook you will find explanations of the important policies and procedures currently in effect at St. Mary's Elementary School and in the Springfield Diocese.

The purpose of our handbook is twofold: to provide the Administration and Faculty with the means of serving our students and their families, and ultimately, to better fulfill our mission of providing a quality Catholic education that reveals Christ in a loving, safe faith community. Secondly, it is meant to inform, both students and their families of what is expected of them and what they can expect from the Administration, Faculty and Staff at St. Mary's Elementary School each and every day.

Please review the contents of this handbook, both by yourself and with your child/ren. It is important that we all understand our responsibilities to our school, to our parish, to the Diocese and to each other.

When you have completed this, please sign and return this entire page to school. This is our mutual assurance that we will work cooperatively. Your signature indicates that you have read this handbook, understand the policies of our school and agree to be governed by them.

As we begin this school year, I ask God's blessings on each of us. I pray that together we will be able to maintain and enhance the quality Catholic education already present at St. Mary's.

God bless,

Sr. Christine Lavoie, s.s.j.

Child/ren's names and grades _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature _____

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HISTORY

St. Mary's School was first opened as a parish school in September of 1898 and was dedicated by the second bishop of Springfield, Thomas Daniel Beaven. The children who were first enrolled were taught by five Sisters of St. Joseph.

With increased enrollment and a demand for more space, the third story of the present building was added in 1914. The 1930's and 1940's saw a tremendous growth in the school population and the classrooms were filled to capacity. While the nation witnessed the demise of so many Catholic schools during the late 1960's and early 1970's, St. Mary's continued to flourish.

As a further sign of its commitment to Catholic education, St. Mary's completed its program by adding the first kindergarten in the history of the school. In September of 1979, thirty-six five year olds became members of this first kindergarten class. St. Mary's can further boast of being the only parish in the Springfield diocese to have its own high school as well as elementary school.

For over one hundred years, the school has produced outstanding students who, in competition with much larger organizations, have brought fame and victory to St. Mary's in every field of endeavor. Graduates of the school have succeeded in industry, business, education, medicine and politics.

Though a small school in size, St. Mary's is magnanimous in spirit. The current administration and faculty seek to uphold that fine tradition and spirit which is St. Mary's, while adding to its own zest for life, fulfillment, affirmation and sensitivity.

In 2007, in the yellow house next door to our school, we welcomed our first Preschoolers. We began the program with 13 four year olds. In 2008, we will welcome 21. We continue to grow and continue to offer "an education that reveals Christ."

MISSION STATEMENT

Saint Mary's Elementary School is a Catholic PK-8 school that strives to develop the academic and spiritual potential of each child in a loving, safe, faith community.

Our goal is to provide a quality Catholic education that reveals Christ. Our students are encouraged to live a life of service for God and humankind, guided by the principles of peace and justice.

ADMISSION POLICY

Every Catholic child registered in a Catholic parish of the diocese has a right to attend a Catholic school on a space available basis. Neither race, nor national origin will prevent a

child from being accepted at St. Mary's Elementary School. Students of all faiths may be accepted into St. Mary's Elementary School on a space available basis. While we welcome all students, the principal will meet with the parents of all new students to explain our school's mission statement and to request a commitment on the part of the parents/guardians to support the philosophy of Catholic Education.

When St. Mary's Elementary School cannot accommodate all those who apply for admission, they are placed on a waiting list and taken in the order in which they apply for admission.

Diocesan Policy 5330 states that students diagnosed with learning disabilities will not be denied enrollment in a Catholic school solely on the basis of their disability.

Prior to enrollment, parents of a learning disabled student must present to the school administration accurate information concerning the student's disability including health records, individual educational plans, and all relevant physicians' reports. The information will be used to determine the ability of the school to modify the regular educational program to meet the needs of the child.

If a child enrolled in a Catholic school is diagnosed with a learning disability, the administration and teachers will work together to determine whether or not the program can be modified to meet the student's needs. If the regular educational program cannot be modified to meet the needs of the learning disabled student, the school will offer guidance to the family in locating alternative services for the student.

In order to assure that Saint Mary's Elementary School is the proper educational placement for children, all students are accepted on a three month probationary basis.

ARRIVAL

Students are not allowed in the school building until 7:50 AM, when the first bell rings; except in severe and cold weather. The students are to be dropped off in the back parking lot of the school and are expected to line up in their respective lines until the bell rings. A teacher will be on duty beginning at 7:40 AM. The sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students will enter the school with the first bell at 7:50 AM and the remainder of the students will go in the school at 8:00 AM. Junior High students are tardy if they are not in the classroom when the first class bell rings at 7:55. If you arrive after students have entered the building, parents must escort their child to the front door to gain entrance. Students are required to check in with the school secretary before proceeding to their classrooms.

A.M. Drop Off: Morning drop off takes place from 7:40 am until 8:00 am. Please enter the schoolyard by the back gate (corner of Mechanic St. and Birge Ave.) Follow the line and go all the way to the orange cones before dropping off your children. Exit by the

back gate in front of Westfield Auto. If you are staying at school for any reason, please park in one of the visitor spots or any other spot not reserved for teachers. Please be aware of congestion and drop off your student as quickly as possible. Please do not park blocking the front lot nor on Mechanic St. near the school. Note that the sooner Kindergarten parents and new parents can leave the schoolyard the better. The more parked cars there are, the harder it is for traffic to move along smoothly. So, moms and dads, say good-bye as quickly as possible and leave your children in the caring hands of the teachers. Remember that students of both schools are being dropped off at the same time.

DISMISSAL

Students are dismissed at 2:15 PM. Any student requiring early dismissal or a change in their regular dismissal must have a note written by his/her parent guardian. Parents/guardians must report to the office to pick up their children who are leaving early. All medical and dental appointments should be made outside of school hours unless it is an emergency.

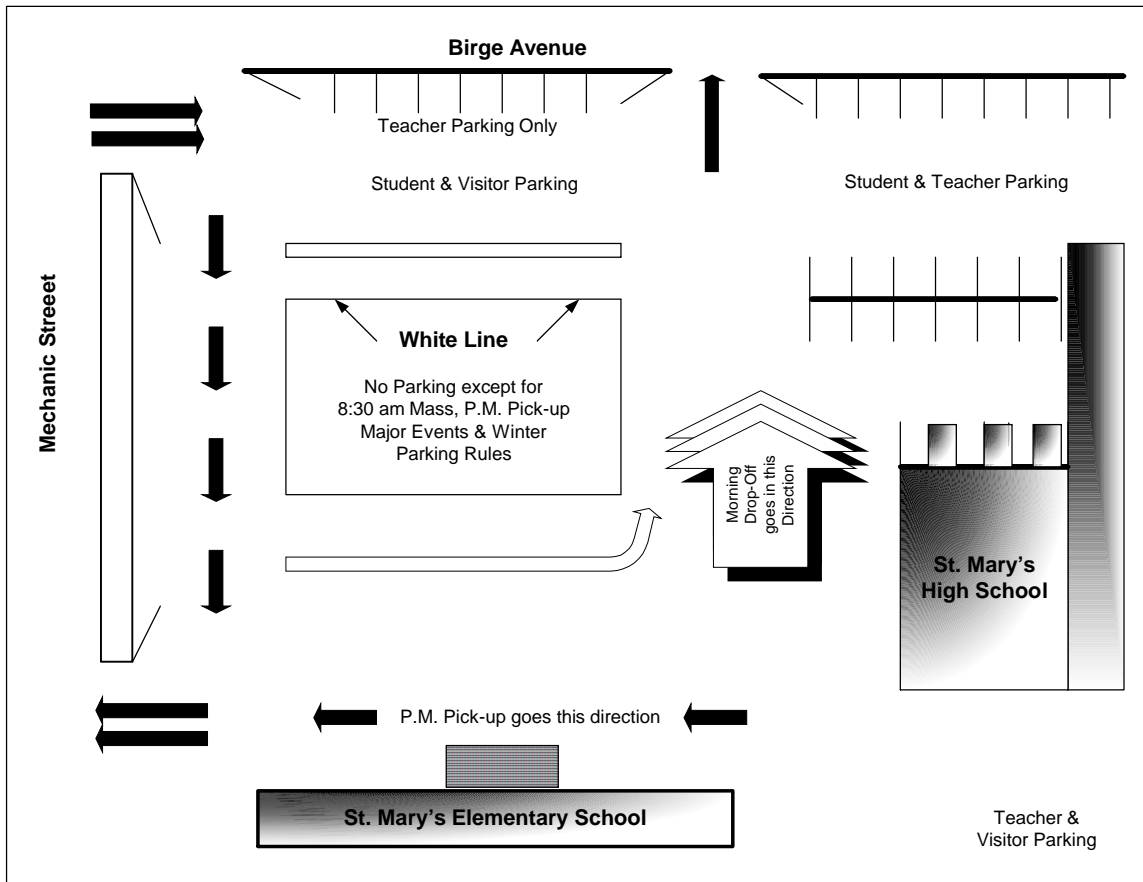
P.M. Pick-Up: Afternoon dismissal takes place at 2:15 pm for the Elementary School and 2:19 pm for the High School. Elementary School students will be released from the back stairs according to class as directed by a teacher. Parents are welcome to wait for their children beginning at 2:00 pm. Please enter the schoolyard by the back gate (corner of Mechanic St. and Birge Ave.). Line up along the yellow parking lines as close to the Elementary School building (facing the school) as possible. At dismissal the children will walk to their cars or to you if you choose to get out of your car, so you can escort them from the back stairs. It is recommended that parents of students in Grades K-3 come to the stairs to meet their children. DO NOT begin to drive away until a parking lot attendant, one of the teachers, gives you the sign. Follow instructions, stay in line, drive slowly and carefully.

A parking and driving flow chart has been included for your reference. We all need to be patient and courteous about the parking lot. Keep in mind: drive safely at all times. Thank you.

PARKING LOT GUIDELINES

Parents and Visitor Parking: We have a very limited parking lot, especially when winter comes. Always trying to give our students as large a recess space as possible, while affording the maximum number of student and faculty parking, there are only so many parking spaces in our lot. We ask all parents and visitors to respect the signs for handicapped parking and teacher parking (some of our teachers and staff come in and out of school at unusual times, please do not take a spot even after school starts). The white line indicates the area set aside for AM Mass, major functions, winter parking rules, PM pick-up, etc.). There are a few visitors parking spots reserved in our front lot. Additional

parking should be available in the main lot as well as along the street (please note the street signs; Westfield enforces its parking restrictions). PLEASE do not block our front parking lot or fire lanes when dropping off or picking up your child(ren).



SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance at St. Mary's is essential to a student's success in school. Persistent absenteeism creates a genuine hardship for a student and is regarded as a very serious problem. When a student is absent, a parent/guardian must call the school office by 8:00 AM. If the school does not hear from the parent/guardian of the absent student, the principal or school secretary will call them to check on the whereabouts of the child.

The only recognized excuses for school absences are:

1. Personal illness
2. Serious family illness
3. Death in the family

Our policies for handling absences from school include the following:

1. A dated and signed note giving the reason for the absence must be given to the teacher when the child returns to school in addition to the phone call.
2. If a child is absent due to a contagious disease, the school office should be notified.
3. If a child is to be tardy, a phone call, giving the reason, should be made to the office.
4. Early dismissal for doctor or dentist appointments requires a written note to the office on the morning of the appointment.
5. A child being dismissed early must be met by the parent in the school office.
6. If a student is absent on the day of a School Dance, or Student Council Movie Night, that student may not participate in the evening's activities.
7. We strongly discourage children being withdrawn from school for vacation during school time. Students and parents must assume responsibility for making up class/homework upon returning from the trip. Textbooks do not go on vacation. Make-up assignments will be given upon the student's return.
8. Leaving the school grounds without permission is absolutely forbidden for the protection of the child as well as the school.
9. Tardiness is discouraged. Morning directions from the teacher are missed when a child comes in after the program for the day has begun. Tardiness is a very serious problem. Any child who is tardy must report to the office before going to the classroom.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

In case of an emergency, each student is required to have on file the following information:

1. Parent(s) or guardian(s) name(s)
2. Complete and up-to-date address
3. Home phone and parent(s) or guardian(s) work phone
4. Emergency phone number of friend or relative
5. Physician's name and phone number
6. Name of the hospital the child should be taken to in an emergency
7. Medical alert information
8. Insurance information

At the beginning of each school year, parents/guardian are required to complete an Emergency Procedure Card for each child.

In the event that an emergency warrants an early school closing, families/children should be prepared with an emergency plan.

EVACUATION/CRISIS PLANS

There are plans in place for leaving the building and for remaining in the building. If we needed to walk away from the building, we would walk to Holy Trinity School and have protection in the Gym. If we needed to be bussed from the building, the city of Westfield would take us to Munger Hill School. If we need to stay in the building, in the case of a serious storm, we would all go to the cafeteria. There we have access to telephone and water. Each teacher has a walkie-talkie. One teacher on each floor is responsible for their floor's First Aid Kit. Our Emergency Cards are stored in a portable file box that is carried with us at all times. A duplicate set of Emergency Cards has been placed at the Rectory. All teachers now have cell phones, as well. As soon as we are able, the school would contact the Police (562-5411) or Fire Department (562-2329), the Rectory (562-5477), one of the local TV stations, the Westfield School Department (572-6415), and The Diocesan Office (452-0830). Parents may call us (568-2388) or any of the above numbers for more information. Countless measures are taken every day to keep the children as safe as possible.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

School closings or delays are determined by the Westfield School Department. The decision to close or delay school is made by 5:30 a.m. Parents are advised to listen to local television (Cable Channel 15) or radio stations for this information. Other information concerning closings, delays or early dismissals from WPS will be distributed to families in October or November.

SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

St. Mary's Elementary School follows the calendar for the school year established for the Westfield Public Schools. This calendar will be sent home at the end of each school year for the following year and again at the beginning of the new school year. An Academic Calendar is also sent at the beginning of the year. This calendar lists all vacations, In-service days, holidays, Holy Days, and the dates for the Iowa Test of Basic Skills given in Grades 3, 5, and 7.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS / PHONE NUMBERS

It is very important, for emergency and administrative purposes, that every student maintain an up-to-date address/phone record at the school office. Notify the school immediately if there is a change of address, home and/or work phone numbers during the school year.

HOME SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

In order to create the best educational atmosphere possible for all children, good communication is very important. Speaking to the secretary will usually solve any questions concerning schedules, lunch, bussing, attendance, and most other business questions. The secretary is also the way to the Principal and to the teachers. Teachers should be contacted at school, not at their homes, concerning a student's progress and behavior or to set up an appointment for a conference. The Principal and/or the teachers are not available at a moment's notice. Please call the school to make an appointment to speak with or meet with the Principal, faculty or staff.

Parents are not allowed to go to a classroom without the permission of the Principal or secretary. No parent will be allowed to go to a classroom until the Principal or Secretary speaks to the teacher. Parents are not to go to a classroom by the back stairs. Please go to the office first.

The monthly newsletter, interim reports, Report Cards, Principal letters and teacher letters are also sent home on a regular basis to pass on other information. The website, www.stmaryses.org, is updated regularly and contains the Handbook, newsletter, PTO notes, the menu, the calendar, Student Council news and other info.

Messages concerning early dismissal, requests for homework assignments when a student is ill, changes in how a student is to be picked up, etc., should be communicated to the school office before the school day begins or through a written note.

If parents have a concern, or a complaint about a teacher or a situation, they should speak to the teacher first before speaking to the Principal. If parents do contact the Principal first, she will, in turn speak to the teacher before attempting to solve the problem. If parents do contact the teacher first, and are not satisfied with her response or action, they should feel free to call the Principal. She will be happy to speak with them on the phone or meet with them personally. If the parents wish, there will be a meeting with the teacher, as well.

The teachers also have the right and responsibility to request a meeting with the parents. In some cases, the teacher may meet with the parents on his/her own or with the Principal, if she or the Principal feels that it would be the best way to help the student or solve the problem.

If after the above procedures take place, the parents remain unhappy or dissatisfied with the decisions or suggestions made by the school staff, they may contact, the Administrator of the school, the Pastor of St. Mary's Parish.

DISCIPLINE/SCHOOL CONDUCT

Self-discipline and self-control are the objectives of the character formation offered at St. Mary's Elementary School. To foster, encourage and develop self-discipline, general behavioral rules are enforced in all grades: Children are expected to:

1. Respect members of the faculty and staff.
2. Respect the individual student, his/her right and possessions.
3. Respect all school property, including books, materials, etc.
4. Be courteous and attentive in classes.
5. Conform to school and classroom regulations.
6. Be responsible for assignments given.

The following has been adopted at St. Mary's Elementary School:

A. Respect for and obedience to the command of love of neighbor is expected of each student at St. Mary's School. Therefore the following offenses will be disciplined by an immediate detention. Immediate detention is at the discretion of the Principal. A written detention form will be mailed home to the student's parent/guardian and is to be signed and returned the following day to the principal. Any repeat of these offenses or others will require a meeting between the teacher, principal and parent/guardian of the student.

1. Willful destruction of school property,
2. Insolence or disrespect toward staff members and/or students,
3. Willful harassment of staff members and/or students,
4. Bullying and/or aggressive behavior toward staff members and/or students.
5. Inappropriate language towards other students or adults

B. The offenses listed below will warrant a warning toward the student involved. A written warning form will be sent home to the student's parent/guardian and is to be signed and returned the following day to the teacher who issued it. An accumulation of five (5) warnings in each marking period will result in a written notice to serve detention

1. Violating the uniform code for school or gym classes.
2. Eating or chewing gum and/or candy during the school day, including bus rooms.
3. Being late for school, showing a pattern of tardiness.
4. Being unprepared for class, including homework.
5. Displaying disruptive behavior or talking during class time.

6. Treating school books, library books or other school materials carelessly.
7. Not returning library books on time
8. Other offenses may be determined by a teacher or other staff member

DETENTION

Detention will be held during lunch recess on Monday through Friday for Grade K-2. They will lose three days of Lunch Recess. Detention for Grades 3-8 will take place on Tuesday afternoons from 2:15-3:00. If the student is absent from school on the day they are to serve detention, they will be expected to serve the detention the following Tuesday. Students are expected to stay for detention on the date listed on the detention form.

SUSPENSION

Diocesan policy 5241 states that suspension is the temporary prohibition of a student's classroom attendance at school. It is used only after reasonable attempts have been made to assist the student in making adjustment to the social and academic expectations of the school environment. Sufficient reason for suspension may include, but is not limited to, student or parental conduct that disrupts the normal operation of the school, or that places at risk, the health or safety of the student, other students or school employees.

Suspension is within the jurisdiction of the school principal. The duration of the suspension, and whether the suspension will be carried out in school or at home, shall be made at the discretion of the principal. The parents/legal guardians of a student who has been suspended shall be notified promptly.

Written documentation of the suspension shall be kept in the student's file. If applicable, the pastor or president shall be informed of the suspension.

EXPULSION

Expulsion, the permanent termination of a student's enrollment, is ordinarily invoked only as a last resort. The fact that a student presents serious problems to a school is not, in itself, sufficient reason for expelling him/her. The principal will use every means available to discover the cause of the problem and may make a referral for professional counseling and/or to the Diocesan Schools Office. Written documentation will be kept in the student's file.

Respect of teachers: Parents/legal guardians are held to the same standard as students with respect to teachers. Enrollment of the child in the school implies a partnership between the school and the parents/legal guardian/child. If the partnership breaks down, parents/legal guardians can be required to withdraw the child from the school. Diocesan policy 5215 on expulsion will also be followed.

TRANSPORTATION

BICYCLES

St. Mary's assumes no responsibility for bicycles. To safeguard bikes, they should be properly parked and locked in the school bike rack. Bicycles are never to be ridden on school grounds, nor are they to be ridden off school grounds during the school day except with prior approval. When traveling to and from school, students must obey all traffic regulations. Students are also expected to wear helmets.

BUS CONDUCT

School Bus transportation is available for Westfield school children living a distance from the school. The schedule, routes, times and rules are determined by the School Department of the City of Westfield.

Student behavior on the school buses should be exemplary at all times. The following rules of behavior have been established in order to insure the safety of all students who ride the buses.

1. Use only the bus and bus stops assigned.
2. Behave properly at the bus stop.
3. Remain seated, facing front, when the bus is in motion.
4. Keep the aisles and exits clear.
5. Use quiet voices.
6. Follow the directions of the bus driver.
7. Enter and leave the bus in an orderly manner.
8. Keep head and arms inside the bus.
9. Never throw anything in the bus or out the windows.
10. Never eat or drink on the bus.

Children who break any of the above rules will receive a Bus Conduct Report issued by the driver. The Principal will make contact with the parents and speak to the student. Continual abuse of bus rules will result in denial of bus transportation.

In order for a student to ride another bus or get off at another bus stop, other than the one assigned, a parent must write a note and said note must be delivered to the school secretary before or during homeroom. The city of Westfield does not allow the changing of buses during the first three weeks of school. Only students who qualify for bussing, according to the city of Westfield, may ride the busses.

INDOOR DISMISSAL-BUS RULES

1. The teacher on duty will usually stand at or near the door of the classroom.
2. The children will be seated at all times.
3. The children will keep their jackets on in order to be prepared for the bus.
4. The Student Leaders or teacher will announce the bus number to the students.
5. There are to be no toys, no headphones, and absolutely **NO CELL PHONES** used at Bus Duty.
6. There will be no drinks, except in emergencies.
7. The children are to leave the chairs, furniture and room the way that they found it.
8. The children are to have no food or drinks at Bus Duty.
9. If there are problems, they should be reported to Sr. Christine.

HEALTH

A. Medication

Diocesan Policy 5513 states that school personnel are never permitted to administer medication except in cases of emergency when it will be administered by persons trained for this specific purpose. If a school nurse is not available, the parents/legal guardian or adult designated by them must come to school to administer medication. Parents/legal guardians are encouraged to work out a schedule whereby medication is administered before or after the school day. If medication is mandatory during school hours, the following steps must be in place:

1. Written orders from the student's physician.
2. Written request/authorization from the student's parents.
3. Medication, in a pharmacy labeled container, should be delivered to the school by a responsible adult. One week's supply should be brought to the Secretary's office each Monday.

The bottle of medicine shall be issued by a pharmacist; the label shall have:

1. The name of the student.
2. The name of the doctor.
3. The name and strength of the medication.
4. The amount of each dose.
5. The schedule for the administration of the medication.

St. Mary's Elementary School provides qualified nursing daily for our students. Our registered nurse works from 9-1 on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays in our building and Wednesdays in St. Mary's High School.

When the school receives medication for a student two forms need to be completed. They are as follows: *Medication Administration and Emergency Care Plan Form* and *Parental Consent and Medication Order Form*.

Diocesan policy 5510 states that each school shall comply with local Board of Health and Commonwealth of Massachusetts regulations regarding immunizations, communicable diseases, administering medications and physical examinations.

B. Immunizations

Diocesan policy 5510.1 is as follows: State law requires immunization against Hepatitis B, varicella (chicken pox), diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella and polio. Children must also be tested for the presence of lead. Parents are required to present certification of immunizations when they register children in school for the first time.

A student shall be admitted to school without required immunizations upon certification by a physician, who has personally examined the student, that the student's health would be endangered by any of the immunization series. Such certification shall be submitted at the beginning of each school year to the health authorities in charge of the school health program.

C. Illness/injury

In case of illness or injury, a child will be cared for temporarily by a member of the school staff. Basic first-aid treatment will be rendered. If emergency treatment is necessary, parents/guardians will be contacted. If a parent/guardian or other designated person is not available, the child will be taken to an emergency room. The faculty and staff of STMES are CPR and First Aide certified. Parents/guardians must complete an Emergency Procedure Card each year and notify the school office immediately of any change of information.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are scheduled by classroom teachers at various times throughout the school year. These trips are designed to supplement various aspects of the classroom curriculum. Parents will receive notices of field trips well in advance of the scheduled trip date, and will be asked to sign field trip permission forms. Students will be unable to attend without the signed accepted form. Most Field Trips require the help of chaperones. All Field Trip chaperones are required to sign the Diocesan Code of Conduct and have a CORI check before taking part. Field trips are privileges given to students; no student has an absolute right to a field trip. Students can be denied participation if they fail to meet academic and/or behavioral requirements.

HOMEWORK/MAKE-UP WORK

Homework is important. It is an extension of the learning that takes place in school. Homework provides practice and drill which reinforces classroom learning. Parents can help their children by providing a comfortable place for the student to work and by seeing to it that the assignments given in school are completed.

Students are given a reasonable amount of time to complete missed work upon returning to school following an illness. The policy will be as follows: If a student is out one day he/she has one day to make up the work. If a student is out two days he/she has two days to make-up the work. The same applies for three, four and five days. If the absence is longer than five days for illness, arrangements will be made on an individual basis with each teacher. Work will be sent home if a phone call is received in the office by 9A.M. on the 2nd consecutive day of being absent. **Work will not go home if the absence is only one day.**

Make-up work for children taken from school for a vacation or trip is given to the student when they return to school. The student will have **one week** from the day of their return to make up any missed work. **After that, any work not turned in will be given a failing mark.**

THE INTERNET POLICY

Internet access is available for all students at St. Mary's Elementary School. Our goal in providing this service is to increase excellence in our school by resource sharing, innovation and communication. Access to the Internet will provide students with numerous sources of information by allowing them to explore many libraries and educational settings that reach far beyond our school.

With access to computers and people all over the world also comes the availability of material that may not be considered to be of educational value. We firmly believe that the valuable information on the Internet far outweighs the possibility that users may produce material not consistent with our goals. Families are responsible for speaking with their children about responsible settings and quality information sources. For this reason we respect each family's right to decide whether or not to allow their children access.

Internet access is provided for students to conduct research and communicate with others. This access is provided to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. Students are accountable for good behavior on school computers, just as they are in the classroom. The Internet is a resource to be used with an information objective in mind. Access is a privilege, not a right. Staff will review files and communications to maintain the system, and ensure that students are using the system responsibly. Students should not expect that files stored on school computers would be private. Neither are we accountable for the accuracy and quality of Internet information.

The following are not permitted:

1. Sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures
2. Using obscene language
3. Harassing or insulting others
4. Attempting to visit commercial websites i.e. Ebay or catalog sites
5. Attempting to visit Web sites with violent or suggestive material
6. Violating copyright laws
7. Using others' passwords
8. Trespassing in others' folders and files
9. Damaging computers or computer systems
10. Creating and/or using E-mail while in the classroom, Computer Room or Library

REPORT CARD/HONOR ROLL

Reports of progress are sent home to the parent/guardian of K-2 three times a year, usually before the Christmas break, at the end of March and the end of the school year. Progress Reports are sent to Preschool families twice a year.

Reports of progress for Grades Three through Eight are sent home on a quarterly basis; approximately every ten weeks. If required, failing notices are sent home four times a year. These estimate the progress during each grading period. Both the report cards and interim notices are to be signed by the parent/guardian and returned to school.

High Honors, Honors, and Commendations include 6th, 7th and 8th graders for all marking periods, and 5th graders from the second marking period.

Diocesan policy 5320 states that the decision to promote or retain a student shall be made by the principal after consultation with the teacher and parents/legal guardians.

Retention should take place only if there has been adequate evaluation and documentation that indicate that a student would most likely profit from retention. If this is the case, the retention should occur as early as possible in a student's educational career to achieve the desired effect. If a student has repeated a grade and continues to perform below grade level, a referral shall be made to the local educational district for a full evaluation of the student's educational needs.

Ordinarily, parents will be consulted by mid-year if retention is considered probable by the principal and teacher.

LEAVING SCHOOL GROUNDS

Students are not allowed to leave the school grounds during school hours for any reason without the knowledge and consent of the principal. Permission to leave the school grounds will be granted only upon written request from the student's parent or guardian.

LIBRARY

The school library is open during schools hours. Each class has a scheduled library time each week. Books and materials borrowed should be returned in a timely manner. Students are responsible for any items lost or damaged beyond reasonable use.

There is a program for donating books to the library in memory of a friend or family member, or to honor a special occasion. Contact the school librarian or our Website for more information. New books for the library are also acquired through two Book Fairs, one in the Fall and one during Catholic Schools Week in January.

LUNCH

A hot lunch is available every day and provided by the Westfield Public Schools. Prices for lunch are set at the beginning of each year.

Free and reduced price lunches are provided for students from families who qualify. Applications are distributed to all students on the first day of school or may be obtained any time at the office.

A daily menu is distributed to the youngest child in the middle of each month for the following month. It is also posted on our Website and in the local newspapers.

A Snack Program will also be available to Grades 3-5 on Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays and every day to our Junior High students during their lunch time. The Program will be directed by our Student Council.

The hot lunch program is not required of any student. The students may bring a bag lunch to school, but they may not bring in glass containers, cans or soda of any kind. Take out lunches (e.g. Burger King) are not allowed to be brought to school. In using the cafeteria, the students are to respect the rights of others by leaving their table clean and orderly before leaving the room. Trash should be disposed of in the containers provided. Quiet conversation and good table manners are encouraged and expected.

P.T.O.

The PTO was established to provide a channel of communication between parents, teachers and the administration of St. Mary's Elementary School in order to promote the general well being of the students. The specific goals of this organization are to:

1. Raise the necessary funds to provide for additional educational opportunities for the students.
2. Provide opportunities for all concerned individuals to come in contact with ideas which will promote the educational, moral and spiritual development of the student at home and at school.
3. Direct and coordinate parental support to the school through assistance with activities, social functions, and fund-raisers.
4. Raise the consciousness of the parents regarding local, state, and federal legislation that affect Catholic schools as well as the lives of students and parents.

All parents are members of the PTO and are encouraged to actively participate. A list of meeting dates and times is given out at the beginning of the school year.

SCHOOL BOARD

The School Board, established by St. Mary's Parish with the approval of its pastor, shall have as its primary concern the ministry of Catholic School education: the spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional and social development of the students. The Board, operating under the guidance of the School Board of the Diocese of Springfield and in conformity with the Diocesan School Office, shall concern itself with policy matters pertaining to the general excellence of education at St. Mary's Elementary School.

PLAYGROUND RULES

Students are to remain on the blacktop area behind the elementary school or in the Playscape during recess/lunch period. Different areas may be off-limits depending on the weather and teacher discretion. Dangerous activities, misuse or destruction of playground equipment will not be permitted. Teachers are on duty during recess/lunch times.

Schedule for use of the playscape will be on a rotating basis. The number of students allowed on the playscape at one time will be determined by the administrator, faculty and staff. Rules established by the faculty and students are as follows:

Playground Rules

1. Treat others with kindness
2. Stay in fenced in areas
3. Treat others with respect: no pushing, no shoving, no bullying, no hitting, no cutting in line
4. Use kind and/or respectful language
5. Take turns and share equipment

Playscape Rules

1. Never more than 2 on the tire swing at a time
2. Never more than 2 on the jumper at a time
3. Go down the slides, never up
4. Wait for others to get off the slides before going down
5. No balls, toys or food in the playscape
6. No standing on the benches or picnic tables
7. No throwing wood chips
8. No playing tag in the playscape area
9. Put litter in trash containers

Our best guide for all of our manners is KINDNESS-treating others as you want to be treated and as Christ would treat them.

TELEPHONE

The office telephone is a business phone and is to be used by students only in an emergency. Students are not allowed to use the phone to make personal social arrangements. Students may not use the phone in the Library or Nurse's Office or Guidance Office.

Cell phones are never to be used during the school day by students. Cell phones are allowed in school, however must be turned off and remain in backpacks or lockers during the day. If a teacher sees a student using or playing with a cell phone on school property, it will be taken away and brought to the office. Parents will then need to contact the Principal to get the cell phone back. The school is not responsible for lost cell phones or any other equipment such as IPODs, headphones, games, etc..

VISITORS

ALL visitors are required to report to the school office upon entering the building, sign in and pick up their visitors' pass. The Diocese of Springfield now requires all adults who

interact with Saint Mary's Elementary School students, in any way i.e. chaperones, library aides etc., to have a CORI check. CORI checks are done with the School Secretary.

UNIFORMS

Students at St. Mary's Elementary School must be well groomed at all times. Hair should be neat, clean and combed. Boys' hair should not go past the shirt collar or be longer than the earlobe. No one's hair, girls or boys, should ever be in the eyes. Any unnatural coloring of the hair or spiking of the hair is unacceptable. Girls may wear headbands, but kerchiefs, bandanas and/or long scarves may not be worn by boys or girls. Jewelry is not part of a uniform, although girls may wear small earrings and girls and boys may wear watches or rings. Boys at STMES are not allowed to wear earrings. Bracelets and necklaces are not part of our uniform and should not be worn to school. The only exception to this is a crucifix, cross or religious medal. Students must be aware that the classroom and the school are formal gatherings and not leisure and/or recreational time.

A. REGULAR UNIFORMS

The principal may exclude any student when, in his/her judgment, the apparel is inappropriate.

The plaid uniform worn by the girls must be purchased from Flynn and O'Hara Uniforms. The other items may also be purchased through them, or may be bought in local stores or at Landsend.com.

1. Uniforms (skirts and jumpers) Girls
 - a. Plaid Jumpers for grades K-5
 - b. Plaid Skirts or Kilts for grades 5-8
 - c. Skirts navy blue or khaki- no denim
 - d. Skorts navy blue or khaki-no denim

2. Slacks - Girls and Boys
 - a. Dress slacks in navy blue, gray or khaki; no jeans or khakis that look like jeans i.e. pants having copper or metal snaps, no multiple pockets. No baggy, no low riding pants including hip hugger pants
 - b. Polyester, cotton or corduroy is acceptable - **no denim.**
 - c. If belts are worn, they should be brown, black, navy or tan.

3. Shorts - Girls and Boys
 - a. Dress walking shorts in navy blue, gray or khaki, worn no more than 2" above the knee.

- b. Cotton twill or polyester/cotton is acceptable – **no nylon or denim or khakis that have copper or metal snaps.**
- c. If belts are worn, they should be brown, black, navy or tan.
- d. Shorts may be worn from the first day of school to October 31st and from the Monday after spring vacation to the last day of school.

4. Shirts – Boys

- a. White, light blue, navy blue, or light yellow dress shirts, **or oxford shirts with collar**, long or short sleeved.
- b. White, light blue, navy blue, or light yellow knit polo shirts, **with collar.**
- c. White, light blue, navy blue or light yellow turtle neck.
- d. NO oversized shirts permitted
- e. Shirts must be tucked in.

5. Shirts/Blouses – Girls

- a. White, light blue, navy blue or light yellow blouses **with collar**, long or short sleeve.
- b. White, light blue, navy blue or light yellow knit polo shirts, **with collar.**
- c. White, light blue, navy blue or light yellow turtle neck.
- d. NO oversized shirts permitted.
- e. Shirts/blouses must be tucked in.

6. Sweaters and Sweatshirts - Boys and Girls

- a. White or navy blue pullover or cardigan sweater (no logos).
- b. School sweatshirts purchased through the PTO.
- c. Sweatshirts without hoods - Navy blue, gray or dark green (no logos)
- d. NO oversized sweatshirts permitted.

Tights must be worn with skorts, and skirts between November 1st and the Friday that begins Spring Vacation. Socks must be worn at all times and **no open toed sandals are allowed. No open backed shoes are allowed.** Tights or socks must be white or navy blue. The Parent/Guardian of any child not in uniform will be called to bring in the appropriate clothing.

B. GYM UNIFORMS

Students in grades K-2 will wear their gym clothes to school on the day of their gym class. From November 1st through the Thursday before Spring Vacation, they must wear long pants and a long sleeved sweatshirt. A T-shirt may be worn under the sweatshirt. No jeans are allowed. From the first day of school to October 31st and from the Monday after Spring Vacation to the last day of school, they may wear shorts to school for gym class.

Students in grades 3-8 will bring their gym clothes to school on their gym day. They will be allowed time to change during class. These students are to come prepared for indoor or outdoor activities.

Acceptable clothing is listed below.

1. Shorts of an appropriate length, loose fitting not baggy and no denim allowed.
2. T-Shirt with no offensive pictures or words
3. Sweat pants or stretch pants (same as shorts)
4. Sweatshirt with no offensive pictures or words.
5. Sneakers: tied or Velcro no step- ins
6. Socks
7. Shirts must be long enough to be tucked in, when necessary.

A warning will be issued for any student not having appropriate clothing for gym or for not having a school uniform to change back to before returning to class.

Students having physical education class the first period of the day may wear their gym clothes to school. These students must also bring a uniform to change back into for regular education classes.

Jewelry and Gym The students may not wear dangling earrings, or watches, during gym period. If they wear these to school they must leave them in the classroom or take them off when changing clothes. The teachers will not be responsible for the jewelry.

TUITION

The tuition at St. Mary's Elementary School is set by the pastor and School Board during the school year for the following year. A letter will be sent home at that time informing parents/guardians of the tuition. Each student must send back an intent form to the school office by the deadline. The parents/guardians will have a choice of how to make their tuition payments to the school. The school will not be responsible for loss of placement if forms are not returned in a timely manner.

Payments may be made in one of three ways: one payment; two payments by Aug. 15th and Jan. 15th; or ten monthly payments made directly to the school.

INSURANCE

Each child is required to have some type of insurance coverage. St. Mary's sponsors a student accident insurance plan and each parent/guardian must declare in writing if they want their children to be covered by that insurance at the beginning of each school year when the insurance forms are issued.

Diocesan policy 5530 states that all schools should offer accident insurance to students. Parents/legal guardians preferring another insurance arrangement should explicitly indicate in writing that the family has adequate coverage and that the school will be held blameless in case of an accident in school or on school property. Written documentation of a parent's/legal guardian's group insurance plan is kept on file on the Emergency Card filled out at the beginning of the year.

ADDITIONAL DIOCESAN POLICIES

School Violence Policy 5615

The safety of all persons must be the concern in each Catholic school of the Springfield Diocese. Therefore, the principal should hold school sponsored in-service on safety issues. He/she should also ask students, faculty and staff to report every incident of threatened violence and any reference made to guns or weapons to the school administration whether or not the reporter believes the threat to be real.

The principal should conduct an investigation as to the circumstances and credibility of the report and should contact the Superintendent of the Diocesan schools to communicate the information.

If, in the opinion of the principal, a student did threaten to carry out an act of physical violence or to kill or seriously injure someone, the student's parent/legal guardian will be informed. If the threat is to harm a specific, identifiable individual, that person or the person's parent/legal guardian shall be notified of the threat. The student who made the threat will then be suspended from school and his/her readmission to the school will be contingent on a report from a mental health professional to the school with the following information:

- The student does not appear to have the intent and ability to carry out the threat
- The student does not have a history of violence

- The mental health professional has no reasonable basis to believe that there is a clear and present danger the student will attempt to kill or inflict serious bodily injury on a victim or victims.
- At the discretion of the principal, the student may be readmitted. The principal may require the student receive counseling.

Weapons Policy 5615.1

Each student in a Catholic school has the right to learn in an environment that is safe and free from fear. Therefore, weapons or any object that can be classified as a weapon, including, but not limited to, guns, knives, bats, sticks, brass knuckles, pipes, etc., are prohibited and banned from school premises and from all school-related functions. This ban includes travel to and from school. A student who violates this policy may be subject to suspension and/or expulsion according to Diocesan policies 5214 and 5215.

In compliance with Massachusetts law, the principal will report any incident involving a student's possession or use of a dangerous weapon on school premises to the local police.

The Diocesan Superintendent of Schools should also be notified.

Assault/Bullying/Harrassment Policy 5615.2

All students in a Catholic school have the right to learn in a safe environment. Therefore assault, bullying and harassment, whether verbal or physical, will not be tolerated. Depending on the severity or repetitive nature of the offense, the principal will follow Diocesan School Policies 5214 and 5215 concerning suspension and expulsion.

The Diocesan Superintendent of School should also be notified.

Search Policy 5616

The school administration, in the exercise of the school's duty to enforce school discipline and protect the health and safety of the student body, has the right and duty to inspect and search school property and a student's person or possessions if there is a high degree of suspicion that drugs, weapons, other dangerous, illegal or prohibited items or stolen good are likely to be found.

Ordinarily, inspection of personal property, e.g., pockets, pocket books, book bags, is conducted with the student's knowledge, unless there is a compelling reason to believe that to delay the search would endanger the health and well being of the student, other students or school staff.

A witness should accompany the principal or other school official during a search of school property, and be present when it is necessary to search a student's person or property. It is recommended that the witness be an adult of the same sex as the student being searched. Strip searches by school personnel are never permitted.

Electronic Devices Policy 5712

Electronic devices, including but not limited to pagers, laser pointers and cell phones should not be used or be in the possession of students while in school unless authorized or approved by the building principal

Smoking Policy 5713

In order to safeguard health and comfort and comply with Massachusetts law banning smoking in the workplace, the schools of the Diocese of Springfield are designated "smoke free." Students are not permitted to smoke in school buildings or on school grounds. The school administration will take appropriate disciplinary action for any person abusing Policy 5713.

Possession of Drugs or Alcohol Policy 5714

No student shall possess, use, distribute or be under the influence of drugs or alcoholic beverages while on school premises, on school or chartered buses or at any school-sponsored activity. Students who violate this policy may be disciplined according to Policies 5214 and 5215.

Sexual Harassment Policy 5715

All students of the schools of the Diocese of Springfield have the right to be treated with dignity and respect and to learn in an environment free from sexual harassment. Any violation of this right will not be tolerated, and such conduct may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from school. Incidences of sexual harassment should be reported to the school administration.

Discrimination Policy 5716

In keeping with Diocesan policy and goals, students of the school of the Diocese of Springfield are expected to treat each other with respect and to refrain from discrimination on the basis of race, color, religious creed, national origin or sex.

Vandalism Policy 5717

Catholic school students are expected to have respect for the property of others and to assume responsibility for the care of school property. Students who vandalize school property or the property of others are responsible to pay for the damage and will be disciplined.

Each school should develop a policy on vandalism at the local level and publish the policy in the student handbook.

Contact with Law Enforcement Officials Policy 5720

Schools should cooperate fully with local and state police departments keeping in mind the rights of students and parents/legal guardians.

Students under the age of eighteen may not be questioned in school by law enforcement officials without the consent of the parents/guardians, especially when there is likelihood that the questioning concerns possible involvement in a crime.

In situations where the police seek to question a student in school, the procedure shall be:

- The parents/legal guardians should be notified of the request before questioning begins.
- If the parent/legal guardian gives consent, the student should be told the reasons for questioning and informed of his/her legal rights.
- If the parent/legal guardian refuses to give consent, the police may not question the student in school.
- The principal or a designated representative should be present during any questioning period.
- The police may not take student from school without a warrant.

SCHOOL/PRINCIPAL'S RIGHT TO AMEND

Though this handbook was created with great forethought and care, situations and/or issues will arise that were not anticipated or that for some unanticipated reason our handbook does not delineate. The Principal and/or Administrator is the final recourse for the settling of these instances. The Principal and/or Administrator also reserve the right to amend this handbook for just cause. Parents will be given prompt notification if changes are made.