

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to a historical 20-21 school year! We begin by celebrating 50 years of faith, love and community. In this jubilee year, we celebrate the tradition of St. Mary's and the many faculty, staff and students who have walked the hallways who are now achieving great success and making an impact in the communities they live. The hard work and dedication demonstrated in establishing St. Mary's 50 years ago, is a great reminder as we continue to journey together through this pandemic. We are reminded and aware of the grace of God among us and the gift of family and community. Together with God, all things are possible.

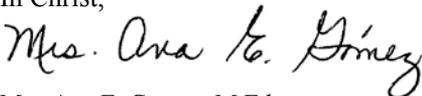
Our school remains dedicated to the mission and commitment of providing excellence in Catholic education in the Rio Grande Valley. St. Mary's continues to provide a top-notch program to develop and enhance 21st century skills that impact the growth and development of each child. Our goal is that each student nurture a strong faith foundation, a relationship with Jesus Christ and develop skills, talents and dreams to be the best versions of themselves. We strive to nurture and inspire the hearts of each student to be life long learners that desire to share their gifts with the world around them.

As we continue to work through the current pandemic and mitigate the spread of COVID-19, we adhere to the policies and procedures in our Return to School Plan that relate to our daily interaction. If and when there are changes deemed necessary by diocesan, state and local authorities, they will be communicated to parents.

Our 20-21 Parent Student Handbook will also serve as a resource that addresses many other aspects of school life, daily operations and opportunities within our school. The school community extends a hand to each family to build and maintain a strong connection and partnership. This is done by reviewing its contents along with your child and committing to supporting the school's rules and regulations. It remains important that follow-through be a collective effort by all to ensure a safe and effective learning environment.

Our St. Mary's team continues to strive to maintain high standards and academic excellence by inspiring the heart, mind and soul of each child. Let us give thanks to God for the opportunities in this school year!

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mrs. Ana E. Gomez". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mrs. Ana E. Gomez, M.Ed.

Principal

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MISSION STATEMENT

St. Mary's Catholic School strives to develop and inspire strong Christian values and foster academic excellence in each child by providing quality education in a safe, nurturing, and multicultural environment.

VISION STATEMENT

Faith, Love of God
Academics, Love of Learning
Service, Love of Neighbor
Teamwork, Love of Community

GOALS

- **Develop Strong Christian Values**

To empower each community member to become a living example of Jesus Christ through prayer and worship, scripture, and the authentic teachings of the Catholic Church.

- **Multicultural**

To provide a caring, loving environment built on trust, justice and peace where each individual is valued.

- **Nurturing Environment**

To nurture life skills that will encourage each school member to become a mature, responsible, and caring citizen of the world. To increase each person's level of awareness, sense of responsibility and respect for global technology.

- **Provide a Quality Education**

To challenge each person to develop an open, inquiring mind that allows an appreciation and acceptance of each person's uniqueness as a precious child of God. To provide a balanced teaching environment that ensures educational excellence while nurturing each person's creativity, spontaneity, emotional stability and self-worth. To create a safe and pleasant learning environment. To provide opportunities for each person's total physical development and good health.

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

The aim of education at St. Mary's Catholic School is to promote a critical awareness of the world. This is accomplished by developing the qualities of discipline, thoughtfulness and responsibility thereby awakening the student to the potential of the human mind, body and spirit, and promoting a critical awareness by which to think, judge and act. St. Mary's Catholic School believes that peace and justice, as well as all Christian values, flows from a clear living and understanding of a life centered in Christ and nurtured by the Eucharist. St. Mary's Catholic School has a unique purpose and function, since it makes spirituality the cornerstone of the educational process while maintaining academic excellence.

SCHOOL –WIDE LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

Faith – Love of God

- Realize our life of knowing and loving God is a life-long process where our faith and personal relationship with God grow
- Experience different styles of prayer and worship; engaged in church liturgies, service and activities
- Form a good conscience
- Know the basic doctrines of our faith
- Translate Gospel values into responsible citizenship and evangelize
- Believe that all human life is special and precious; care for God’s creation
- Love and honor Mary as God’s Mother and our Mother also

Academics – Love of Learning (Character)

- Knowing the steps in making good choices; develop strong emotional/social IQ’s as well. Be able to self- regulate in all situations
- Always seek to promote justice
- Develop confidence, independence, resilience and motivation of self and others
- Commit to life-long learning; becoming problem solvers, innovative, creative, global thinkers ...
- Excel in reading, writing, listening and speaking
- Skilled in the use of library and media
- Competent in Mathematics
- Scientifically and technologically literate
- Knowledgeable of historical and current events (local, state, national and world level)
- Patriotic- Love of country
- Appreciative and knowledgeable of literature and the arts

Service – Love of Neighbors

- Choose life and truth
- Value forgiveness and reconciliation; compassion and empathy
- Cherish God’s gift of self, family and life
- Experience a physically healthy life-style
- Demonstrate good manners and respect in all relationships
- Prepare to take their place as responsible citizens; active in communities, parishes
- Responsible good digital citizens

Team work – Love of Community

- Global Awareness
- Dedicated and committed
- Collaborator/Open-minded
- Good listeners
- Positive risk taker
- Demonstrate strong integrity

ACCREDITATION

St. Mary's Catholic School is fully accredited by the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Education Department (TCCB ED) in conjunction with Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Diocese of Brownsville. Our school community has also received dual accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools on Accreditation and School Improvements (SACS-CASI) This action was taken by AdvancED Accreditation Commission.

School evaluation and accreditation have as a common purpose the development and improvement of an educational program designed to meet the needs and talents of the students.

The quality of the education offered is enriched through membership in the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Education Department (TCCB-ED), the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA), the United States Catholic Conference (USCC), and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD). Our curriculum includes instruction in the beliefs and tradition of the Catholic Church and guidance in moral values.

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

Pastor

The pastor, as appointed director of the parish, is responsible to the Bishop and has the final authority in school matters.

Principal

The principal administers policies set by the Diocesan School Office, the Parish School Council and the accrediting agencies. Supervision of teachers and instruction, curriculum development, and the professional development of staff through in-service programs are among the principal's duties. The principal is responsible for the overall school environment. The principal is available for conferences and consultations with parents by appointment. All school personnel report to the principal.

Teachers

The teachers are responsible for the academic instruction of the students, the evaluation and grading of scholastic achievement, and the maintenance of discipline under the guidance of the administration and in accordance with the requirements of the school's accrediting agencies, the Diocesan School Office and the policies of St. Mary's Catholic School.

GENERAL INFORMATION

School Hours

The office will be open from 7:30 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.

- After 4:15 p.m. emergency calls may be made to the parish at 956-546-3800 till 6 p.m. They will contact administration or school personnel on your behalf.

Daily School Hours

- 7:30 – 7:55 a.m. Supervision
- 7:50 a.m. First Bell Rings/Teachers receive students
- 8:10 a.m. Second Bell Rings/All gates close/Class begins
- 8:05 a.m. Morning Prayer and Announcements/Students arriving are tardy
- 3:10 p.m. First Bell Rings (Pavilion)
- 3:15 p.m. Dismissal Bell Rings
- 3:15 – 3:55 p.m. Pick- ups/ Gates close at 3:55 p.m.
- 4:00 p.m. Official start time for Extended Day and Late-Pick-up
After School Activities begin

** During this time of the pandemic and in order to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, all procedures described in the Return to School Plan are in effect until further notification in regard to daily procedures/policies. Any changes directed by diocesan, state, and local authorities will be communicated to our school families.*

Arrival and Dismissal

1. Drivers are asked to follow drop-off and pick-up procedures at all times.
2. Parents are asked to remain in their cars and to proceed through the regular carpool process.
3. Students are not allowed to walk to a parked car without a teacher or administrator escort.
- 4. Cell phones are not be used at this time. This is considered a school zone and it is the law.**
5. Please follow the traffic directions given by the teachers on duty.
6. It is the responsibility of the parent to contact car pool members and after school care agencies when a child is absent, leaves school early, or needs other arrangements to be made.
7. Homeroom teachers should be advised in writing via written note, email or Remind message if a child is to go home in a different car pool or by a different means on a given day. Students will not be released to someone who is not on authorized for pick up within the FACTS SIS (Renweb) system.
8. Parents are asked to follow the instructions and guide lines for dismissal in regards to the proper lanes.
9. Arrival begins at 7:30 a.m. Dismissal begins at 3:15 p.m.
10. Use caution at all times.

11. Students who's after school activity begins at 3:15 p.m. will be picked up by their coach/sponsor prior to the last bell if the supervisor. Students whose activity begins at 4 p.m. must exit with their homeroom teacher and remain with them during dismissal till collected safely by their coach/sponsor or parent/authorized adult.
12. Each family will be registered in the iDismiss system which will be used to notify teachers of pick up. Each family will be given a number to assist.
13. All students will remain with their teachers until dismissed. A center lane will be used to permit students from both the main building and Montessori to be loaded in their vehicle by a school staff member.
14. All parents are asked to adhere to traffic lanes and rules.

Extended Day Program

Students may be enrolled for our Extended Day Program. Students will follow a scheduled program that will include homework/study time/and a calendar of enrichment activities such as library time, art, physical activity...

Program will begin immediately at 3:15 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Students may enroll for an additional \$100.00 a month. Modified week (4-3-2-1 day a week) schedule may be applied for a prorated rate calculated at the Business Office.

Changes in enrollment in the program during the year must be communicated to the Business Office in a timely fashion for billing purposes.

Program is not available on ½ days of school unless notified by the school.

Late Pick-Up

Beginning at 4:00 p.m. the charge per child for late pick up is \$3.00 and an additional \$3.00 for every 15 minutes thereafter.

Students are signed in by their homeroom teachers and must be signed out by the parent/or authorized adult at pick-up.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Religion Program & Liturgy

The religion program at St. Mary's Catholic School provides each student an opportunity to develop a closer relationship with God. Experiences of faith, sharing, worship through liturgy and prayer, opportunities to be of service and formal instruction help build a strong Christian community. Each class grades 1st-6th grade will have an opportunity to prepare the Mass on a rotation basis.

Each Wednesday the students will be assembled in the church for Mass. Parents are invited to these services which are held at 8:30 a.m. We ask that students avoid being late. Students are required to attend Mass as this is an important component of their religion class. Students' overall grade may be effected if student is excessively tardy and/or absent from Mass. Staff members will be stationed at each door to receive students who are tardy. Students are invited to participate fully in the Mass.

Students in Grades 5 take the ACRE (Assessment of Catechesis of Religious Education) Test in May.

Montessori students participate in class prayer services scheduled throughout the

school year. Parents will receive an invitation to these services.

Sacramental Preparation

The sacramental life of the children of the Catholic tradition is an important component of the religion program at St. Mary's School. Preparations for two sacraments, Reconciliation and Eucharist, form the core of instruction in Grades 2 and 3. In accordance with the diocesan guidelines, candidates for First Eucharist will receive the sacrament of Reconciliation prior to First Eucharist.

Parents are required to be active partners in the preparation of their children for these sacraments. The sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist are only conferred to students baptized in the Roman Catholic tradition.

Prayer

Our school community begins with prayer daily at the start of the day, during the day and at the end along with their classmates and teacher(s). A morning assembly is held at least once a week when permissible.

Students in grades 1st-6th grade attend the Adoration chapel for silent prayer time during their religion time or during their scheduled visit led by our faith committee led by the Parent Association. This may happen 2-3 times a year.

Students in grades 3rd-6th may receive the sacrament of confession if needed at any time with collaboration with their parents and our parish priests. A Reconciliation Service may take place during the seasons of Advent and Lent.

Students along with their teachers, and faith committee members will pray the rosary once a month beginning in October as a class.

Service Projects

St. Mary's Catholic School strives to teach students to build a Christian community by helping others. Along with their teachers, students participate in service projects throughout the year. They may include daily mission bag collections to help the less fortunate, blanket/clothing, food or toy drives to name a few. Students are to give willingly with a joyful heart and learn the joy of helping others. We strive to teach the concept of giving of oneself of time, talent or treasure. The aspect of service will carry beyond their years at St. Mary's Catholic School. Thank you for your help and support.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

Academic Curriculum

The Diocesan curriculum guidelines, consistent with the State of Texas guidelines, are followed for the teaching of all secular subject areas.

St. Mary's School offers students opportunities for growth in the following major subjects: Religion, Language Arts, Reading, Mathematics, Science & Social Studies. Students also take the following elective courses either quarterly or annually as part of the curriculum: Physical Education, Music, Art, Library Studies, Technology and Spanish (1st-6th grade).

Homework

Formal home-study is assigned to help students become self-reliant and self-directed. We believe that learning good homework habits will benefit students as they

progress in their academic education. Homework will be done online using tools or in the traditional format.

Assignments are designed to reinforce daily lessons, to supplement and enrich class work, and to prepare for certain lessons through various experiences. Homework time may include reading or studying for a quiz or test. Homework may consist of reading time to be done at home or review of resources online. Since each student has different capabilities and interests, it would be difficult to denote the specific amount of time to be spent on an assignment. If a problem arises, the teacher should be contacted. The following are guidelines to help achieve completion of homework:

1. Primary Department – Grades 1-3

- a. Homework is due the following day after an assignment is given unless otherwise noted. It will be checked for completion, recorded and returned.
- b. Parents will be notified in writing, via e-mail or Remind if homework is not turned in on time.
- c. Consistently late homework will be noted and on the progress report and reflected on quarterly report card. A conference will be called by the teacher.

In the primary grades, students may be expected to work on homework for 20 to 30 minutes on average.

2. Upper Elementary – Grades 4-6

- a. Each student is responsible for keeping his/her planner up to date.
- b. Late homework will be subject to a reduced grade or no credit.
- c. Parents will be notified in writing if a student consistently misses homework assignments.

In grades 4-5, students may be expected to work on homework for 30-60 minutes on average. In grade 6, students may be expected to work on homework an average of 45-90 minutes on average.

Homework may be assigned to students Monday through Thursday. Homework may be assigned to students over the weekend on occasion. This may be applicable to the upper grade levels.

Master Binder is used in various grade-levels to assist students in keeping organized and developing good study habits. A digital calendar will be used to support student's in organization. Teachers will review the system and expectations at the beginning of the year.

Montessori Students (PK3-PK5)

Based on the teacher's observation and student readiness, students may receive homework to complement their work-time in the classroom. Reading is essential to every student. Therefore reading to your early childhood student is highly encouraged.

Make-Up Work

Excused absences and special circumstances approved by the Principal. (Refer to attendance section). Once documentation is received the student is allowed to make up class work and tests missed.

For unexcused absences, students will be allowed to make up class work and tests. At the teacher's discretion, student may not be eligible for full credit and may result in

a lower grade on the progress report or report card.

Work that is missed during an in or out of school suspension must be made up and the student may receive partial or no credit depending on the surrounding circumstances. It is the responsibility of the student to arrange with the teacher the time and place for make-up work. It must be completed within the allotted time. Each teacher or grade level will have policies regarding the grading of make-up work.

Retesting

Retesting is not required but is done based on the instructional progress of each child. This is left to the professional judgement of the teacher. If a child is issued a retest the parent will be notified by the teacher and a special formula will be used to calculate grade.

After-School Tutoring

At the First Quarter Progress Report, students in grades 1st-6th grade will be recommended for after-school tutoring. Tutoring schedule will be shared with the student and their parents. Tutoring will take place at 3:20 p.m.-4:20 p.m. led by St. Mary's teachers.

Academic Integrity

St. Mary's Catholic School values academic integrity very highly and does not permit any form of dishonesty or deception that unfairly, improperly or illegally enhances a grade on an individual assignment or a course grade. Students who choose to cheat face a failing grade, detention, suspension, and/or expulsion.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- Cheating on Exams
- Copying from others
- Having or using other information without explicit teacher review and permission
- Taking an exam for another student or permitting someone else to take a test for you
- Providing or receiving information about all or part of an exam, including answers
- Altering a graded exam and resubmitting it for a better grade
- Plagiarism in Paper and Assignments
- Giving or getting improper assistance on an assignment meant to be individual work

Academic Probation

A student whose academic performance indicates serious deficiencies may be placed on academic probation. If a student is placed on academic probation, a conference with the parents will be required.

Students on academic probation will be placed on a two-week improvement plan. At the end of the two-week period, the student's academic progress will be assessed. Students whose average is failing may not be allowed to participate in any school related sport or other extra-curricular activity until the grade has improved to a passing grade of D. Students may be recommended for after school tutoring and/or placed on an academic contract that will be developed and reviewed by administration, teacher(s), parents and student.

Grading

Grading (1st – 6th grade)

Numeric grades are used on a 100-point scale. The minimum passing grade is 70. Specials will receive a grade of Satisfactory (S+, S, S- or NI (Needs Improvement))

Grading Scale

A+	99-100
A	95-98
A-	94
B+	92-93
B	87-91
B-	86
C+	84-85
C	76-83
C-	75
D+	73-74
D	71-72
D-	70
E/P	69 and below

Grade Weights

The student's quarter performance is reported as an overall average with varying assessments throughout the nine-week period. The following weight system applies to each grade level:

1st-6th Grade

All students' work is based on an equal distribution and averages equally. Teachers are required to have formative and summative assessments throughout the quarter. A majority of the grades collected in a nine-week period must be independent work completed by the student.

Group projects or assignments may be given and based on the content and purpose during the instructional process. A rubric will be shared prior to beginning an assignment/task to guide students.

Montessori Evaluation

In K3-K5, the report card will show academic areas that are undertaken at the respective levels. Parents will be informed of areas of work that have been introduced that are in the developing stage, and/or have reached mastery.

Achievement Testing

Achievement and intelligence testing is administered annually as required by the Diocesan School Office. This is one form of data used to evaluate school programming but also to support our student's learning process. The data received is used to direct instruction and facilitate the needs of our students based on their individual capabilities and achievement in core subject areas. The test results are shared with parents.

The Iowa Assessment published by Riverside Publishing Company is used for students in grades K5–6th grade. Students are tested in the areas of Reading, Language Arts, Listening, Math, Science and Social Studies.

A fall and spring testing cycle is followed by the Diocese of Brownsville Catholic Schools. Fall testing will include benchmark testing in the areas of Reading, Language Arts and Math in grades 1st–6th. Spring testing will include a complete battery for our K5 students and our 1st–6th.

COGAT (intelligence testing) is administered to students in 2nd & 5th grade in the spring testing cycle.

Progress Reports and Report Cards

Report Cards are important tools for communication. Report Cards will be given four (4) times during the academic school year or every nine (9) weeks.

Progress Reports will be given mid-way between each nine-week grading period. A Growth and Habits Chart will be sent home in a hardcopy. The chart will detail any areas of improvement needed in regards to work ethic, attitude, organization and engagement. This is to be reviewed along with grades on FACTS SIS (Renweb). A signature is to be returned to the student's teacher securing parental review and notification.

No student will be given a Report Card if tuition, library fines, or After School Care Program fees are in arrears.

The report card serves as one instrument that provides parents with an evaluation of the student's development in specific content areas and the students' performance in the primary elements of attitude and behavior every nine weeks. At the end of each quarter, the report card is to be reviewed, signed by the parent or guardian and returned to the student's teacher at the appropriate time.

In the middle of the quarter, a progress report will be issued and will provide an opportunity to review student progress. Parents are encouraged to set up a conference with teachers if needed at any time. Parents are to call the main office to schedule the conference during the teacher's conference period. If other arrangements are necessary accommodations may be made with approval of all parties.

Promotion Policy and Retention Policy

Advancement to the next grade in St. Mary's School is based on a student's daily performance, test results, attendance and recommendations of teachers, and the student's ability to complete work successfully on a more advanced level.

Promotion to the next grade depends on successful completion of all subject areas. The Administration may recommend the repetition of a grade, tutoring, or summer school classes as requirement for promotion when, after conferences with teachers and parents, it is believed that such action will better prepare the student academically or emotionally for the next grade.

Students may also be TRANSFERRED to the next grade. A student who is transferred to another grade will not be allowed to continue as a student at St. Mary's School.

Honor Roll

An honor roll student is one who not only performs academically but also illustrates

strong work habits and good character. Students need to have good attendance, good work habits and attitude, no conduct marks on their progress reports, report cards or conduct referrals filed in the office. All will be verified to verify Honor Roll status. Absences/tardiness must be accompanied by a valid excuse. Excuses are to be submitted to the main office and be on record prior to the close of the quarter. Behavior, attitude and participation in fine arts, physical education, library and computers will effect honor roll status. Students who receive an S- or below will not qualify for the honor roll. Teachers will communicate with students and parents throughout quarter. Honor Roll is determined per nine weeks and is the average for each class.

2nd – 6th 94+ (A Honor Roll)

86+ (A-B Honor Roll)

A student must achieve the honor status for the four quarters to receive recognition at the end of the year.

National Elementary Honor Society

“The National Elementary Honor Society™ chapter of the Bishop John J. Fitzpatrick - St. Mary’s Catholic School is a duly chartered and affiliated chapter of this prestigious national organization. Membership is open to those students who meet the required standards in two areas of initial evaluation: scholarship (academic achievement) and responsibility. General standards for selection are established by the national office of NEHS and have been revised to meet the needs of our school and fall within our strategic goals.

Students are selected to be members of NEHS by a Faculty Council, appointed by the principal and supervised by an additional member of the faculty serving as the chapter adviser. This group awards the honor of membership upon qualified students on behalf of the faculty of the school during each school year. Our NEHS chapter will conduct its selection procedures during the second quarter of the academic school year.

Students in the 4th, 5th, or 6th grades are eligible for membership. For the scholarship criterion, a student in 4th grade must have a cumulative grade point average of a 95 or above to be eligible. Students in 5th and 6th must have a cumulative grade point average of 90 or above. Those students who meet this criterion are invited to complete a Candidate’s Form that provides the Faculty Council with evidence of the candidate’s Responsibility at home, school, and in the community.

In addition, to evaluate a candidate’s levels of Responsibility, the Faculty Council may use two forms of input: first, school administrative records are reviewed; second, members of the faculty are asked for input regarding their professional reflections on a candidate’s personal responsibility qualities. These forms and the Candidate’s Forms are carefully reviewed by the Faculty Council to determine membership. A majority vote of the council is necessary for selection. Candidates are notified regarding selection or non-selection according to a predetermined schedule established by the chapter.

Following notification, a formal induction ceremony is held at the school to recognize all the newly selected members. Once inducted, new members are required to maintain the same level of performance (or better) in all of the criteria that led to

their selection. This obligation includes regular attendance at chapter meetings held monthly during the school year, and participation in other chapter service projects(s) and activities.

Once inducted into the Honor Society, students are responsible for maintaining their academic status, be a good role model of behavior/attitude and participate in at least one service project sponsored by the chapter. Students who remain in good standing through the 6th grade will receive their honor chord at graduation.

Students or parents who have questions regarding the selection process or membership obligations can contact the chapter adviser by phone at 546-1805.

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT

Attendance Policy

In compliance with the Texas State Law and the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Education Department (accrediting agency), a student (PK3-6th grade) who is enrolled in school and is required to attend school must meet the attendance requirement. The school calendar provides a total of 180 instructional days. A student is expected to attend school at least 90% of the time. If a student has attended less than 90% loss of credit may apply. A school calendar is provided prior to the beginning of the school year for all families, and it is expected that each family will honor it.

Regular attendance is essential to the guaranteeing a continuous, uninterrupted program of instruction as a basis for academic success.

A student is considered truant if he/she has 10 or more days of unexcused absences within a six month period or three days or parts of days of unexcused absences within a four week period. As per state law, it is the parent's duty to monitor attendance and require students to attend school. Parents are required to schedule a conference or communicate with school administration to discuss excessive absences. An excuse must be submitted to the student's homeroom teacher.

Administration accepts the following as "extenuating circumstances" for the purpose of granting credit: personal sickness, health treatment, sickness or death of immediate family member, emergency, quarantine, or participation in approved extracurricular activities. Proper documentation is required to validate the excuse and must be received upon returning to campus.

If a student is picked up early and does not meet the required instructional time for the day a student will be marked absent ½ day. It is imperative that parents do not pick up their child(ren) early unless it is absolutely important because it only interrupts instructional time.

If a student demonstrates an attendance issue, a written notification will be sent home, a conference may be required and retention/summer school may be applicable.

Procedures When Absent

When a student is absent from a school, a parent should notify the school by 10 a.m. via phone, e-mail or Remind message to the teacher each day of the absence. If school is not notified, parent may be contacted. This policy is for the protection of students.

Absence During the School Day

Students needing medical appointments during school hours require a written note/ email by the parent. Parents are required to sign out their child. If the child returns to school during the same school day, he/she must be signed back into school in the office. Students who are away from school for an appointment, for 4 hours or more will be counted as absent for a full day.

Early Dismissal

The closing of the day is just as important as the beginning of the day. We ask that students remain in school the entire day. This allows for a clear flow of the instructional process. Students will not be signed out in between 3:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. This is a very busy time for our students. Dismissal begins at 3:15 p.m. when the bell rings. Large groups of students will not have permitted to be signed out for parties or gatherings. This is a distraction to the classroom and afternoon procedures. We ask that parents wait till regular dismissal time. Students will only be dismissed to those listed on their emergency card; written documentation must be received, proper procedures followed to release a student to anyone not listed on their emergency card. Proper identification will be required and requested to release any student. Excessive early dismissal will affect student instruction and academic progress. Teachers will contact parents to address issue.

Attendance and Extracurricular Activities

A student must be in attendance prior to an event/activity to participate in extracurricular event/activity. This refers to students who are ill, injured, truant, or unexcused by administration.

TARDINESS

Arriving to school on time is key to the success of all students. Having morning routines and procedures assist in creating good work habits. Chronic tardiness not only effects the students but also the classroom. Students miss morning routine, meeting, prayer and start for the day. As attendance, students who have excessive tardiness will receive a written notification and a conference may be called to discuss the issue. Tardiness may be excused with the proper documentation as is required with attendance. Documentation is to be submitted to the main office.

DISCIPLINE/BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

Discipline is essential to a positive learning environment. In accordance with the stated philosophy of the school, which emphasizes deep respect for the human dignity and uniqueness of every individual, each student will be considerate of the rights of others in all interactions. All students are expected to cooperate with the spirit and policies of the school which are designed to foster mature development and personal responsibility. This requires courtesy in all personal relationships, promptness in fulfilling obligations, concern for the environment, and many other factors which the students' sense of appropriateness will indicate to them.

The essence of Christian discipline is self-discipline. Rules and regulations pertaining to the management of student behavior are necessary for the development and maintenance of an orderly, safe, Christian school environment. Our school goal is

to teacher seven skills (Conscious Discipline) to transform every day discipline issues into teachable moments, equipping children with the social-emotional and communication skills needed to manage themselves (self-regulation), resolve conflict and develop healthy behavior.

Each teacher will also have their classroom rules that align with the overall mission of the school. Teachers are asked to use positive behavior modifications, natural consequences and practices when working with their students. The school is to work with correcting and improving behavior with the appropriate resources and plan. All students, situations and issues vary and are different. All necessary parties will be called into place to support the student. If improvement is not made parents will be notified and a conference may be held to discuss a necessary, plan.

Severe cases are referred to school administration such as disrespect, fighting, inappropriate language, etc. Student disciplinary action is primarily a function of the office of the principal. All issues are handled by necessary faculty members and are confidential.

When an incident is reported, administration will begin and conduct an investigation in order to take the necessary steps and measures to ensure the safety and well-being of all students. Parents will be notified of their child's involvement and outcome.

Disciplinary Actions

May consist of the following:

- i. Verbal reprimand – A verbal admonition for actions unbecoming in a school community. Students may receive a written warning and steps necessary to support a change in behavior.
- ii. Incident Report will be completed by the teacher/supervisor and parents will be notified.
- iii. Loss of privileges – Privileges given to a group of students or to an individual student may be withdrawn for actions unacceptable in a school community.
- iv. Detention – Detention may be given after attempts to correct behavior are unsuccessful. Parents will receive a written notification.
- v. Behavior Referral – A letter or written form which makes the matter of record any incident or behavior or misconduct. The referral will document repeated incidents or severe infractions.
- vi. In-school suspension – Separation of the student from class. Students must complete all class work and tests from the days of suspension but lower grades may be recorded for this work.
- vii. Suspension – Separation of the student from St. Mary's School for a definite period of time. The student will not be allowed on campus during the time of their suspension. Students must complete all class work and tests from the days of the suspension but lower grades will be recorded for this work.
- viii. Expulsion – see below

Students who are suspended either in-school or out of school may not participate in any extra-curricular activities or sports events in the days of suspension. Students may also lose other privileges such as field trips and honor roll status.

Suspension

Suspension, the temporary prohibition of a student's attendance, for three school days or less, will be within the jurisdiction of the principal. The principal is responsible for deciding whether the suspension is in school or off-campus.

Implementation for Suspension

The principal must notify the student and the student's parents or guardian(s) of the reason for the suspension, the duration of the suspension, and requirements for reinstatement.

Expulsion

Expulsion is an extremely serious matter. Students who pose a threat to themselves or to others may be expelled from St. Mary's School. Three or more visits to the administration for disciplinary reasons may be considered grounds for expulsion. Students who have been expelled will not be allowed to return to the school without prior permission from the Principal.

Expulsion, the permanent termination of a student's enrollment, is a serious act and requires the concurrence of the pastor and the principal. Notification of the decision must be filed with the Superintendent of Schools. Parents or guardian(s) can appeal through a grievance process.

Causes

Suspension or expulsion may be invoked for any of the following reasons but not limited to:

- i. Habitual misconduct that is disruptive of the teaching/learning process.
- ii. Refusal to obey reasonable directives, orders, rules or regulations of the school, or any administrative officer of the school, which are promulgated for the wellbeing of the student body, the staff, or the institution.
- iii. Violations of any penal law or ordinance applicable to the respective jurisdiction of all parties concerned.
- iv. Verbal or written threats made against the physical or emotional wellbeing of any individual. Threats made in jest or online will be taken seriously.
- v. Engaging in any activity or conduct which is a serious violation of Roman Catholic ethic or which attempts to promote teaching contrary to ethic or which attempts to promote teaching contrary to those of the Roman Catholic Church.
- vi. Any serious violation of school regulations governing the use of the computer, internet and telecommunications system.

Safe Environment Policy

St. Mary's Catholic School is a multicultural community and because of our diversity we have an opportunity to model how the world can be, as Christ showed us. We believe that everyone should enjoy our school equally, and to feel accepted regardless of any difference. We speak kindly to one another and about each other. All students reach out to invite others to join them so that no student spends a school day alone for want of a friend. We treat each member of the community with dignity, respect, and understanding. Students, parents, faculty, staff, and the parish of St. Mary's come

together as a community to provide a safe environment for all individuals.

We are committed to creating and sustaining a safe and respectful environment for all students and we know that bullying and harassment are obstacles to realizing our Christian values in how we relate with others. Therefore, we will take the necessary disciplinary action as specified in order to enforce the school policies and follow our mission/philosophy.

Though many of these types of behaviors may also happen off campus, on-line and outside school hours, when they directly affect the school environment, learning and the well-being of a student(s) an investigation will ensue once the allegations are reported and necessary actions taken. We ask that all parents be vigilant and aware of student's interactions and use of technology/social media. It takes all of us together to maintain a safe environment.

Video Cameras on Campus

To foster safe and secure environment for students, staff and school visitors, video/audio equipment may be used to monitor student behavior in common areas on campus. The principal/designee will review the video/audio recordings routinely and document student misconduct. Discipline will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Video/audio tapes are subject to release or viewing in compliance with the Family and Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Bullying/Harassment Policy

Bullying occurs when a student, or group of students, attempts to **intentionally and repeatedly** take power over another student by causing pain, fear or embarrassment. Often bullying is repeated, where students fall into the roles of **bully** (the student that is bullying), **bully-follower** (a student that goes along with the bully), **target** (the child being bullied) and **bystander** (a student that sees the bullying but does nothing to stop it). Students and parents are open to report via our counseling page on our website. All information is shared with administration and is confidential.

<https://claraomagallanes.wixsite.com/smcs counselor>

The main ways in which bullying may happen are:

Physical bullying, when a student uses physical force to intentionally and maliciously hurt another student by hitting, punching, pushing, shoving, kicking, spitting, pinching, getting in their way, or holding them down. It is also bullying to interfere with another student's belongings, to take or break their possessions, and to demand or steal money.

Verbal bullying, when a student directs words at another student with the intention of putting them down or humiliating them. This includes threatening, taunting, intimidating, shouting, insulting, sarcasm, name-calling, teasing, put-downs and ridiculing. It is also verbal bullying when a student uses hostile gestures towards another student, such as making faces, staring, giving the evil eye, and eye rolling.

Relational bullying, when a student influences another student's friendships and relationships through deliberately leaving them out, spreading gossip and rumors about them, whispering, giving them the silent treatment, or ostracizing. This also includes writing words or creating cartoons, posters or drawings about another student designed to hurt or humiliate that student.

Cyber bullying refers to the use of cell-phones, text messages, e-mails, instant messaging, chatrooms, web blogs and social networking sites to bully another student in any of the ways described above. Examples of cyber bullying are sending threatening or insulting messages by phone and e-mail, posting untrue information or embarrassing pictures about another student on message boards, blogs or social networking sites such as but not limited to Instagram, Snap Chat or Facebook, using another student's e-mail address or IM name to send messages that make the student look bad, creating a web page devoted to putting down another student, forwarding a text-message or e-mail that was meant for your eyes only.

When using any type of social media or engagement on-line, disciplinary action may be taken if conversations or comments include defamatory comments regarding a student(s), the school, faculty/staff members, parish or towards any school related matters.

When bullying is also harassment. Bullying is part of a continuum of aggression and may, at times, amount to harassment. Harassment occurs when a student is the recipient of threatening, disturbing or unwelcome behaviors because of a characteristic.

Parents will be notified of disciplinary infractions through incident forms or referrals sent home by administration, the teacher, requiring a parent signature. St. Mary's Catholic School uses age appropriate discipline program to assist in this effort.

Policy for Off-Campus/On-line Conduct

The administration of St. Mary's Catholic School reserves the right to discipline its students for off-campus/on-line behavior that is not in line with behavior expectations of its students during the course of the school day. Off-campus behavior that endangers the health and safety of an individual within the school/system or adversely affects the educational process may be subject to disciplinary action. When reported, every incident will be looked into and investigated for the safety and well-being of all and prompt appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

Parents play a key role in assisting in the supervision and review of on-line activity of their child. All safety measures and requirements when engaging online should be enforced.

As we live in a digital age, social networking sites, chat rooms, virtual worlds and blogs ... seem to be the place children, tweens, and teens socialize. Online actions have consequences, so it is important to help learn how to navigate these spaces safely. As a school community we remain committed to supporting our families. There are many great resources such as www.commonsemmedia.org.

Policy for Inappropriate Language or Gestures

All students are responsible for using appropriate language at school at all times. Practicing self-control is critical and is a choice for each student. As Christians, we all must work together to nurture a true environment of love and support of one another. Inappropriate language and gestures are a serious offense and the school's disciplinary plan will be implemented if a student is accused and found guilty of any inappropriate language, drawings or gestures. These incidents may be reported by other members of the school community to the classroom teacher.

Policy Regarding Inappropriate Objects Brought to School

An inappropriate object includes but is not limited to any instrument, device, or object capable of inflicting injury and designed or specifically adapted for the use as a weapon, and possessed or carried as a weapon. This includes any dangerous object (firearm, knife, deadly weapon, explosive, incendiary device) or look-alike.

The policy expressly prohibits the use, possession, transmission, sale or discharge of weapons, instruments, or explosive devices in the school or school grounds, or at school-sponsored activities. If it is determined that this policy has been violated, the parents of the offender shall be immediately contacted and shall cooperate with the disciplinary process.

Policy Regarding Search and Seizure

School officials have a legitimate interest in the safety and protection of all students within their care and custody. A student's backpack or personal property may be searched when there is reasonable suspicion that a prohibited object or substance is in the possession of a student.

Lockers are the property of the school and are subject to a search at any time. The Principal reserves the right to conduct inspections and searches if circumstances warrant it. Students tampering with other students' lockers are referred to the office for disciplinary action. The Principal reserves the right to have students empty their pockets, purses and or backpacks for stolen articles or any other suspicious items.

TECHNOLOGY

St. Mary's Catholic School's computer facilities provide unequalled opportunities to explore and use a varied and exciting set of educational resources including computer programs, software, tools and access to the internet.

We recognize that the access to virtually limitless sources of information poses a hazard. Some internet sites contain material which are sexually explicit, offensive, or contrary to our educational mission. St. Mary's Catholic School does use filters that limit access to undesirable web sites. However, these measures are not completely effective in deterring individuals who are intent on accessing such sites. Therefore, at the school supervision is provided wherever computers are in use.

Primary responsibility is on the student to use our computer facilities for appropriate means only. The rules for computer usage and guidelines for online conduct will be posted in each room where computers are available for use. Failure to meet any of these expectations may result in revocation of the student's permission to use the school's computer and/or other disciplinary action.

To be granted permission to use the school computers, the student must:

- i. Sign the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) Agreement.
- ii. Obtain parent signature on Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) Agreement.
- iii. Return the signed copy of the AUP agreement to the homeroom teacher.

The following are considered as serious violations, which may lead to suspension, expulsion or termination of privileges:

- i. Use of the network or internet to plagiarize or violate copyright laws.
- ii. Use of the network or internet to send or display offensive and/or obscene

messages or pictures

- iii. Use of computer or internet to harass, insult, or attack others (includes any chats or social media) verbally, with use of photos or videos.
- iv. Use of network or internet for commercial purposes or ending of unsolicited junk mail or chain mail.
- v. Trespassing in another's folder, work or files for any reason.
- vi. Use of disks without permission of the network administrator.
- vii. Creation, propagation and/or use of computer viruses.
- viii. Acts of vandalism, which include but are not limited to, any attempts to harm or destroy the network/internet, or any networks or sites connected to the network/internet (attempts to breach security codes and/or passwords will also be considered a form of vandalism.)
- ix. Students and teachers will be utilizing Google Classroom and the applications specific to Google for Education. Tools are to be used for instructional purposes following all Diocesan/School guidelines. All usage will be monitored/supervised by the classroom teacher.

School Issued/Bring Your Own Device

Students will be allowed to bring electronic devices to school at the request and permission of their teachers and parents for academic purposes.

Guidelines for Use:

- All students are to adhere to the Acceptable Use of Policy for Computers and Telecommunications signed at the beginning of the school year.
- Students are to keep their devices powered off and in their backpacks at all times until they are instructed by the teacher to access their devices.
- At school, devices will be used only for academic purposes with the supervision of a teacher. They are not to be used before, after school or at recess.
- Students are NOT to take photos or videos with their devices if not directed by a teacher for an assignment.
- Devices brought to school are the responsibility of each student and the school will not be responsible for lost or broken items.
- Students are to follow all procedures dictated by the classroom teacher to ensure proper and safe use of each device. This ensure a positive learning experience for all students.
- If a student fails to follow procedures and rules the device will be confiscated and given back to the student or student's parent based on the school's discretion.

Printing

Students will not be allowed to bring or use USB's to save work in school or print from any school device. Special instructions will be given to students on how to save their work done in school. If an assignment is given to the student and requires the use of a computer the assignment may be submitted via e-mail to the teacher if allowed or the student must print at home and submit to the teacher. Following Diocesan Guidelines,

students in grades 3rd-6th grade will be issued an e-mail account for school use only where students will have access to a Google Drive account to save and access all student work.

Cell Phones

Cell phones will NOT be permissible on campus. If a parent needs a child to have a cell phone after school permission must be given by administration. A meeting will be made and proper forms reviewed and completed to be kept on file at the school. Cell phones if found will be confiscated and held in the office till a parent picks up the device.

Smart Watches or any other type of device are not permissible in school. Any device that has Internet accessibility is not allowed.

Items such as these are a distraction to our students and disrupt the learning environment.

Cameras

Cameras are not permissible during the school day unless there is a special event or project and permission has been granted by administration.

Cell phones or cameras in a student's possession without permission will be confiscated and returned to the parent(s)/guardian(s) on the last day of the school year or at the discretion of Administration.

COMMUNICATION

Conferences

The lines of communication must always be open and kept in a positive manner. Please feel free to address any questions or concerns about your child with their teacher. Aside from scheduled conferences dates teachers or parents may request a meeting. Parents may call the school office and set up a meeting during a teacher's conference time at any time during the school year. Times outside the teacher's planning period must be arranged at the teacher's approval and availability. This must be done 24 hours in advance. We discourage conferences held during dismissal time. Teachers must continue to supervise their students and a private conference would allow the teacher to give parents their full attention. A phone conference may also be set up if needed.

Formal conferences are scheduled at the end of the first and third quarters for parents to meet with their child's teacher. The purpose of the conference is:

- (1) for parents to collaborate with their child's teacher
- (2) for parents to learn about the school and its curriculum, and
- (3) to discuss the child's strengths and weakness in various areas and strategies to support the child.

All conferences are held in a professional manner and are held confidential. The conference time is confined to the subject of the individual student's well-being.

Electronic Messaging APP/E-mail Communication

Remind is a messaging app which allows administration, teachers and parents to communicate in a safe, secure way. Remind may be accessed via the Internet or downloaded onto a Smart phone, android or IPAD. Messages may be received

through the direct use of the app, text or e-mail message.

A school wide group is available to receive reminders, updates and important announcements. Each classroom teacher will have a classroom group and extracurricular activities will also form groups to stay in communication. The use of this messaging app is at no charge.

To join our St. Mary's Catholic School Remind grade level group you may follow either of the following directions:

1. Visit the website <https://www.remind.com>

Sign up as a user and follow the steps. When asked to join a class you will enter the appropriate grade level code.

or

2. Download the app on your smartphone

Follow the steps and use the join a class tab and enter the appropriate code.

or

3. Text directly from our smartphone or android to 81010 in the message board and text the appropriate code in the message area to join.

Grade level codes:

Little Saints and Montessori - @8gdf6b

1st and 2nd Grade - @g99ahf

3rd and 4th - @3fbghec

5th and 6th - @h89a9a

When joining other groups, teachers, coaches and sponsors will provide the correct information to enter and join appropriate groups.

Website & FACTS SIS (formally Renweb)

Our website is a great source of information and support for our families. Our school's home page will give parents and students access to all school information such as news, updates, special activities calendar, lunch menus and much more. Our URL address is www.stmarys-cs.org.

Direct electronic communication between students, teachers & parents will be hosted by FACTS SIS (formally Renweb). All school - wide communication will be sent via e-mail to our families. We are a "paperless" community. It is imperative to have a correct e-mail registered within the system. Teachers may send home written communication that is grade specific with the student in a weekly folder/binder or via e-mail as well.

This confidential form of communication will allow parents to review individual student information such as grades, attendance and keep track of what is going on in the classroom via teacher webpages.

Each family must create a Parents Web account. Families who activated their Parent's WEB accounts last school year will use the same login information. Families needing assistance are to call the main office and we will gladly guide you through the process so that you may utilize this tool. If parents have an issue with their account, they may call the main office at any time to receive assistance.

Official School Communication

School phone 956-546-1805; office staff will take a message and teacher/administration will return call/after 4:15 p.m. Parish Office 956-546-3800

website: www.stmarys-cs.org

FACTS - SIS (Student Information System)

Email (cdobcs.org accounts)

Student Planner

Homework/Work Folder

Master Binder

Marketing and Social Activity/celebration accounts

Facebook – Saint Mary’s Catholic School, Brownsville, TX

Instagram – [stmarys_brownsville](https://www.instagram.com/stmarys_brownsville)

** Above modes of communication may vary from grade level to grade level.*

FAMILY/CUSTODIAL SITUATIONS IN RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SCHOOL

The following procedures will be followed by administration and faculty:

- i. In the event of separation of parents or divorce, information will be sent home with child to which ever parent currently has care of the child.
- ii. In cases of actual divorce decree involving clear custody by one parent, the principal is to be informed by the custodial parent.
- iii. A copy of the first page of the decree bearing the case number referring to custody and the relationship with the school and final page bearing the judge’s signature are to be submitted to the principal. Unless the decree indicates otherwise, school communications will be sent home to the custodial parent.
- iv. We will, unless instructed by court order, release records upon request to the non-custodial parent. Records include official transcripts, report cards, health records, referrals for special services and communications regarding major disciplinary actions.
- v. Records do not include daily class work and papers or routine communications sent home through the child to the home of residence.
- vi. Unless restricted by court order, any non-custodial parent has the right to attend any school activity of their child which includes sports activities, and class programs. Parents should keep each other informed as to these activities to avoid duplication of communications and to allow the school to better attend to the duty of teaching your child.
- vii. In cases of joint custody, it is assumed that one copy of communications and information will be sent home with the child and that it will be shared by and between the parents.

- viii. Parent conferences should be scheduled jointly if both parents wish to be present. A joint conference insures that both parents are given the same information at the same time, thereby avoiding misunderstanding and misinterpretations.
- ix. In the event joint conferences are neither possible nor desirable by all parties' involved, alternative arrangements need to be discussed with the Principal.

STUDENT SERVICES/ACTIVITIES

Library

Reading is essential for success and is definitely part of the learning process. The library is an important part of a student's school routine where reading is encouraged and promoted. The library program is fully integrated into the curriculum serving the school's goals and objectives.

The school has a well-equipped automated library and media center. Students are encouraged to use the library for curricular enrichment and pleasure reading. The following rules are to be observed:

- i. Borrowed books are to be returned on time and in good condition.
- ii. A fine is required for overdue books.
- iii. Books damaged or lost must be paid for by the student before any other materials may be checked out. Students who have lost or damaged books do not receive quarterly report cards until their account is cleared.

Guidance Program

St. Mary's Catholic School has a school counselor on campus. Schedule will be provided. The school counselor is part of the school community to provide support services to students, parents and faculty members that will enable the overall success of each child. The counselor will notify parents if a serious concern shall arise. Parents are welcome to schedule an appointment to meet with the counselor as needed.

The counselor provides individual sessions, group sessions and whole class presentations.

Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities are provided to give the students the opportunity to enhance their educational experience by developing team play, problem solving, creativity, expression, responsibility and commitment to name a few advantages. Some activities are offered free of charge, or may hold a one-time fee or monthly charge to cover cost. The school's administration is open to new ideas at times from students' parents, and faculty members. The following are various activities that have been offered at our school. Actual organization of a group(s) depends on interest and enough sponsor supervision.

Student Council	Dance	Basketball	Young Einstein's	PSIA
Altar Servers	Choir	Cheerleading	Running Club	Robotics/Coding
Book club	Reading Club	Girl Scouts	Drama	Chess
Track	Volleyball	Track	Soccer	Art Club
Yearbook	Journalism			

Field Trips

1. Field trips are designed to correlate with teaching units and to achieve curricular goals.
2. Field trips are re-evaluated each year to determine the trip's compatibility with curricular goals.
3. A field trip is a privilege and not a right. Field trips may be restricted as set out herein.
4. There are no "traditional" field trips. Class participation in a particular field trip over consecutive years does not mean that this trip has become a school tradition.
5. All grades do not always have the same number of field trips.
6. Field trips are permissible for all grades when advanced planning, location, and the experience insure a successful learning opportunity.
7. Individual teachers, in consultation with the Administration, reserve the right to restrict or deny student participation on any field trip due to, but not limited to, poor academic performance and/or poor conduct.
8. A written official permission slip, signed by the parent, is required before a child will be permitted to attend a field trip activity. Verbal permission cannot be accepted. Permission slips are due in the office forty-eight hours after receipt of the permission slip.
9. A Field Trip Permission Slip will be provided to all students for scheduled field trips. This form is the only format that may be used to allow a student to leave school during school hours for scheduled field trip. Please feel free to call the school for information needed to complete the form. A faxed copy does not take the place of an original signature.
10. A telephone call will not be accepted in lieu of the proper field trip permission slip.
11. Parents may refuse to permit their child from participating in a field trip by stating so on the proper form. Students who do not attend the field trip will be marked absent unless they remain in school. Field trip days are instructional days and alternate arrangements will be made for students who do not attend a scheduled field trip.
12. All monies collected for a field trip are non-refundable.
13. Cell phones are not allowed on field trips unless otherwise directed by administration and teacher.
14. St. Mary's School has the right to refuse to allow a student to participate in a field trip if the family's account is delinquent.

Lunch Program

St. Mary's School offers a hot lunch program daily. Meals are prepared in the school cafeteria. Menus are published each month for parents' and student's convenience. Lunches are \$4.00. A daily record will be kept of the students' who buy lunch. At the end of each month, students' accounts will be charged for meals they ate that month.

Students may choose to bring their lunch each day. Students should not bring glass bottles, soft drinks or candy. Lunches or drinks from carry-out restaurants are highly discouraged.

Students are expected to use the same manners required in the classroom during lunch. Cafeteria Rules must be followed at all times. Courtesy toward other students and cooperation with lunch monitors are in order at all times.

Cafeteria Rules

1. Use of good manners at all times.
2. Remain seated while eating. Ask for permission to leave your seat.
3. All food must be eaten in the cafeteria and not taken outdoors.
4. Use indoor voices. No shouting.
5. Practice good hygiene; no sharing of food.
6. Walk at all times. No running.
7. Clean up after yourself. Pick up all trash.
8. Show respect for all supervisors. Follow directions.

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION POLICY

Safe Practices for Administration of Medications at School

1. Only medication which is necessary for the child to remain in school will be given during school hours with medication being administered at home whenever possible.
2. The Principal of a school will designate a responsible person to supervise the storing and administration of medications at school.
3. Only medication prescribed by a licensed physician, dentist, Nurse Practitioner or Physician's Assistant will be administered by authorized school personnel.
4. Signed parental and/or physician consent congruent with diocesan policy, for either prescription or non-prescription medication must be obtained. The consent form should contain, at the least, the following elements:
 - Name of student
 - Name of medication
 - Dosage of medication
 - Times medication is to be given
 - Route of administration
 - Disclaimer statements:
 - Medication will be administered by non-medical personnel
 - Hold school harmless for adverse drug reactions and side effects of properly administered medication
 - Parent responsible for maintaining adequate supply of medication at the school
 - Parent/Guardian signature

5. Substitution of medication from one student's supply for another, (even if it is the same medication), is never permitted.
6. The parent is responsible to bring all medication to the school clinic/office, and to pick up unused medicine or it will be properly destroyed. Medication is not kept from year to year in the school clinic/office.
7. Medication that is received in an unlabeled container or plastic bag will not be accepted.
8. Administration of medication will be recorded on a medication log with date, time, and initials of person giving the medication. The student is responsible for coming to the office and asking for his/her medication. This includes both daily and PRN medications.
9. The use of nebulizer treatments in schools for the treatment of asthma should be done with extreme caution. Non-medical personnel will not be responsible for the administration of the nebulizer treatment without careful training. The parent is ultimately responsible for the care of their asthmatic child.

PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS

1. Prescription medication will be properly identified with the prescription label from a pharmacy. This label will include:
 - Student Name
 - Medication Name
 - Directions concerning dosage
 - Route of administration (i.e., oral, topical, right eye, left eye, IM (intramuscular), etc.)
 - Time that the medication is to be given
 - Length of the medication to be given (duration)

NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS

1. Non-prescription medication (over-the-counter) must be in original container, with visible directions, and displaying the students' name. Parent request for administration of such medications must be consistent with directions for use on the package.
2. With the use of cough drops, they must be in the original container, and labeled with the child's name, and written directions from the parent. Parent request for administration of cough drops must be consistent with directions for use on the package.

INJURIES

Injuries are reported to the main office immediately. An accident report must be completed by the school. Parents or guardians will be notified immediately and informed of the steps taken at the time of the incident depending on the type of injury. If the student needs medical treatment, proper documentation will be provided to assist with the process.

VISION, HEARING AND SCOLIOSIS TEST

Vision and hearing screening is required for all students every two years by the state of Texas. Scoliosis screening is required for fifth and sixth graders. The school conducts these screenings.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Immunization Records: All immunizations must be up-to-date within 30 days of entry into school. The Texas Education Code requires that all children entering Texas elementary schools must be immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, polio, measles, rubella, hemophilic influenza (4-year-old only) and Pneumococcal Conjugate (PCVT). All students new to the Diocese of Brownsville are required to have a T.B. test. Failure to comply will result in the child's removal from school.

All schools are required to maintain records of the immunization status of individual students during the period of attendance for each student admitted. The records must be made available for inspection by appropriate state agencies at all reasonable times.

Exemption from Immunizations: In the event that a parent/guardian strongly objects to the required school immunization, a written request must be submitted to the school Principal with the appropriate affidavit obtained from the TX Dept. of Health, Immunization Division. Each individual vaccine exemption affidavit is good for two years from the date notarized.

The Catholic Bishops of the United States and Catholic moral and ethical theologians have concluded that the use of vaccines is not morally wrong, therefore, no exemptions will be granted in the Diocese of Brownsville on the basis of religious beliefs.

If for medical reasons, an exemption requires a written statement signed by the child's physician (M.D. or D.O.), duly registered and licensed to practice medicine in the United States that, in the physician's opinion, the vaccine required is injurious to the child's health or poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the child. Unless it is written in the statement that a lifelong condition exists, the exemption statement is valid for only one year from the date signed by the physician. This document must be submitted to the Principal prior to the child attending school and will be reviewed annually.

SAFETY

Crisis Plan

St. Mary's Catholic School adheres to all regulations contained in the Campus Crisis Plan issued by the Diocese of Brownsville Catholic School Office. This Crisis Plan covers emergencies that may arise at school and includes response procedures, emergency numbers, and other pertinent information. The Crisis Plan is available for review in the school office.

Doors and Gate

All doors and gates open to the outside of our grounds are kept locked at all times during the school day. Visitors must buzz in and identify themselves before being given clearance to enter the grounds. All visitors are to report to the main office first, be given authorization and must sign in.

First Aid and CPR

A crew of faculty and staff members are trained in First Aid and CPR. All sections of the school are covered with trained personnel in case of an emergency. A defibrillator is also readily available for any adult or child experiencing cardiac distress. Training has been issued by the American Red Cross.

Emergency Drill

State Law requires that fire drills be held monthly.

During the fire drills, students should follow these regulations:

- * Rise in silence when the alarm sounds;
- * Close windows and doors;
- * Walk to the assigned place briskly, in single file at all times, and in silence;
- * Stand in a column of two's, facing away from the building;
- * Return to building when signal is given.

Tornado drills are held periodically. The procedures are:

- * Rise in silence when the alarm sounds;
- * Walk briskly to the assigned place in single file;
- * Sit, face wall, and put hands over head;
- * Return to classroom when signal is given.

Intruder/Lock-Down Drills will be performed periodically. The purpose for a Lock-Down Drill is to stop all students and staff members from moving about the building in case of an intruder and/or other emergency that warrants such procedure. Procedures to be followed by students and staff are as follows:

- * At the sound of an alarm or announcement, the students and staff members report to the nearest classroom and remain until further instructions.
- * Adult in charge of each room is to account for every child in the room.
- * For accountability purposes, adult in charge is to call and alert teachers of students(s) not assigned to that room of the student(s) whereabouts.

Mass and Assembly procedures are to be familiar by faculty and staff. Follow-through will ensure safety of all.

Foyer Coverage during Mass – Designated staff

Assisting Students in the back – Designated staff

Full view of Church – Administration

- All doors locked with the exception of the side door leading to the school
- There will be one key entrance.
- All doors will have remained locked
- Adoration access will be closed and locked
- Restrooms only accessed in the sacristy for students. Staff will ensure that if priest's bathroom is clean if necessary.
- "Take Cover" will be called out. This will alert teachers of any crisis. Students and teachers will be directed to duck inside the pew to secure students and themselves. Teachers are to wait for instructions.

- Supervisors are to carry their cell phones. If an emergency arises, 911 is to be called.
- Supervisors, teachers, support staff are to report an unusual person, be aware of movement and items for example (a large bag etc.)
- Supervisors will approach a person they do not recognize (ask important questions) or are not accompanied by a parent etc. Second supervisor is to remain close by. Communication is key.
- Active Shooter training for school personnel will be held and supervisors will attend self-defense class.

Assembly in Gym/Soccer field

- A supervisor will post themselves in the foyer (indoors) and outside the glass doors on the black top.
- Care to observe who is entering is key. If someone out of the ordinary approaches person is to be stopped, and questions asked.
- As Supervisor at the gate entrance during the event.

Notification of School Closing or Evacuation

If it should be necessary to close/delays the school because of weather conditions, an announcement will be made over our Facebook, school website and other forms of electronic communication such as Remind.

In case of a school evacuation, parents will be informed of the steps to follow to ensure the safety of all students.

Update of Records/Emergency Card Contact Information via FACTS SIS (Renweb)

If families are in need of making changes or updates to mailing address, contact numbers, email, emergency contact(s), medical information or authorized pick-up they may be do so through Parents Web account at any time. If changes are made parents may notify the office or teacher when complete. Persons listed only on the emergency card will be allowed to pick up your child with proper identification. If your child is planning on leaving with another school family or designated person a written notification is required to release the student. We must have a release in writing. If written permission is not received, your child will not be released for their safety.

Protection of Children

St. Mary's Catholic School does everything possible to ensure that all children are cared for appropriately. We comply with all directives as set by the Child Abuse Prevention and Services Act. Any suspected case of child abuse/or neglect will be reported to Child Protective Services as mandated by law.

AHERA

In compliance with the U.S. Environmental Protections Agency (EPA) and the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA), St. Mary's Catholic School was required to have an inspection of buildings for asbestos containing materials. All Catholic school buildings of the Diocese of Brownsville were inspected by a licensed accredited consultant. Periodic surveillance is conducted twice a school year. The Inspection Management Plan is on file in the administrative office. The plan is available for review upon request of the Principal at any time during the normal school hours.

Visitors Policy

School visitors (volunteers, parents, etc.) must come to the main office. For safety and security reasons, each person is required to sign in at the office when he/she enters the building for any reason this includes the business office. Visitors are asked to respect all classrooms during the instructional day and the office area so that the needs of all may be met. All visitors and/or volunteers are required to wear a designated badge that may be picked up in the office. Visitors and/or volunteers are to sign out at the time of departure.

Parents who volunteer to serve lunch or who volunteer in another capacity in the school may not drop in to a classroom to see their student during the day. This is an interruption to the teacher and to the educational process. Also, it is expected that parent volunteers will respect the procedures of the school by refraining from using their electronic devices while on campus supervising or assisting on campus.

Lunch Visits

Lunch time is a time for each student to develop their social skills and table manners. Students are well supervised and need this time to themselves. Students have 20 minutes for lunch and 20 minutes for recess. Parents are welcome to drop off any lunches in the main office prior to their lunch time and it will be delivered or picked up by the student. Parents will only be allowed to join their son or daughter for lunch on their birthday. If their birthday falls on a weekend the Friday prior or Monday after is allowed. Summer birthdays may be observed in the month of May. Parents may notify teacher they plan to join their child for lunch. This not a requirement but a kind gesture if the parent wishes.

Photography/Videography Policy

No photographer, professional or otherwise, may photograph or record a school sponsored event, with the intent to sell these photos and/or videos for profit, or have said photos and/or videos published in any manner, without direct written consent from the Principal or parish priest.

UNIFORMS AND DRESS CODE

Uniform components (pants, shorts, skirts, jumpers, blouses, shirts, vests, and sweaters) may be purchased through

Ibiley Uniforms

<https://www.ibiley.com/default.aspx>

All students must be in uniform every day. There will be out-of-uniform days which will be announced during the course of the school year (a dress code for such days will be announced). Students who are out of uniform without this excuse will be sent to the office and the parent will be called to bring the proper clothing. There is a special uniform for Physical Education classes, to be purchased through the school.

- Required pieces from Ibiley are described on their website.
- Mass Required Uniform from Ibiley.

Spirit Shirt (Required)

Navy blue colored polo with school logo is to be used. The navy polo with logo through Ibiley is the spirit shirt. Students who have the navy polo with silk screen

white logo (purchased) through the school from previous years may be used as well for this school year.

Pride T-Shirt (Optional)

Navy (Catholic School Strong) T-Shirt and Red #Be the Good T-shirt may be used on designated Blue Jean Days. Orders will be taken for the navy t-shirt and the red option pride shirt may be purchased at the Business Office. Sizes available may vary.

Other Requirements

Sweaters and Jackets

While in the building, students are to use a solid navy sweater, jacket, sweatshirt or hoodie (with not labels or markings) or one with the correct logo. Other jackets or sweaters of other colors or styles may only be used outdoors when cooler weather is present.

Shoes and Socks

Students (boys or girls) are to use (white, navy or black) ankle socks or girls knee high (navy or white). Students are not to wear no show socks.

Tennis shoes are recommended for P.E. and recess. All tennis shoes are to be white, navy or black. Most of the shoe must be this color so accent colors acceptable. Lights/wheels are not acceptable as they are a distraction.

If a child brings regular shoes, they are encouraged to bring tennis shoes if they will be participating in physical education (1st- 6th).

Belts

Boys must always wear a belt with their trousers. Belts may be navy, brown or black only. No excessive/decorative belt buckles. Flexibility will be used with our younger students who may not be able to unbuckle and buckle pant or belts. Students in Montessori who are wearing elastic waist are not required to wear a belt.

Other Requirements

All students – Hair should be neat with bangs above the eyebrows. Boy's hair should be above and not touch the shirt collar and trimmed around the ears. Scrunchies, hair clips, rubber bands, etc. must be in the hair, not worn on wrists. No cosmetics, lip gloss, colored chopstick, nail polish, or artificial nails may be worn. Girls may wear one pair of earrings not larger than a dime and without hoops. Boys may not wear earrings of any type.

Jewelry should be limited to one watch, one ring and simple crosses or holy medals on a narrow silver or gold chain. Watches with a beeping device should be disconnected during the school day. Watches that beep will be taken away and may be claimed on the last day of the school year.

The uniform should be clean and pressed with all buttons attached and hem intact. Shirrtails should be tucked in while a student is on campus. Strict adherence to the dress code will be expected by all students.

Students who repeatedly violate the uniform policy will be denied participation in the next out-of-uniform day. Other disciplinary actions may be taken at the discretion of the Principal.

DAILY PROCEDURES AND EXPECTATIONS

Spirit/Blue Jean Days

Spirit/Blue Jean Days are held monthly to celebrate our spirit or special occasion. Days will be announced in advance. Students will be allowed to wear their spirit polo or any other top designated by the school. It may vary on occasion. A dollar donation is made to the school's Mission Bag initiative to assist the less fortunate in our community.

Telephone

Permission to use the telephone must be obtained from the school secretary. Students must submit a note from their teacher. The office phone is a business phone and students are permitted to use it only in case of an emergency. The telephone in a teacher's classroom is for the use of the teacher only. Forgotten homework, athletic equipment, etc. do not constitute emergencies. Arrangements for after-school visits with friends should be made at home.

Gum

Students should not chew gum at school at any time that they are at school. This includes before school, during school, and after school. Disciplinary action may occur for student's chewing gum during the course of the school day.

Lockers

Each student is assigned a locker to store textbooks. In order to maintain a quiet atmosphere for class, students are allowed to go to their lockers only at specified times. The school reserves the right to inspect lockers at any time. Lockers may not be decorated inside or out unless under the direction of the teacher. Student schedules and pencil holders that facilitate learning may be posted on the interior of a student's locker door.

School Property

The parent or a child who carelessly destroys or damages any furniture, equipment, buildings, or anyone's personal property will be obligated to pay the full amount of repairs and labor or replacement. Textbooks issued to the student must have a proper book cover. No writing in textbooks is permitted. The student will pay a fine or replacement for damaged or lost texts before any final reports, transcripts, or diplomas are presented.

Lost and Found

Any items found in the school building or on the school grounds should be given to the school receptionist to be placed in the Lost and Found basket. Items placed in the Lost and Found remain there for 30 days. After 30 days, items are donated to charity. Students who lose a library book, textbook or workbook must pay the replacement cost of the book plus shipping in order to receive a new copy.

Birthday Observances

Montessori students participate in a "Celebration of Life". Teachers will provide parents with details and schedule a celebration within their day. Students in 1st -6th grade are allowed to bring a birthday treat during their lunch time. We ask that parents coordinate with the classroom teacher to schedule the day. If multiple birthdays fall on

a particular day alternative plans may be needed. Instructional time is not available for birthday celebrations for the elementary student.

In the spirit of Christian fellowship, the distribution of party invitations at school is allowed only if all members of the class (or all the boys or girls in a class) are invited. This also applies to distributing invitations before school and at dismissal. In addition, limousines for parties will not be permitted on the school grounds.

Early dismissal of large groups will not be permissible. (see Early Dismissal)

Gifts

Students should not exchange individual gifts at school. This gesture only creates hurt feelings among other students. Delivery of flowers, balloons, etc. to the school is not allowed. Deliveries will not be accepted.

Toys

Toys are not allowed at school unless authorized by the teacher for a special project or show & tell.

Bathroom Accident

For our younger students, a bathroom accident may occur. All PK3 students are required to be potty trained however an accident may occur. The following are our procedures if an accident occurs:

1. Teachers will ask all parents to keep an extra set of clothes (socks, undergarments, shorts, shirt) in the classroom at all times.
2. Teachers will assist by guiding the child and providing the necessary items (such as wipes) to clean and dress themselves.
3. A parent may be called if necessary to come assist or take the child home if needed.

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

Tuition and Fees 2020-2021 (per student)

Early Registration - \$250.00/\$200.00/\$150.00

Regular Registration - \$350.00

Books and Materials - \$385.00 (\$35 for 11 months)

Technology - \$220.00 (\$20 for 11 months)

Tuition (K-3) ½ day - \$6,050/\$5,335.00/\$5,005.00

Tuition (K3-6th) - \$6,435.00/\$5,665.00/\$5,225.00

Voluntary Commitment – Style Show etc.

Registration fees are per child and are non-refundable and non-transferable. The tuition is payable over a period of eleven (11) months (July through May) within the first fifteen days of each month. Registration Fee must be paid at the time of registration when the student is accepted into the school. The Books and Materials Fee (book rental, workbooks, special testing, limited school supplies) of \$385.00 and the \$220.00 technology fee (license renewals, Internet Service, maintenance and update of equipment and supplies) may be paid in July or in eleven equal payments (July thru May).

Tuition Policy

For the 2020-2021 school year registration will be paid directly to the school.

- All families will establish an account with FACTS in order to pay fees, tuition or other expenses such as materials/books, technology fee, cafeteria charges, field trips, etc. Parents will be able to check the status of their account online and pay tuition and fees 24/7. All payments are to be made through the FACTS plan. Families are to create an account (separate from FACTS SIS) with a separate username and password.
- Tuition is due before the end of the month. Through FACTS families will be able to pay tuition, cafeteria and other fees with automated ACH payments from a checking or savings account. Also, payments may be made with a credit or debit card as well as check, money order, online or over the phone.
- Tuition will be considered past due after the last day of the month. On the next day a late charge of \$25.00 will be assessed on account balances over \$50.00.
- A fee will be charged each time the bank returns a check for insufficient funds.
- Families with a delinquent account may be referred by the principal to the Tuition Review Committee to negotiate a payment plan depending on the individual family circumstances. A student's continued enrollment may depend on these payment arrangements. Exceptional situations may be referred to the Pastor.
- In the event a student withdraws from St. Mary's School and has an outstanding balance, all grades and student records will be withheld until all account(s) are paid in full.
- A refund for tuition and/or material fees will be issued to families who cancel their registration if written requests for refunds are received by the following dates:
 - Prior to August 5th 100%
 - August 5th to 10th 50%
 - After August 10th No refunds for tuition and/or materials fees will be made unless a student is withdrawn at the school's request.

Tuition Assistance

Each year the available amount of tuition assistance will be determined by the School Administration and the Pastor. Parents unable to pay the full tuition may apply for a partial reduction in tuition by filling out a Tuition Assistance form through FACTS in April.

The Tuition Assistance Committee will evaluate the applications to determine if the applicant qualifies for a reduction in tuition. Qualified applicants will be notified in writing of the amount of "tuition assistance" they will receive. Limited funds are available. Priority is given to parishioners, and families who have more than one child enrolled in our school.

Admissions & Registration

The Registration process for new and returning students begins in the month of February. A new student may be considered for admission at any time of the year if

space is available and the following criteria is met by the student.

Children entering Pre-K must be three (3) years or four (4) years of age by September 1st. 3 year- old students are required to be potty- trained.

Children entering Kindergarten must be five (5) years of age by September 1st.

Children entering 1st Grade must be six (6) years of age by September 1st

At the time of registration, all new students in grades 2 through 6 seeking admission to St. Mary's School are evaluated on the basis of current standardized test scores and report cards.

Requirements include:

- Health Records
- Immunization Records
- Birth Certificate (original)
- Baptismal Certificate (Catholic applicants only)
- Report Cards
- Standardized Test Results
- Record of IEP

Students applying for Admission in Grades 1-6 must present a copy of the current report card and standardized test results. These will be reviewed by the school's administration to determine whether the program at St. Mary's School will meet the educational needs of the students. An interview with the student may be requested. Testing in some academic areas may be held for new incoming students in Grades 1-6.

All new students will be given a trial period in which to prove himself/herself both socially and academically. If during this trial period there are any problems, a student may be asked to withdraw his/her attendance at St. Mary's School.

Admissions of Non-Catholic Students

The non-Catholic applicant should:

- i. Understand, accept, and support actively the philosophy and goals of the school
- ii. Relate responsibly to the members of the school community, whether adults or students
- iii. Cultivate personal talents and abilities to the extent that he/she is able
- iv. Attend religion classes
- v. Attend church service and/or liturgy at the school and understand the reasons for invitation
- vi. Participate in the school's service projects

Immigration (SEVIS)

St. Mary's Catholic School complies with Immigration and Naturalization Service requirements regarding non-immigrant, F-1 students. Such students entering the United States to study must hold passports with a U.S. student visa. Authorized personnel will complete all information required using the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System SEVIS registration. Our offices must conform to all policies issued by SEVIS and all student information must be accurate and kept current. Once

families receive the SEVIS issued I-20, it must be taken to the consulate to have it validated. It would expedite the procedure if this is done on the same day it is issued.

Nondiscriminatory Policy

St. Mary's School admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students of the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the enrollment, employment or administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, or athletic and other school-administered programs.

Enrollment Block

The school reserves the right to dismiss or block reenrollment of a student for the following reasons:

- * Repeated violations of the Discipline & Behavior Policies
- * Violations of Specific Policies
- * Excessive unexcused absences or tardiness
- * Excessive non-compliance with homework policy
- * Continued non-compliance with tuition payment policy
- * Continued disruptive, uncooperative behavior on the part of the parent/guardian

Because it is impossible to foresee all problems which may arise, this clause empowers the administration to block enrollment for any repeat behavior which violates the spirit and philosophy of St. Mary's Catholic School even though not specified above.

Probationary Period (New Students K3 – 6th)

If a student is admitted to St. Mary's Catholic School, a probationary period of nine weeks exists during which time a decision is made whether or not the school can meet the needs of the child. Parents will be informed by the principal of the need to enroll the child elsewhere if the school is not able to meet the needs of the student. For our Montessori students, this time is usually considered a period of adjustment where they will demonstrate readiness for school.

Withdrawal/Transfer Policy

- Notice of withdrawal of a current student during the school year should be made by the parent verbally or in writing to the school principal.
- An official withdrawal form must be completed by the school along with the parent.
- The school will not forward records for students who withdraw with an outstanding balance.
- If a student withdraws during the school year, reimbursement of any monies applied to tuition will be determined by the administration and finance office if applicable.

Student Records

Records of students transferring to other schools will only be sent from "school to school" once officially requested by their receiving campus. They are official and legal documents.

Students requesting records/transcripts/recommendations must make a three school-day request to the School Office. All forms should be submitted to the St. Mary's School Office for distribution. Completed forms will be sent via the U.S. Mail. Special handling may require that all postal fees be paid by the parents.

No records will be sent to transferring schools of students whose financial commitment is in arrears.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES FOR THE DIOCESE OF BROWNSVILLE

Purpose

The purpose of this process is to provide students and parents/guardians of students enrolled in any parish Catholic school within the Diocese of Brownsville with an orderly procedure for equitable and prompt resolution of a complaint. This policy is intended to resolve disputes at the lowest possible level in a cooperative, conciliatory Christian atmosphere

Scope

No person shall be discriminated against because of filing or participating in this Grievance Process and no reprisals of any kind shall be taken against any person because of participation in this complaint process. Prior to using the steps set forth below, a student or his/her parent or guardian shall meet with the person with whom he/she is having a dispute. If the matter is not then settled to the complainant's satisfaction, the complainant shall present the complaint in accordance with the procedures outlined herein.

Computation of Time

The time limits of the grievance process shall be based on working days, i.e., Monday through Friday. If the day of any time line falls on a holiday, however, the time line shall be extended to the next working day. Time lines may require flexibility and, if necessary, may be modified by agreement of the parties.

Parent/Student/Guardian Grievance Procedures

All Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Brownsville shall have a grievance process for Parent/Student/Guardians. A grievance is a complaint based on any alleged violation or inequitable application of policy or a dispute over the meaning or interpretation of the rules and regulations of the Diocese and/or school.

Informal Action

Persons with concerns regarding applications or interpretation of a policy should first attempt to address the concern with the teacher. Only after such attempts have failed should administrators be contacted.

- Level One - Presentation to Teacher
- Level Two - Presentation to the Coordinator (if applicable)
- Level Three - Presentation to Principal

Formal Action

If satisfactory resolution is not reached at the resolution/conciliation level, the complainant shall state his or her complaint in writing (on a form to be provided by

the Principal), setting forth the nature of the complaint, all relevant details and the remedy sought. This form should be submitted to the Pastor within ten (10) working days following the meeting with the Principal.

Level Four - Presentation to the Pastor

If satisfactory resolution is not reached at Level Three, the complainant may appeal, in writing to the Pastor. The following procedures shall then be utilized.

- i. The complainant form containing a written statement setting forth with specificity the reason(s) dissatisfaction with the decision made at Level Three shall be submitted to the Pastor within ten (10) working days following receipt of the decision made by the Principal;
- ii. The Pastor will meet with the complainant within ten (10) days following receipt of the written complaint to hear the complaint and any other information that the pastor deems relevant;
- iii. Following the meeting, the Pastor shall issue a written decision within the first five (5) working days. The decision(s) of the Pastor regarding any matter other than school personnel is final;
- iv. If the complaint concerns school personnel and if the complainant is dissatisfied with the decision of the Pastor or if no decision is made within five (5) working days after the meeting with the Pastor, the complainant may appeal to the next level. Level Four decisions regarding any matter other than school personnel are final and will not be considered at Level Five.

Level Five - Presentation to the Superintendent

If a satisfactory resolution of a complaint concerning school personnel is not reached at Level Four, the complainant may appeal to Level Five, the Superintendent of Schools.

The following procedure shall be utilized:

- i. The written appeal shall be submitted to the Superintendent of Schools within ten (10) working days following the complainant's receipt of the Level Four decision or the expiration of the time for issuance of such decision;
- ii. The record for the Level Five consideration shall consist of all materials submitted at Level Three and Four plus a written statement setting forth with specificity the reason(s) for dissatisfaction with the decisions at Level Three and Four;
- iii. The Superintendent will meet with the complainant within ten (10) working days following receipt of the written complaint to hear the appeal and any other information that the Superintendent deems relevant;
- iv. Following the meeting, the Superintendent shall issue a written decision within five (5) working days. The decision of the Superintendent is final.

PARENT'S ROLE IN EDUCATION

We, at St. Mary's Catholic School, consider it a privilege to work with parents in the education of children because we believe parents are the primary educators of their children. Therefore, it is your right and your duty to become the primary role models for the development of your child's life---physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally,

and psychologically. Your choice of St. Mary's School involves a commitment and exhibits a concern for helping your child to recognize God as the greatest good in his/her life.

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

Once you have chosen to enter into a partnership with us at St. Mary's School, we trust you will be loyal to this commitment. During these formative years (Pre-K to 6), your child needs constant support from both parents and faculty in order to develop his/her moral, intellectual, social, cultural, and physical endowment. Neither parents nor teachers can afford to doubt the sincerity of the efforts of their educational partner in the quest of challenging, yet nourishing, the student to reach his/her potential. It is vital that both parents and teachers remember that allowing oneself to be caught between the student and the other partner will never have positive results. To divide authority between school and home or within the home will only teach disrespect of all authority. If there is an incident at school, you as parents must make investigation of the complete story your first step. Evidence of mutual respect between parents and teachers will model good mature behavior and relationships.

Students are naturally eager to grow and learn. However, sometimes in the process of maturation new interests may cause them to lose focus. As this natural process occurs, the student needs both understanding and discipline. At times, your child may perceive discipline as restrictive. However, it is boundaries and limits which provide a young person with both guidance and security. It is essential that a child take responsibility for grades he/she has earned and be accountable for homework, long-term assignments, major tests, service projects, and all other assignments. This responsibility also extends to times of absence. Together, let us begin this year with a commitment to partnership as we support one another in helping your child to become the best person he/she is capable of becoming.

Parents as Partners

As partners in the educational process at St. Mary's School, we ask parents:

To set rules, times, and limits so that your child:

- Gets to bed early on school nights;
 - Arrives at school on time and is picked up on time at the end of the day;
 - Is dressed according to the school dress code;
 - Completes assignments on time; and
 - Reviews menu with child(ren) or helps pack a nutritional sack lunch every day.
- To actively participate in school activities such as Parent-Teacher Conferences;
- To see that the student pays for any damage to school books or property due to carelessness or neglect on the part of the student;
- To notify the school with a written note when the student has been absent or tardy;

- To notify the school office of any changes of address or important phone numbers;
- To meet all financial obligations to the school;
- To inform the school of any special situation regarding the student's well-being, safety, and health;
- To complete and return to school any requested information promptly;
- To read school notes and newsletters and to show interest in the student's total education;
- To support the religious and educational goals of the school;
- To support and cooperate with the discipline policy of the school;
- To treat teachers with respect and courtesy in discussing student problems
- To address any suggestions, questions or concerns to school's administration on a timely fashion.

Parent Workshops

In support and collaboration with our families, workshops will be offered throughout the school year to address varying topics. These workshops are to help support our work as a team to ensure the success of every student spiritually, academically, emotionally and physically. As a partner in your child's education, each family will be asked to attend workshop opportunities. Attendance is for all parents but does not exclude grandparents, aunts, uncles or anyone who assists in raising and caring for our students. All are welcome.

Parent/Grandparent Volunteer Organization (Classroom Heroes)

Our school is blessed with volunteerism. Our volunteers work to support and enhance the educational ministry of the school. Fund-raising, parent education, and building community are goals of this organization. Various committees will be developed and representation will connect to the School Advisory Council via our Advancement Director. All parents will be welcome to sign-up for the various committees at the beginning of the year to support the school and be involved if they so wish.

Volunteers

All individuals who volunteer in the school in a regular consistent manner must complete the following:

- * Complete Diocesan Volunteer Application
- * Criminal Background Check
- * Complete Protecting God's Children Training (renewal every 5 years)

All volunteers are expected to dress appropriately. Clothing should be modest and neat. Volunteers are not to use cellular devices when engaged in a school activity. The main responsibility of a volunteer is to assist the administration or teacher. Volunteers are to adhere to all the policies and procedures of the school.

****RIGHT TO AMEND**

St. Mary's Catholic School reserves the right to amend this Handbook at any time. Notice of amendments will be sent to parents via e-mail communication.