

WELCOME TO SAINT MARY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

2021.2022



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FORWARD

The purpose of this handbook is to give all students and parents a general overview of rules and activities. This handbook does not claim to contain every rule and policy of the school. Further, such rules or policies are subject to change during the school year with sufficient notice to all parents and students.

Saint Mary Catholic School is YOUR school.
We welcome your input, comments, and concerns.

*Saint Mary Catholic School provides a safe and loving Catholic learning environment
where faith and knowledge meet.*

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Mission Statement

Saint Mary Catholic School provides a safe and loving Catholic learning environment where faith and knowledge meet.

We believe...

- † in promoting the teachings of Jesus Christ and the mission of the Catholic church.
- † in serving the students of this community, in partnership with their parents, and in nurturing them to become life-long learners who serve God and one another.
- † in developing students into confident young adults fully equipped to take their place as future Christian leaders in our communities.
- † in providing high quality academics intertwined with our Catholic faith and beliefs.
- † in designing activities to develop the whole student: body, mind, and heart.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is very important to us. If you ever have any questions or concerns, please contact one of us. We have an open door policy and want to work with you to solve problems. Many problems or concerns occur because of miscommunication or misunderstandings. We are all here because of our love for God and His children.

HOME-SCHOOL CORRESPONDENCE

At Saint Mary Catholic School, communication between parents and school is important to the academic success of students. Encourage your children to bring home all correspondence from school. In addition, please reply quickly to letters requiring a signature or a response. Each week, a parent newsletter will be sent home featuring up-to-date information regarding school information (usually on Thursday via email). Parent-teacher conferences for preschool through 5th grade are scheduled twice a year, and report cards are given at the end of each quarter. Each child is evaluated on an individual basis according to his/her own ability. Report cards are sent home with the students.

WHEN YOU NEED ANSWERS

Please adhere to the following chain of command:

1. To seek an answer to a question concerning a school situation (whether it is from the bus stop, playground, bus, or classroom) please begin with the primary supervisor.
2. If you are not satisfied with his/her answer, please approach the principal next.
3. If you are not satisfied with the answer, please contact the Pastor.

EMAIL and WEBSITE

Visit our website, www.saintmarypawpaw.org, for upcoming events, school calendar, email addresses, pictures, etc.

Most faculty and staff members have school email addresses. You can find them on our website or by using the person's first initial and last name followed by @saintmarypawpaw.org.

FACEBOOK

Find our Facebook page using @stmarypawpaw.

ACCREDITATION

Saint Mary Catholic School has received accreditation status by successfully completing the accreditation process of the Michigan Nonpublic School Association. The accreditation cycle is five years. Every fifth year schools must reapply for accreditation and complete the self-study report, as well as receive a site visit by the accreditation team. Our accreditation is due for renewal in the spring of 2025.

ADMISSION POLICY

Saint Mary Catholic School does not discriminate based on sex, race, color, or national origin. Saint Mary Catholic School gives preference to students enrolled the previous year and whose accounts are current, and to parishioners of Saint Mary Church and other Catholic churches.

Admission Policy for Students with Special Needs

Saint Mary Catholic School recognizes the beauty and potential inherent within each student. In an effort to foster continued growth, the school embraces the challenge to provide assistance and program to serve students with special needs according to the resources available within/to the school. Parents are an integral part of the process.

Saint Mary Catholic School provides for a normal range of learning differences and serves students whose instructional program requires minimal adjustments. The system does not offer direct special education instruction. However, it does provide administrative services to coordinate with resident public schools for the screening and diagnostic evaluation of students and the development of an Adjusted Education Plan (AEP). Direct special education services may be provided by the public school district in which the child resides.

Adjustments that allow a student access to the general curriculum, but do not fundamentally lower the standard or expectation of the course, are available to students on an individual basis determined by learning needs and a documented disability. Adjustments do release students from demonstrating required knowledge. Rather, adjustments provide students with disabilities the support they need to demonstrate what they know and understand.

Saint Mary Catholic School strives to address and make appropriate adjustments for special learning needs, but in some cases, it may not be feasible. If the school does not have the resources to address the need that has emerged, if an appropriate education requires more than minimal adjustments, if the student seriously disrupts other students' learning, or if the student puts the safety of staff or other students at risk, enrollment may be terminated. In such cases, Saint Mary Catholic School will attempt to assist families in finding appropriate alternatives.

St. Mary does not deny admission based on race, color, gender, or place of national origin.

Priority of Acceptance

Priority is as follows:

1. Students enrolled the previous year and whose accounts are current
2. Contributing parishioners' children
3. Open enrollment for those interested in attending Saint Mary Catholic School

When classes are filled, a waiting list will be compiled on a first come, first served basis.

ASBESTOS REQUIREMENTS

An asbestos management plan is on file in the principal's office showing or describing the following information:

- Areas of testing and location of any friable materials
- Results of tests past and present
- Results of air sampling if done or to be done
- Recommendations of consultants
- Asbestos projects completed and final test clearance, etc.

It is important to know that not all Asbestos Containing Building Materials needs to be removed from our school building. If identified, all asbestos protocols will be followed to ensure that the material is maintained in good conditions and that appropriate precautions are followed.

Villa Environmental Consultants inspected Saint Mary Catholic School for asbestos according to EPA and Diocesan Guidelines in 2018. All areas are examined semi-annually and are maintained according to EPA regulations. A copy of the Asbestos Management Plan and Report are available in the school office.

BUILDING SECURITY

Saint Mary Parish and School staff are concerned about the safety of our students. An intercom system is in place at the main and preschool entrances. (The Parish office has its own intercom system.) Parents or students entering the building must use the intercom system. You will be "buzzed in" to enter the building after the door release is unlocked.

All doors are locked except during the time of morning arrival and afternoon dismissal (8:20-8:35 am and 3:20-3:35 pm).

CHILD PROTECTION ACT

Under the Michigan Child Protection Act, school employees are mandated to report suspected child abuse to Child Protective Services. Child abuse is defined in the act as "harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare by a parent, legal guardian, or any other person responsible for the child's health or welfare, or by a teacher or teacher's aide, which occurs through non-accidental physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or maltreatment."

With or without parental notification, a social worker representing the state may interview students. Saint Mary Catholic School will allow the interview usually with the principal or classroom teacher present, although the law allows for a private interview to be conducted without school officials present. Any follow-up to the interview or investigation is in the hands of Child Protective Services.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN

A Crisis Management Plan is available in the school office. A copy of the plan can also be found in each classroom.

DIOCESAN POLICIES

The Diocese of Kalamazoo has published a policy manual by which all diocesan schools are bound. These policies override any local or internal policies which a school may develop. Saint Mary Catholic School strictly adheres to all diocesan policies in regard to the operation of its school. A copy of the diocesan policy manual is available in the school office for parental review.

DISCIPLINE

The goal of discipline is to assist students in achieving self-discipline, respect for self and others, and to learn their responsibility toward neighbor, church, and state. Students are expected to be responsible, respectful, and attentive during school and at all school functions. Parents are ultimately held responsible for the child's behavior and will be kept informed of serious discipline problems. Parents are encouraged to impose appropriate disciplinary action at home, if necessary. Teachers are responsible for developing a written set of rules and teaching them to their students. Respect for the dignity of students prohibits the use of corporal punishment, berating statements, or degrading actions as a means of seeking adherence to the rules and regulations of the school.

All members of Saint Mary Catholic School community have a right to a healthy and safe environment, respectful treatment of others, freedom from harassment and abuse, and to a positive learning environment. In support of these rights, the following behaviors are expected of Saint Mary Catholic School students at all times.

1. Respect for adults
 - a. Refer to adults by their last name prefaced by the appropriate title.
 - b. Listen and answer respectfully.
 - c. Follow directions promptly.
 - d. Participate to the best of your ability at all times in the classroom, church, school assemblies, field trips or on the playground.
2. Respect for other students
 - a. Keep hands to yourself; do not shove or hit others.
 - b. Speak courteously and without interrupting one another.
 - c. Help each other and be kind to one another.
 - d. NEVER use foul language.
3. Respect for property
 - a. Be responsible for any books, desk, bus seat, or equipment assigned to you. The cost of school property is the responsibility of the student and his or her family.
 - b. Use restrooms, classrooms, hallways, and playground with care.

When these behaviors are not followed, one of the appropriate disciplines will be occur:

1st Referral:

1. Loss of recess time (possible written assignment and/or service project)
2. Temporary removal from interaction with other students with restriction of activity.

2nd Referral:

1. Same as the first plus a phone call to the parent by the student outlining his/her problem.
2. After School Detention time may be assigned.

3rd Referral:

1. Removal from interaction with other students plus extra assignments for a 1-3 day period for a building or playground offense. Suspension from the bus for 1-3 days for bus or bus stop problems.
2. A conference with the parents, student, appropriate supervisor, and the principal is required for reinstatement to the bus or classroom.

SEVERE, HARMFUL, OR DANGEROUS VIOLATIONS WILL NOT BE GIVEN THE THREE-REFERRAL PROCESS.

Detention

Detention will be assigned for flagrant violations of the school's discipline code. Parents will be notified and are expected to provide transportation home.

Suspension

Suspension will be left to the discretion of the principal and done in alignment with diocesan policy. All infractions will be documented, and the parents will be notified when suspension takes place. Students may be given a suspension of 1-5 days. Suspension may take place in school, with the student removed from other students, or out-of-school, at the discretion of the principal.

Expulsion

In the event of a serious infraction where expulsion is necessary, there will be a hearing before an executive session of the School Board involving the principal, pastor, appropriate supervisor, and parent. A student may be expelled for the following reasons:

1. Possession of drugs, alcohol, knives, or firearms.
2. The student's presence in school would seriously hamper the welfare of other students, faculty, or staff.
3. The school determines that it can no longer serve the needs of the student.

DRESS CODE (PRESCHOOL THROUGH 5TH GRADE)

Saint Mary Catholic School has implemented a dress code that helps simplify the matter of student attire and creates an atmosphere that is conducive to learning – free from distractions that clothing choices can create. The dress code is viewed as a sign of belonging to Saint Mary Catholic School and is an expression of pride in our community. Cooperation with the dress code encourages responsibility and self-discipline on the part of the students.

Tops

- White, light blue, hunter green, or navy blue polo shirts or button down dress shirts **with collar**
- White, hunter green, or navy blue sweaters--long sleeve, cardigan, crew neck, or V-neck--may be worn over a collared shirt.
- Navy blue, non-hooded, crewneck sweatshirts or zip fleeces may be worn over a collared shirt.
- Saint Mary Catholic School embroidered fleece jackets purchased through the school may be worn over a collared shirt. The Saint Mary Catholic School name can be embroidered on all tops through Lands' End. No other emblems or logos are allowed. **Lands' End School Code - 900158247**

Bottoms

- Khaki or navy blue pants; woven cotton or corduroy. Classic style only with natural waist. No

denim, cargo pockets, athletic, nylon, flares, skinny or stretchy pants.

- Khaki or navy blue shorts (from April 15 to October 15) – knee length
- Plaid skirts and jumpers (knee length) may be found in the Lands' End catalog or at landsend.com. For consistency purposes, please ensure that all plaid items are purchased from the specified vendor, Lands' End. **Lands' End School Code - 900158247**
- Skorts (skirt in front, shorts in back) – PRESCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN ONLY

Accessories

- Belts - Navy, brown, or black, plain, no wider than 1 ½ inches, plain buckle (not mandatory)
- Socks – **White or navy**
- Tights and Leggings – **white or navy only; must extend to ankle; must be worn with skirts or jumpers between October 15 and April 15 (No bare legs during the colder months.)**
- Shoes – **dress shoes or dress boots must be navy, brown or black.** Athletic shoes may be worn—**no light up or roller shoes are allowed; No cowboy boots are allowed.**
- Sandals with backs may be worn with socks between **April 15 and October 15.**
- **Accessories including headbands, hair bows or flowers, and scarves must be either white or blue.**

General Notes

- **Clothing should be clean and free of all rips, holes and tears.**
- **Non-uniform sweatshirts, jackets, fleeces or sweaters may not be worn in classrooms.** Please ensure that students have ample cold-weather, uniform-compliant layers for indoor use during the winter.
- Clean, usable clothing may be donated to the uniform closet, and items in the uniform closet may be taken for use at no charge.

One day of every month will be a designated Uniform Holiday, unless announced differently. (Dates are subject to change; please watch the weekly parent letter for announcements.) Non-uniform attire must be clean, tear-free, and modest in nature. Please avoid spaghetti straps, short skirts or dresses, and after first grade, avoid leggings and skinny jeans.

DRUG FREE SCHOOL ZONE

Saint Mary Catholic School takes a firm stand against illegal substance abuse in an effort to provide a school environment which promotes educational goals, and which is free of drug abuse or trafficking activities. Age appropriate lessons are given for all student regarding substance abuse prevention, clearly teaching that unlawful possession and use of such substance is wrong and harmful. Students, parents, and employees of Saint Mary Catholic School are equally responsible to insure acceptable standards of conduct. Compliance with these standards of conduct is mandatory, and any person in violation of them is subject to disciplinary sanctions as follows:

1. Parents will be notified upon discovery of students involved in selling or using drugs, tobacco, or alcohol or other controlled substances, on school property or at school-related activities.
2. A conference will be promptly held with both students and parents together. A referral to special counseling agencies will take place in conjunction with the support of guidance personnel.
3. In the event that the student fails to cooperate with the rehabilitation program, or relapses into

unacceptable conduct, the school will proceed with expulsion, and if necessary, referral to law authorities.

EARLY DISMISSAL

Once the school day has begun, no student may leave without authorization from the office. When an emergency requires an early dismissal, it is necessary to send a note or call the office stating the reason why you will be picking up your child. Children will not be dismissed until signed out by a parent in the office. Please report to the office to pick up your child. **Do not go directly to the classroom.** If the child is returning to school that day, then a parent must sign the child back in to school in the office.

EMERGENCY DRILLS (FIRE/TORNADO/LOCKDOWN)

Drills are held periodically throughout the school year for the protection of all concerned. When the alarm sounds for a fire drill, staff and students will immediately proceed to designated exits. In the case of a tornado drill or lockdown drill, a staff member will announce it over the PA, and staff and students will immediately proceed to designated, protected areas. Copies of all drill data is posted on the school website.

EMERGENCY FORMS

The school office keeps Emergency Forms on file in case a child becomes ill while at school. **Parents need to keep this information current.**

EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE FOR STUDENTS

Children are NOT PERMITTED to keep any medicine in school including cough syrup, pain relievers, cough drops, etc. All medicine must be kept in the school office and ONLY AUTHORIZED school personnel can administer such medicine if/when they have written permission stating time and dosage from a healthcare professional.

FAMILY EDUCATION RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (BUCKLEY AMENDMENT)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (the Buckley Amendment) is a federal law that gives all parents the right to see, correct and control access to student records. This includes attendance reports, health files, test results, grade reports, discipline records, and many other types of information gathered about each student and filed from year to year. Parents do NOT have to be shown a teacher's personal notes and personnel records of school employees. The school has 45 days to grant your request to see school records.

FIELD TRIPS

When classroom teachers plan field trips away from school, a permission slip will be sent home, which must be signed and returned to the school. Each trip requires its own slip. **INSURANCE LIABILITY REQUIRES WRITTEN PERMISSION - PHONE CALLS ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE.** Students who do not return signed permission slips will not be allowed on field trips. Regular dress code will be followed for all field trips unless stated otherwise.

Parents who volunteer to drive on a field trip are required to fill out a driver information sheet each new school year. Seatbelts & child safety seats are required for each passenger. Any adult with supervision of children must be Virtus trained (refer to the Protecting God's Children section of this handbook).

FIRST AID

First aid may be given under the Good Samaritan Law whether trained or untrained in first aid; however, most staff members are certified in First Aid & CPR.

In case of an emergency, the parent will be notified immediately. The severity of injury in which parents would be contacted would consist of broken bones, bee stings, head injuries, suspected sprains, severe lacerations, allergic reactions (such as asthma attacks). Parents are also notified in cases where we suspect an infectious disease, such as pink eye, head lice, chicken pox, etc.

Accident reports are filed and parents are notified for anything other than a skinned knee, slivers, or slight abrasions. Each child has on file a current up-to-date emergency form giving school authority permission to have child transported or to take the child to hospital for treatment until parent or family doctor is notified.

GUM CHEWING

Gum chewing is generally not allowed at school, on school premises, or on the school bus unless special permission is given from the classroom teacher.

HARASSMENT

Saint Mary Catholic School students are directed not to be a party to any form of racial, ethnic, sexual, or emotional harassment. Encounters of this nature should be immediately brought to the attention of the administration.

HOMEWORK POLICY

Homework is an extension of classroom learning and designed to reinforce and practice concepts taught during class time. It is difficult to give an exact amount of time that a child should spend doing homework as children have differences in learning styles and pacing. Homework can vary the time needed to complete an assignment. The approximate time spent on homework should be 10 minutes per grade beginning in first grade. If it takes longer, contact your child's teacher. In addition, the time needed at home could include work that was not completed during regular classroom time.

ILLNESS

Help your child to practice good health habits, which we try to reinforce at school. **Do not send your children to school if they are sick or have had a fever in the past 24 hours.**

If your child contracts a COMMUNICABLE DISEASE, do not permit them to return to school until your physician gives you permission to do so. Cases of diphtheria, hepatitis, rheumatic fever, rubella, measles, and other diseases should be reported to the school immediately so that the County Health Department can take the necessary steps to prevent an epidemic. (All communicable diseases must be reported to the

school office at the time they are diagnosed.) Please notify the school if your child suffers from asthma, epilepsy, allergies, or other health problems, so that proper procedures may be followed with the least possible trauma for the child or others.

Illness Prior to School

Please call the school office at 657-3750 by 9:00 AM of EACH DAY of your child/ren's illness to notify us of their absence. If no call is made to the office, then it will be considered an unexcused absence. Attendance is critical to a successful school year. Children who have missed three days of school or more due to illness may be required to have a note signed by the family physician.

Illness During School

Parents will be notified if a child becomes ill while at school. Parents must provide transportation home for such an illness. Please keep the office informed of two alternate names and phone numbers of responsible people who can be called, if a parent cannot be reached.

Returning to School

Please do not send a child back to school until he/she is fever free (without medication) AND vomit free for 24 hours. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain any missed work from his/her teacher.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Michigan School Law requires that each child be immunized or that parents have had a mandatory meeting with the Van Buren County Health Department. Proof of immunization is required for all students entering Saint Mary for the first time.

KIDS' CLUB (BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL CARE)

Saint Mary Catholic School's Kid's Club is a before and after school program designed to meet the needs of working parents. A safe and caring environment with adult supervision, planned activities, snack, homework, and outdoor/gym time is provided. Kids' Club is an extension of the home, family, and school. If no one answers the door bell, we are most likely outside on the playground.

Kid's Club hours are 7:00 am to 8:15 and 3:25 to 6:00 pm Fees are \$4.50 per hour, pro-rated by the minute. Bills are sent on your family's tuition statement and due on the 15th of each month. The clock on the wall in the Kids' Club room is the sole determiner of time for this program. Registration forms are available on the school website under parent resources.

LOCAL CONSULTATIVE ADVISORY BOARD – "LCAB" (SCHOOL BOARD)

Saint Mary Catholic School LCAB meets monthly. Meeting dates will be published in the weekly newsletters. The LCAB is a consultative board to the principal and the pastor. The LCAB is composed of parents and Saint Mary parish members.

LOST AND FOUND

There is a lost and found box in the office for unmarked items. All marked items are returned to the child.

Please help us by marking/writing your child's name on all items brought to school. Unclaimed items are given to charity at the end of the each school year.

LUNCHES

School lunches are provided by the food service of Paw Paw Public Schools. Menus are posted monthly on the school website. Every effort is made to comply with nutrition requirements of the USDA for healthy and nutritious lunches.

At the beginning of each school year, a free/reduced lunch form will be sent home. It is **important** that you **fill it out**, whether you intend to utilize the lunch program or believe you do not qualify for free/reduced lunches. The amount of money that we receive from the public school for reading and math intervention is dependent upon these forms, as well as the possibility for your children to receive PPPS cold lunches at a free or reduced amount.

Note: Please refrain from bringing fast food lunches to the school. As innocent as it may seem, it causes hard feelings in the classroom. Instead, consider signing your child out and taking him or her off campus for a special lunch!

MEDICATION DISPENSING

All medications, prescription or over-the-counter, required by a student should be administered by a parent at home or by the student's medical provider. Parents should use every effort to have medication times set for time periods other than school hours.

When it is not possible, two designated staff members may assist the administration of medication during school hours, subject to the following rules:

- **Physician's Note.** A note from the student's physician (including a dentist) relating to each medication must be on file. The note must state that a valid health reason exists that makes administration of such medication necessary during school hours or when the student is under the supervision of school officials. The physician's note must indicate the student's name, the name of the medication, the dosage, the time and day or dates to be given, possible side effects, special care needed for the medication (e.g. refrigeration), the termination date for administering the medication, and the physician's signature. This request is in effect for the school year in which the note is issued.
- **Administering Medication.** Only those people designated and trained by the school administration may administer medications to students. Two of these designated people must be present when medications are administered.
- **Parent Note.** The parent or legal guardian must also provide the school with a note giving permission to have the school administer the medication. This note should include the name of the medication, the dosage, the time and day or dates to be given out, the student's name, a parent's signature, and the date. Staff should ensure that the note remains in the student's file.
- **Responsible adult must bring medication to school.** All medication shall be brought to school by a responsible adult except in situations in which the parent, physician, or school administration believe it is in the best interest of the student that he or she carry the medication. In these situations,

the student shall carry a copy of the written permission form from the parent. The student must carry the medication in the container with the original label. Except for inhalers, the student shall carry only one day's dosage.

- **Check-In procedure.** The school's designated staff member shall record the date medication is brought in, ensure that the required authorization is on file, and count and record the number or amount of medication in the presence of the person who deposited it.
- **Original container.** All medication must be in the original labeled container and be labeled with the student's name. The school shall accept no more than a thirty (30) day supply. The school shall not administer expired medications.
- **Changes to prescriptions.** It is the responsibility of the parents to notify the school of any changes to the original prescription, and a new pharmacy label and container must be submitted with any change.
- **Student responsibility.** It shall be the student's responsibility to come to the office at the appropriate times for medication unless a physician or dentist indicates in writing that the student cannot do this. The parent may put a note in the student's lunch box to remind the student to take his/her medication.
- **Self-medication.** Students shall not administer any medication to themselves, except when a physician, the principal or legal guardian and the student agree in writing that it is necessary and appropriate. In compliance with Public Act 120, there must be written notification from the physician and parent on file in the school office before a child may carry their own inhaler. The student must demonstrate proper administration of the medication (such as an inhaler for asthma) and must inform the school's designated person who will record what time the medication is taken.
- **Locked cabinet.** School staff shall keep all medication in a secure, locked, and clean location at all times when not being administered to students.
- **Documentation.** The school's designated staff member shall keep a separate Medication Administration Record for each student that includes the student's name, medication, dosage, times to be given, signature of person administering the medication, and a place for other information to be recorded, such as any observed reactions or possible side effects. All such records shall be deemed a permanent part of the student's records and shall be confidential, except as disclosed to other staff members on a need-to-know basis.

PEST MANAGEMENT CONTROL

As part of Saint Mary Catholic School's pest management program, pesticides are occasionally applied both inside and outside the building. You have the right to be informed prior to any pesticide application to the school grounds and buildings. In certain emergencies, pesticides may be applied without prior notice, but you will be provided notice following the application.

PRESCHOOL AND PREKINDERGARTEN

St. Mary Preschool is based on the philosophy that children learn best through play and active involvement in age-appropriate activities. One of the most important experiences that the children undergo is that of

learning to be with others. Along with this, we hope the children develop a positive self-image, independence, self-control, sense of responsibility, respect, cooperation, and trust. Our program is designed to provide a variety of new and stimulating learning experiences and activities for the children to explore. Please contact the office for more specific information.

PROGRAMS AND CURRICULUM

Saint Mary Catholic School provides a strong academic program intertwined with our Catholic faith. Our Catholic faith is an integral part of the school program and intertwined throughout the day. Math and reading are strongly emphasized with assistance given to those who may be struggling. Creative writing is used in conjunction with other subjects. Students are encouraged to write often. Computers are available in each classroom and in the computer lab to enhance the competency in technology. Computer skills are taught to students at each grade level. Kindergarten through fifth grade students have the opportunity to work on computer skills in the lab. Science skills are taught by implementation of hands-on experiments. Saint Mary Catholic School's Social Studies curriculum is designed to develop an understanding of citizenship among our children. The outcomes ensure that students have the knowledge, skills, and democratic values necessary for rational decision-making as participating citizens in a multicultural and interdependent global society.

In addition to this core curriculum, Saint Mary Catholic School offers the following programs:

RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES: Instruction in Catholic Religion occurs on a daily basis. All students and teachers attend Mass once a week and on Holy Days. We come together as a community to worship with an attitude of reverence and respect. The sacrament of Reconciliation is offered to students twice each school year, during Advent and Lent. Students in preschool through fifth grade attend Prayer Service each Monday, all-school rosaries in May, Stations of the Cross during Lent, and May Crowning. Additionally, we have Adoration and Benediction on the first Friday of each month.

LIBRARY: Students generally go to the library bi-weekly with their classroom teacher. They will be guided to select books appropriate to their grade level and reading ability. Please help your child with the responsibility of returning books on time and in the proper condition. Students will be held financially responsible for any lost or damaged books.

COMPUTER TRAINING: Computers are available to all students in kindergarten through 5th grade. Students in kindergarten through 5th grade are offered computer training in the lab as well as computer use in each classroom.

Computer Usage Policy: Saint Mary Catholic School makes the internet available to our students & teachers. Saint Mary Catholic School will make every effort to protect our students from inappropriate materials. All students will be monitored by an adult and must have a signed Internet Acceptable Use Policy in order to use the internet.

BOOK IT: Students in Kindergarten – 5th grade participate in the “Book It” reading program sponsored by Pizza Hut. As an incentive, students who reach their monthly goal and complete their classroom requirements receive a coupon for free personal pan pizza.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION: Weekly classes are held for kindergarten through fifth-grade students. P.E. classes improve students' physical development as well as teaching games, sportsmanship, and teamwork.

GUARDIAN PROGRAM: In conjunction with the diocesan's safe schools coordinator, the creator of

Protecting Young Eyes developed the *Guardian* program. This program is part of our ongoing effort to show families and children how to create safer digital spaces through a terrific website and app (*The Protect App*). The goal is to protect all children from inappropriate and predatory behavior. Twice each year, parents will be notified when lessons occur and have the right to choose whether their student participates.

PROTECTING GOD’S CHILDREN (VIRTUS)

The Diocese of Kalamazoo is committed to making all its parishes and schools a safe environment for all Children. Saint Mary Parish has responded to the directive from our bishop and is committed to **Protecting God’s Children**. Child abuse, particularly child sexual abuse, is reprehensible. The Protecting All God’s Children Program assists participants to understand signs of abuse, the methods and means by which offenders commit abuse, and five empowerment steps one can use to prevent child sexual abuse in our society. This program is for all individuals who want to keep children safe. It is MANDATORY for all individuals/volunteers who have contact with children on a regular basis to attend a session. Sessions will be posted as they are made available to us. All participants MUST register via the Internet. If you do not have access to the Internet, have any questions, or would like a registration form, please contact the school office. It is the hope of the Diocese that eventually all Catholics and caring adults will be trained in this program, thus making not only the Church safe from abuse, but to drastically impact the welfare of all children within our community.

PTO

Saint Mary PTO is dedicated to the support of the educational welfare of Saint Mary children. The PTO organizes, promotes, and coordinates various activities and projects throughout the year. All parents of Saint Mary Catholic School are members of the PTO. Meetings are held monthly and will be published in the weekly newsletters.

RECESS

Weather permitting, students go outside for recess before lunch. Experience has shown that children do better in the afternoon if they are permitted outdoor recess. Parents are asked to make sure students are dressed for appropriately for cold the weather: heavy coats, mittens, hats, boots, snow pants are necessary in winter. The rules on the playground are:

- Obey the playground supervisors.
- Use equipment as it is intended.
- Respect each other and each other’s property.
- Use appropriate language. (Profanity will not be allowed.)
- Other than balls in a game, no object may be thrown on the playground.
- Keep your hands to yourself and off other people.
- No climbing on the fences or under trees/bushes along the edge of the fence.
- Students may not come back into the building during recess unless it is an emergency.

Remember the Golden Rule: “Treat others as you would like to be treated.”

Playground Discipline policy:

- 1st offense—a warning is given to the students

- 2nd offense—a “time out” is given against the fence
- 3rd offense—student sent to principal’s office

SCHOOL HOURS

School begins each day at 8:30 am and ends at 3:25 pm for students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Half-day dismissal is at 12:15 pm Children dropped off before 8:10 am MUST go to Kids’ Club. Children arriving between 8:10 –8:20 MUST report to the gym until the bell rings.

SCHOOL PARTIES, BIRTHDAY PARTIES, AND TREATS

Parties are scheduled with the classrooms in celebration of Halloween, Christmas, and Valentine’s Day. Parents will be contacted and asked to help with one of the parties by the room parent. If parents wish to help their child celebrate his/her birthday by sending treats to school, they are asked to contact the teacher in advance. Parents—please be aware that the school/teachers will not pass out any birthday party invitations at school unless the entire class (or the entire class of boys or girls) is invited. Also, please do not pass out invitations to only select students in the school building. Hurt feelings can arise quickly, and we respectfully request that you mail invitations to homes for those who are invited. Addresses are available in the main office as long as parents have allowed them to be published.

SERVICE HOURS

Saint Mary Catholic School PTO is dedicated to the support and the educational welfare of all Saint Mary Catholic School children. We expect all school parents to give of their time and talents. It is required that all parents volunteer for the yearly Wine and Harvest Festival (multiple shifts) and Auction. We need all parents to help contribute to the workload that is associated with fundraising.

SEVERE WEATHER AND EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

Saint Mary Catholic School will be closed if Paw Paw Public School announces a closing due to severe weather. In the event that it is necessary to close school because of snow, ice, or mechanical failure, these closings will be announced over the local radio and television stations beginning at 6:30 am. Additionally, a staff member will attempt to send an email blast to all parents notifying them of the cancellation. Please do not call the school to obtain this information.

When it is necessary to dismiss students early due to emergencies, it will also be announced on the radio, television and station websites. Parents will be called if this is possible and students will be sent home as soon as possible. If school buses cannot run, riders will be kept at school until parents are able to pick up their child/ren.

Please go to wwmt.com and woodtv.com to sign up for text alerts when either Paw Paw Public Schools or Saint Mary Catholic School in Van Buren County close. This is just another way to get this information quickly.

SNACKS

Each classroom will send home information about when snacks will be offered in class. Please send along healthy snacks and avoid sugary sweets that do not curb growling tummies!

STUDENT PHOTOS/PUBLICATIONS

From time to time, photos will be taken of students, student activities, special programs, etc. The school reserves the right to use these photos for news releases, the school website, yearbook, school-related video/DVD and slide presentations, brochure, marketing publications, etc.

The school will allow members of the media to take pictures of students and other school activities for publications. At times, photographers may take photos for resale and make them available to students and parents.

Permission to use your child's photo is included in the registration packet.

TITLE IX COORDINATOR

To the extent that Title IX of the U. S. Education Amendments of 1972 applies to Saint Mary Catholic School, the principal is appointed the Title IX coordinator. Saint Mary Catholic School abides by Policy #4166.4 and its accompanying regulations found in the Policy Manual of the Catholic Schools—Diocese of Kalamazoo regarding avoidance of harassment. The principal will answer questions and disseminate information, investigate complaints, and take appropriate corrective action pursuant to this policy. You can reach the principal at (269) 657-3750.

TOBACCO PRODUCTS

The campus of Saint Mary Catholic School is tobacco free. This includes all school functions such as field trips and Field Day.

TRANSFER/CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please notify the school in advance when withdrawing students so that school records can be forwarded to the appropriate school district. Any changes in address or phone numbers should be reported to the school office immediately. Parents of new students coming to Saint Mary must sign a "request for records" form so that student records can be obtained from their former school.

TRANSPORTATION

Bus

Bus transportation is provided by Paw Paw Public Schools to those students who live within the Paw Paw School District. Riding the bus is a privilege for our students and not a right. This privilege may be taken away from any student who is not conscientiously following the regulations:

- Enter and leave the bus in an orderly manner.
- Keep hands, arms, and legs inside the bus.
- Remain quiet and orderly.
- Avoid pushing and rushing.
- Remain seated except when entering and leaving.

SUSPENSION FROM THE BUS IS THE PUNISHMENT FOR STUDENTS WHO CHOOSE TO MISBEHAVE ON THE BUS. CHANGING BUSES IS NOT ALLOWED WITHOUT PERMISSION FROM PAW PAW SCHOOL DISTRICT.

Pick up and Drop Off—Parking Safety

- Please use the back parking area for drop-off and pick-up:
- If you are picking up or dropping off, stay to the right, drop off at the side walk and have your child/ren walk down the sidewalk to the school.
- If you are parking stay to the left, pull up and park, and walk your child to the school
- If you are unable to arrive at dismissal time, then your child(ren) will be sent to Kid’s Club. If you are here working in the building or meeting with a teacher, please make sure that your children stay with you or go to Kids’ Club.

There is a ‘**No Parking Zone**’ in front of the school that will be strictly enforced. If you park in the west end parking lot or on Paw Paw Street, please park and then bring your child in the morning or wait for him/her in the foyer after school.

Note: Preschool parents need to walk their children in and out per state preschool/childcare regulations.

Bus Lanes: Please keep the area on the east end of the building on Paw Paw Street clear for the bus at all times. This is a no parking zone.

TUITION

Saint Mary Catholic School depends on tuition to run its educational programs. Tuition is due monthly unless otherwise specified in the written contract and approved by the principal. Tuition is to be paid in full on or before your last payment in May. It is the parents’ responsibility to contact the school if financial difficulties arise. Saint Mary Catholic School reserves the right to take unpaid tuition accounts to Small Claims Court and/or to collections. Book fees may be paid in advance or added to your tuition contract. Registration fees are due at the time of registration.

You are required to sign a written tuition agreement at the time of registration.

Payment

Tuition is due by the 15th of every month beginning in August. It is your responsibility to pay monthly. If your monthly payment is **NOT** postmarked or received by the 15th, you will be charged a **\$15.00 late fee**. Late fees will be added to your tuition balance.

Nonpayment Policy

- When a tuition payment is delinquent, the following steps may be taken:
- If payment is not received within two weeks after the due date, personal contact or a phone call reminder will be made.
- If payment is not received within 30 days a reminder letter will be sent.
- If your account is past due (over 60 days) without sufficient notification to the school office, you

may be asked to pay your account in full before your child can return.

VISITORS

Visitors are welcome and encouraged to help in the classrooms, on the playground, and around the school. For the safety of our students, all visitors are asked **to report to the office** upon arrival. Individuals and volunteers who have contact with children are required to attend a Protecting God's Children session (Virtus).

VOLUNTEERS

Many volunteer tasks are available at the school and fundraising events. If you would like to volunteer your talents or services, please call the office at 269-657-3750.

WEAPONS-FREE POLICY

Unauthorized possession of any form of weapon or look-alike weapon in school, on school property or at a school-related event may result in immediate suspension or expulsion. Professional counseling at parental expense may be mandated.

The Diocese of Kalamazoo has a weapons policy regarding suspension and expulsion that the school will follow if the need arises. The policy book is available in the school office.

WELLNESS POLICY

Saint Mary Catholic School is committed to creating a healthy school environment that enhances the development of lifelong wellness practices to promote healthy eating and physical activities that support student achievement.

A Wellness Plan, including health, nutrition, and physical activity, can be found on the school website, saintmarypawpaw.org.