



**STMARY Catholic School**

*Reaching Higher For Every Child!*

**St. Mary  
Catholic School  
Parent/Student  
Handbook  
2018-2019**



# STMARY Catholic School

*Reaching Higher For Every Child!*

Dear St. Mary Families,

At St. Mary Catholic School, we believe in forming a partnership with families in order to create an educational community that supports our mission statement...

*"to provide all children with a quality education, in which they will come to know, love and serve God."*

As in any community, the rules and procedures at St. Mary Catholic School are designed to ensure the physical and emotional safety of our students, staff and families, so that we are able to go about the work of preparing our students for high school, college, career and heaven!

Please take the time to familiarize yourself and your student with the rules and procedures outlined in this handbook. We appreciate your support in upholding the policies of St. Mary School and are grateful for your cooperation and trust. Together, we strive to educate the whole child, while keeping centered in the person of Jesus Christ.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Peace and blessings,

Gabriela Bala

Principal

**St. Mary Catholic School  
Student/Parent Handbook**

**Philosophy**

We, the community of St. Mary, believe that all children are entitled to a quality education in a faith-filled environment where Catholic values and academic achievement are nurtured; that, as caring educators, we share with parents and the community the responsibility of helping children grow spiritually, academically and socially; that each child is unique and loved by God.

**Mission Statement**

We, the community of St. Mary Catholic School, will provide all children with a quality education in which they will come to know, love and serve God.

**School Address and Phone Numbers:**

St. Mary Catholic School  
628 S. Lafayette  
Royal Oak, Michigan 48067  
Office Phone: (248) 545-2140  
Latchkey Phone: (248) 545-4584  
Fax: (248) 545-2303  
Website: [www.st-maryroyaloak.org](http://www.st-maryroyaloak.org)  
E-Mail: [info@st-mary.org](mailto:info@st-mary.org)

**School Office Hours**

Monday through Friday: 7:30 A.M. - 3:05 P.M.

The doors to the school are locked from the outside at all times. Students and visitors are instructed not to open the doors for anyone, even if it is someone they know.

Anyone who wishes to enter the building must ring the bell and enter through the front door. Our security system allows for intercom, ring-in capability and video surveillance.

All visitors, including parents, are asked to check in at the office. **Please do not go directly to a classroom without checking in.** This is for the safety of our children.

**Important Notice:** *If adults are in the building to drop off their child regularly, volunteer for classroom help or a field trip, coach, or are a scout leader, it is necessary for you to have the **ICHAT** form filled out and handed into the office and attend the “**Protecting God’s Children**” training.*

Student school day schedule:

8:00 A.M.	Students enter class
8:05 A.M.	Students in the room, Ready to Learn
8:10 A.M.	Morning Prayer
11:00 – 1:20	Lunch/Recess
3:15 P.M.	Dismissal

Half-day dismissal is at 11:45 A.M. These days are noted on the calendar and in weekly updates and reminders.

**Conflict Resolution**

All conflicts should be addressed at the lowest level whenever possible. Student(s) / Parent(s) finding themselves in conflict with another person should first go directly to that person. If a conflict is not resolved at this level, the Teacher should be contacted. Conflicts left unresolved at this point would be addressed to the principal/assistant principal. Further appeal may be made to the pastor.

## Student Code of Conduct

Students and parents must realize that rules are made for the benefit of all; that the registration of a student is considered an agreement on the part of the student and the parents that they comply with the regulations as stated herein.

School rules apply in school, at all school functions, games, trips and events; or school sponsored functions, games, trips and events; in church, the parish hall, St. Mary property, and on the way to school or on the way home from school.

### Beliefs about Student Conduct

It is the belief of the administration and staff that we need to help students to become responsible members of St. Mary Catholic School. This will prepare them to be responsible adults. It is further believed that this is accomplished by giving students opportunities to practice responsibility and whenever possible, in "real world" ways. It is also our belief that natural consequences with empathy from the adults in their lives will do the teaching. These beliefs are derived from a discipline program called "Discipline with Love and Logic" created by Jim Fay and Dr. Foster Cline.

The natural consequence of some behavior may lead to a recommendation for exclusion from school by way of suspension and/or expulsion as provided for by the State of Michigan.

Students who establish a pattern of disruption will be referred to the principal/assistant principal for prompt action. Disrespect for adults and fellow students will not be tolerated. The following are types of behaviors never appropriate at our school and are considered infractions of the Student Code of Conduct. Any of the infractions indicated below, when considered in the context of the circumstances surrounding their occurrences and/or student's behavior record may lead to a recommendation for exclusion from school by way of suspension and/or expulsion.

**The authority to make responsible rules and regulations regarding discipline and to authorize suspension and/or expulsion is granted under Michigan Law as indicated in Section 340.613 and 340.614 of General School Laws of the State of Michigan.**

### School Infractions

Any actions that cause physical harm to self or others, any actions that disrupt the classroom and prevent others from learning and any violations of the law are considered forms of unacceptable conduct.

**1. Students may be disciplined, up to and including expulsion, for conduct inside or outside school that is deemed by the principal/assistant principal or pastor as detrimental to the school community.**

**2. The principal or pastor reserves the right at his/her discretion in the best interest of the school to waive and/or deviate from any and all disciplinary rules, practices or procedures.**

### Suspension

Suspension is the forfeiture of a student's right to attend class due to a variety of offenses. As a rule, suspensions are served in school, but isolated from the rest of the student body, for a length of time determined by the principal. Recognizing that discipline and academics are two separate categories, students will have the opportunity to make up work missed while on suspension, but the STUDENT must initiate the process, NOT THE TEACHER. The completion time and amount of work will be reasonable and determined by the teacher. Students may be suspended for:

*Insubordination, fighting, disruptive behavior, truancy, leaving school grounds without permission, vulgar or abusive language or behavior, etc.*

Generally, the steps followed are:

First Offense	One day in/out school suspension
Second Offense	Three days in/out school suspension
Third Offense	Five days out of school suspension
Fourth Offense	Expulsion

### Suspension Procedure

Within one school day of the suspension a phone or personal conference must be held between the parent/guardian

of the student and the administration. School work will be given for both in and out-of-school suspension. It is the student's responsibility to make up all work. The authority to suspend is reserved for the principal.

## **Expulsion**

Expulsion is the permanent removal of a student from school. Violations, multiple suspensions, conduct, (both in and out of school) which is determined by school administration to be contrary to the best interests of the school and/or detrimental to the good name of the school and academic failure or a determination by the administration that the school is unable to meet the needs of the student may lead to expulsion. The authority to expel is reserved for the principal. The following list includes examples of behaviors which may lead to possible expulsion:

*Possession or use of any unauthorized drugs (tobacco, marijuana, or alcohol)*

*Arson*

*Possession of a weapon*

*Violent acts against any person or fighting*

*Threats of a serious nature*

*Sexually inappropriate behavior/Sexual Harassment*

*Insubordination to an adult in authority*

*Initiation of a false fire alarm or bomb threat*

*Gross or repeated conduct which is disruptive to the educational process*

*Leaving the school grounds without permission*

*Malicious destruction, vandalism, or misuse of parish properties, teacher/staff properties, student properties or other properties (adequate restitution for damages will be mandatory)*

*Inappropriate language*

*Stealing*

*Cheating*

*Failure to cooperate fully in any investigation for expulsion from school*

*Repeated suspensions without improvement*

*Consistent lack of parental cooperation*

*Other actions deemed serious by the administration.*

**Parents who overtly display a negative attitude toward school policies, the principal, assistant principal, teachers or staff and thereby undermine the authority of the school can be the cause of their child's dismissal from the school.**

## **Procedure for Expulsion**

A phone or personal conference will be made with the parent/guardian the day of the recommended expulsion.

The conference content will include information regarding procedures for seeking review by administration, including the time frame in which such review must be sought.

Parent/guardian shall be present at the conference. If advance notice (at least one school day) is provided to administration, it may, at its discretion permit other faculty, staff members, or students to attend the conference to provide relevant information. However, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to secure the attendance of such other students at the conference. No other persons (i.e. relative, friend, advisor, attorney, etc.) will be permitted to attend.

Within a reasonable time after the conference, the student and the parent/guardian will be notified as to whether the student will be asked not to return to school.

## **Appeals Process**

In all cases where disciplinary sanctions have been imposed, a student and his/her parents have the right to a hearing with the principal and the pastor. Hearings on appeal need not repeat matters of procedures accomplished at a prior conference.

Steps in the Process of Appeals are as follows:

Notification of desire to appeal disciplinary measures imposed should be submitted in writing to the principal's office within three school days of the expulsion.

A meeting will be held with the principal and the parents of the student involved within three school days of the principal receiving written notice of appeal.

Parents may request a meeting with the pastor of St. Mary Catholic Church.

The decision of the pastor is final.

Tuition refunds are not given for a student who is expelled.

## **Failing Conduct Grade**

A student who receives a failing grade in conduct will be considered to be on disciplinary probation. If no significant improvement is noted, the school reserves the right to deny enrollment the next semester of the school year.

## **Special Policies**

### **Weapons Policy**

State law requires the reporting of possession of a “dangerous weapon” to the local law enforcement agency. “Dangerous weapon” includes a firearm, dagger, dirk, and stiletto, knife with a blade over 3 inches long, pocket knife opened by mechanical device, iron bar or brass knuckles.

Because St. Mary Catholic School participates in Federal Programs (Title IA, II A, II, IV Drug-Free, Milk, E-Rate, etc.), our policy must include a provision for expulsion as stated in the Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994.

#### **Definitions:**

A weapon is any object which can be used to threaten or injure another. It includes but is not limited to “dangerous weapons” as defined by the State law which is included in the policy.

School premises include the school building and the adjacent grounds including but not limited to parking lot/playground, busses, and at school sponsored events on or off property.

Immediate vicinity of the school means a block radius of the school.

### **Policy**

Any student discovered to be, or suspected of carrying, possessing, concealing or transferring a weapon on school premises or in the immediate vicinity of the school shall be immediately excluded from classes pending investigation.

A search can be conducted to verify the suspicion or clarify the discovery. It may include without prior warning an inspection and search of a student’s person, pockets (the student empties his/her own pockets), book bags, purse, lunch box, locker, etc. Questioning of the same purposes may include questioning by the principal, a member of the administrative team, a school teacher, the pastor or a person acting in the place of any of these.

When a body search is conducted, it shall be in the principal’s or pastor’s office, or another appropriate place. Another person of the same sex should conduct the search of the student.

If a student refuses to cooperate or interferes with a search of a person or possessions or premises, s/he should be warned that refusal to cooperate without legitimate reason will result in disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from school.

Depending on the nature of the weapon, the local police department shall be notified immediately and if possible, the student detained whenever the school has reason to suspect a student may have a weapon or when a weapon is present on school premises.

Any student found to be in violation of the school’s policy is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion (permanent dismissal).

If an injury occurs in school, on school premises or in the immediate vicinity, as the result of a student carrying a weapon, the principal and teachers shall endeavor:

- a. to have students remain calm and avoid panic;
- b. to notify the police, the pastor;
- c. to secure the school;
- d. and to notify and consult with the immediate supervisor or other appropriate party in the Catholic Schools Office. The Superintendent’s Office will, in turn, notify appropriate offices in the Archdiocesan Central Service.

The principal may exercise the options to keep non-school persons out of the school and/or retain students in the school until police have completed their investigation.

Any student determined to have brought a firearm to school will be expelled for a period of not less than one year.

The term **firearm** means:

any weapon including a starter gun which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile

by the action of an explosive;  
the frame or receiver of any such weapons;  
any firearm muffler or firearm silencer;  
any destructive device.

## **Sexual Harassment**

The Archbishop officially promulgated the following policy on sexual and other forms of illegal harassment for all schools. (Policies 4003 and 5145)

It is the policy of the Archdiocese of Detroit and St. Mary Catholic School to make every effort to provide an educational environment as well as a work environment, free from all forms of harassment. This policy applies to the actions of all faculty, staff and students at St. Mary Catholic School, as well as others who may be in a working relationship with the school. The Archdiocese of Detroit and St. Mary Catholic School are open to and respect the complaints brought under this policy. Respect for the dignity and worth of each individual is a basic tenet of St. Mary Catholic School. Each individual faculty, staff member, student, or others who are in a working relationship with the school, are entitled to work/attend school in an environment free from discriminatory practices, including sexual and other forms of illegal harassment. All will be held to standards of conduct which ensure that the school is free from sexual and other forms of illegal harassment.

St. Mary Catholic School will neither tolerate sexual harassment nor reprisals against any employee, student, or other persons who make a sexual harassment complaint. Any faculty or other staff member who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, including termination of employment. Any supervisor or faculty member who receives a complaint of sexual harassment and fails to take corrective action pursuant to this policy is also subject to disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

Students are expected to treat all persons, including each other, with respect and dignity. Accordingly, sexually inappropriate behavior directed at faculty, staff or other students will not be tolerated. Such behavior will result in disciplinary action, up to and including exclusion from school.

### **Definition of Sexual Harassment - Work Environment**

Sexual harassment refers to behavior that is not welcome, that personally is offensive to some people, and fails to respect the rights of others. Harassment can be either conduct or communication. Actions that seem harmless or amusing to some may be offensive to others. Sexual harassment is defined as any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

Submission to such conduct is made an explicit or implicit term or condition of an individual's continued employment, promotion, or school related pursuits. This can occur by clearly stated or implied words or actions.

Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for employment or working relationship decisions affecting the harassed person.

Such conduct is intended or has the effect of interfering with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

### **Definitions of Sexual Harassment - Student Relationships**

Sexual harassment refers to sexually inappropriate behavior that is not welcome, that is personally offensive to someone, and fails to respect the rights of others. Harassment can be either conduct or communication. Accordingly, sexually inappropriate behavior means inappropriate touching, gestures, and language of a sexual nature directed at faculty, staff or other students. Sexual harassment also includes conduct or communication that has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with another student's education, or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment.

### **Examples of Sexual Harassment**

- Sexual innuendoes
- Jokes of a sexual nature
- Sexual propositions
- Sexually suggestive pictures or cartoons
- Foul and obscene language, jokes or gestures
- Unwanted and unnecessary physical contact
- Unwelcome comments about appearance

The school will designate a person to answer questions and disseminate information about the policy, investigate complaints and take appropriate action. Any faculty, staff member, student or other person, in a working relationship with St. Mary Catholic School, who is determined to have engaged in harassment in violation of this policy, will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or exclusion from school.

Retaliation in any form against a person who exercises his or her right to make a complaint under this policy is strictly prohibited, and will result in appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or exclusion from school.

### **Illegal Substances**

Our school's policy is that all school rules and regulations, and state and federal laws, will be enforced by school officials. The possession, use, manufacture, sale or distribution of alcoholic beverages, controlled substances, paraphernalia, or tobacco by students in school or at school sponsored events is expressly forbidden and subject to consequences as outlined in the rules and regulations of the school.

The student will be held accountable for his/her behavior. The situation will be assessed in the context of the whole person in order to determine what type of education, intervention or support services will be most helpful to the student.

### **Social Networking**

It is the policy of the school that no parent, student or staff member shall post on a social network (Facebook, for example) any negativity regarding St. Mary Catholic School, St. Mary Parish or any student, parent or staff member of such. Also, pictures or videos from school or parish events that include children for whom you are not the legal guardian cannot be posted on any social networking sites. Please note that it is Facebook's policy that you must be 13 to have a Facebook account. We strongly suggest that this guideline is followed.

### **Pregnant Students**

The Church's teachings affirm and support human life. We will, therefore, safeguard human life and support the pregnant student in a sensitive and loving manner. St. Mary Catholic School will:  
Provide an uninterrupted academic educational program supported by counseling, for one or both parties.  
Support the student by enhancing her self-esteem and self-concept, both for her sake and that of the unborn child.  
Address pregnancy in the same context as any other physical condition that may impact school attendance and participation in activities such as physical education, cheerleading, etc.  
St. Mary Catholic School will follow this policy in the Christian manner in which it was intended.

### **Dress Code**

Because we believe that the way a child dresses affects his/her behavior and attitude, students at St. Mary Catholic School have a dress code which is in effect from the first day of school until the last day of school in June. All students are expected to follow the dress code every day. The following consequences for dress code violations were suggested by the St. Mary School Committee.

#### Dress Code Violation K-3

First Infraction – Verbal Warning

Second Infraction — Letter Home to Parents – must be signed and returned the next day. Violation must be corrected within 48 hours.

Third Infractions – Parents will come to school to fix issue.

Each quarter students will begin with zero violations. For repeated and ongoing dress code violations, a meeting with school administration may be required.

#### Dress Violation 4-8

First Infraction – Verbal Reminder

Second Infraction – Email sent home to parents – must be signed and returned the next day. Violation must be corrected within 48 hours.

Third Infraction – Recess Detention

Each quarter students will begin with zero violations. Once your child has reached three violations they will continue to receive detention. After three detentions there will be a meeting with the assistant principal

The following are the current Uniform Guidelines that went into effect during the 2008-2009 school year. All the uniform pieces can be ordered through Dennis Uniform at [www.dennisuniform.com](http://www.dennisuniform.com) and using School Code HMY, by calling 800.854.6951 or you can shop at their store at 1532 N. Opdyke Road, Auburn Hills, MI 48326.

Shoes should not contain logos or brand trademarks.

### Hairstyles

Hair must be neat, well-groomed and clean; fad type haircuts are not permitted – including “feathers” and colored highlights. Bangs are to be above the eyebrow. Styles which cover the eye are not permitted. Boys: length of hair in the back may not touch the shirt collar and must be above the ear on the sides. Also, boys may not have facial hair, i.e.; mustache, beard, goatee, sideburns, etc. Headbands should be simple, brown, black or of colors found in our uniform plaid. Headbands should not have large embellishments.

### Make-Up/ Body Art

Make-up (including nail polish) is not permitted. Colored/tinted lip glosses/lip balms are not permitted. No tattoos either temporary or permanent.

### Jewelry

Girls may wear small post earrings, no more than one per ear. Students may wear a wristwatch and/or a religious medal or cross (under the clothing). No other jewelry is permitted.

The student dress code is written in such a way as to say **what** a student may wear. This means that anything else is not permitted. For example, the rule regarding jewelry does not say that boys may wear earrings; therefore, they may not. Questions about dress code should be directed to the office.

### Warm Weather Uniform – when temperature is 65° or above

	Girls K-5	Girls 6-8	Boys K-5	Boys 6-8
<b>Everyday Uniform Top</b>	Light Blue Polo Shirt with Logo	Light Blue Polo Shirt with Logo	Light Blue Polo Shirt with Logo	Light Blue Polo Shirt with Logo
<b>Everyday Uniform Bottoms</b>	<i>Belair</i> Plaid Uniform Jumper, <i>Belair</i> Plaid Uniform Skort or Navy Blue Knee Length Uniform Shorts Jumper length should be no more than 4” above the knee	<i>Belair</i> Plaid Uniform Skirt or skort or Khaki Knee Length Uniform Shorts Skirt length should be no more than 4” above the knee	Navy Blue Knee Length Uniform Shorts	Khaki Knee Length Uniform Shorts
<b>Shoes</b>	<b>Solid</b> Colored Black, Brown or Navy Dress or Casual Shoe	<b>Solid</b> Colored Black, Brown or Navy Dress or Casual Shoe	<b>Solid</b> Colored Black or Brown Dress or Casual Shoe	<b>Solid</b> Colored Black or Brown Dress or Casual Shoe
<b>Socks</b>	Navy, Black or White Crew or Knee Socks – No Athletic Socks	Navy, Black or White Crew or Knee Socks – No Athletic Socks	Navy or Black Dress Socks – No Athletic Socks	Navy, Black or Khaki Dress Socks – No Athletic Socks

<b>Gym Uniform</b>	St. Mary Catholic School Logo: Navy or Grey T-shirt, Navy Shorts, Navy Sweatshirt and Navy Sweatpants, Socks and Non-Marking Gym Shoes	St. Mary Catholic School Logo: Navy or Grey T-shirt, Navy Shorts, Navy Sweatshirt and Navy Sweatpants, Socks and Non-Marking Gym Shoes	St. Mary Catholic School Logo: Navy or Grey T-shirt, Navy Shorts, Navy Sweatshirt and Navy Sweatpants, Socks and Non-Marking Gym Shoes	St. Mary Catholic School Logo: Navy or Grey T-shirt, Navy Shorts, Navy Sweatshirt and Navy Sweatpants, Socks and Non-Marking Gym Shoes
<b>Mass/Holy Day Uniform</b>	Light Blue Peter Pan Blouse with Logo, <i>Belair</i> Plaid Uniform Jumper. Socks and Shoes as listed above Jumper length should be no more than 4" above the knee	Light Blue Peter Pan Blouse with Logo, <i>Belair</i> Plaid Uniform skirt. Socks and Shoes as listed above Skirt length should be no more than 4" above the knee	Light Blue Oxford Shirt with Logo Navy Uniform Pants Navy or <i>Belair</i> Plaid Tie Socks and Shoes as listed above	Light Blue Oxford Shirt with Logo Khaki Uniform Pants Navy or <i>Belair</i> Plaid Tie Socks and Shoes as listed above
<b>Jeans Day Uniform</b>	Jeans, Jean Shorts or Jean Skirt or Jumper Appropriate Top. Appropriate footwear Athletic shoes are acceptable *no flip flops	Jeans, Jean Shorts or Jean Skirt or Jumper Appropriate Top. Appropriate footwear Athletic shoes are acceptable *no flip flops	Jeans or Jean Shorts Appropriate Top. Appropriate footwear Athletic shoes are acceptable *no flip flops	Jeans or Jean Shorts Appropriate Top. Appropriate footwear Athletic shoes are acceptable *no flip flops

**Note: Students in Grades 4-8 must wear a belt with their uniform pants/shorts.**

**Cold Weather Uniform under 65 degrees**

	<b>Girls K-5</b>	<b>Girls 6-8</b>	<b>Boys K-5</b>	<b>Boys 6-8</b>
<b>Everyday Uniform Top</b>	Light Blue Polo Shirt with Logo			
<b>Everyday Uniform Bottoms</b>	<i>Belair</i> Plaid Uniform Jumper Navy Blue Dress Pants Jumper length should be no more than 4" above the knee	<i>Belair</i> Plaid Uniform Skirt or Khaki Dress Pants Skirt length should be no more than 4" above the knee	Navy Blue Dress Pants	Khaki Dress Pants
<b>Shoes</b>	<b>Solid</b> Colored Black, Brown or Navy Dress or Casual Shoe	<b>Solid</b> Colored Black, Brown or Navy Dress or Casual Shoe	<b>Solid</b> Colored Black or Brown Dress or Casual Shoe	<b>Solid</b> Colored Black or Brown Dress or Casual Shoe
<b>Socks</b>	Navy, Black or White Dress Socks, Tights or Leggings – No Athletic Socks	Navy, Black or White Dress Socks, Tights or Leggings – No Athletic Socks	Navy or Black Dress Socks – No Athletic Socks	Navy, Black or Khaki Dress Socks – No Athletic Socks
<b>Gym Uniform</b>	St. Mary Catholic School Logo: Navy or Grey T-shirt, Navy Sweatshirt and Navy Sweatpants, Socks and Non-Marking Gym Shoes	St. Mary Catholic School Logo: Navy or Grey T-shirt, Navy Sweatshirt and Navy Sweatpants, Socks and Non-Marking Gym Shoes	St. Mary Catholic School Logo: Navy or Grey T-shirt, Navy Sweatshirt and Navy Sweatpants, Socks and Non-Marking Gym Shoes	St. Mary Catholic School Logo: Navy or Grey T-shirt, Navy Sweatshirt and Navy Sweatpants, Socks and Non-Marking Gym Shoes

<b>Sweater Fleece or Sweatshirt</b>	Navy Cardigan Sweater or V-neck Vest with Logo, Navy Fleece with Logo, Navy ¼ Zip Sweatshirt with Logo	Navy Cardigan Sweater or V-neck Vest with Logo, Navy Fleece with Logo, Navy ¼ Zip Sweatshirt with Logo	Navy Cardigan Sweater or V-neck Vest with Logo, Navy Fleece with Logo, Navy ¼ Zip Sweatshirt with Logo	Navy Cardigan Sweater or V-neck Vest with Logo, Navy Fleece with Logo, Navy ¼ Zip Sweatshirt with Logo
<b>Mass/Holy Day Uniform</b>	Light Blue Blouse with Logo, <i>Hunter/Classic Navy Plaid Uniform Jumper</i> . Socks and Shoes as listed above Navy Cardigan Sweater or V-neck Vest with Logo Jumper length should be no more than 4" above the knee	Light Blue Blouse with Logo, <i>Hunter/Classic Navy Plaid Uniform Skirt</i> . Socks and Shoes as listed above Navy Cardigan Sweater or V-neck Vest with Logo Skirt length should be no more than 4" above the knee	Light Blue Oxford Shirt with Logo Navy Uniform Pants Navy Tie Socks and Shoes as listed above Navy Cardigan Sweater or V-neck Vest with Logo	Light Blue Oxford Shirt with Logo Khaki Uniform Pants Navy Tie Socks and Shoes as listed above Navy Cardigan Sweater or V-neck Vest with Logo
<b>Jeans Day Uniform*</b>	Jeans, Jean Skirt or Jumper Appropriate Top. Appropriate footwear Athletic shoes are acceptable	Jeans, Jean Skirt or Jumper Appropriate Top. Appropriate footwear Athletic shoes are acceptable	Jeans Appropriate Top. Appropriate footwear Athletic shoes are acceptable	Jeans Appropriate Top. Appropriate footwear Athletic shoes are acceptable

### Items Not Permitted in School

Radios, MP3 players, tapes/CD's, computer games and any other electronic games/devices are not permitted anywhere on St. Mary property, at any time. Cell phones may be kept in a student's backpack, but **must** be turned off. Other items include rollerblades, skateboards, trading cards or collectibles, hair spray or make-up, large sums of money, or anything deemed unsafe by the administration. These items could be confiscated and held in the office until the end of the school year.

### Lunchroom/Playground

There is a hot lunch program available at St. Mary Catholic School. Children may also bring a bag lunch. Children who carry their lunches may buy milk or juice for \$.30 each. Lunches may be purchased for \$4.00per day. A monthly menu is sent home with each child that can be filled out and sent back to school with payment. If students forget their lunch a peanut butter and jelly sandwich or a bagel and cream cheese and a drink will be offered.

Students are to behave in a moderate, orderly, courteous manner while in the lunchroom and on the playground. Students are responsible for their own trash and litter. They are expected to leave their place clean and orderly. No pushing, tripping, fighting, or grabbing will be acceptable. No student is allowed to take food from another or to throw food. No projectiles such as snowballs, ice balls, dirt or rocks etc., are to be thrown or even made at any time on school property. This rule extends off school property when it involves other St. Mary students on the way to or from school.

### Food Allergy Policy

Food allergies can be life threatening. The risk of accidental exposure to foods can be reduced in the school setting if schools work with students, parents and physicians to minimize risks and provide a safe educational environment for food-allergic students.

#### Family's Responsibility:

- Notify the school of the child's allergies.
- Work with the school team to develop a plan that accommodates the child's needs throughout the school including in the classroom in the cafeteria, in after-care programs and during school-sponsored activities, as well as a Food Allergy Action Plan and Dispensing Medication Form.

- Provide written medical documentation, instructions and medication as directed by a physician, using the Food Allergy Action Plan and Dispensing Medication Form as a guide. Include a photo of the child on written form.
- Provide properly labeled medications and replace medications after use or upon expiration.
- Educate the child in the self-management of their food allergy including:
  - Safe and unsafe foods
  - Strategies for avoiding exposure to unsafe foods
  - Symptoms of allergic reactions
  - How and when to tell an adult they may be having an allergy-related problem
  - How to read food labels (age appropriate)
- Review policies/procedures with the school staff, the child's physician and the child (if age appropriate) after a reaction has occurred.
- Provide emergency contact information.

#### School's Responsibility:

- Be knowledgeable about and follow applicable federal laws including ADA, IDEA, Section 504 and FERPA and any state laws or district policies that apply.
- Review the health records submitted by parents and physicians.
- Include food-allergic students in school activities. Students should not be excluded from school activities solely based on their food allergy.
- Identify a core team of, but not limited to, a teacher, principal, office staff and school food service employees to work with parents and the student (age appropriate) to establish a prevention plan. Changes to the prevention plan to promote food allergy management should be made with core team participation.
- Assure that all staff who interact with the student on a regular basis understands food allergy, can recognize symptoms, knows what to do in an emergency and works with other school staff to eliminate the use of food allergens in the allergic student's meals, educational tools, arts and crafts projects or incentives.
- Practice the Food Allergy Action Plans before an allergic reaction occurs to assure the efficiency/effectiveness of the plans.
- Designate school personnel who are properly trained to administer medications in accordance with the State Nursing and Good Samaritan Laws governing the administration of emergency medications.
- Be prepared to handle a reaction and ensure that there is a staff member available who is properly trained to administer medications during the school day regardless of time or location.
- Review policies/prevention plan with the core team members, parents/guardians, student (age appropriate) and physician after a reaction has occurred.
- Discuss field trips with the family of the food-allergic child to decide appropriate strategies for managing the food allergy.
- Follow federal/state/district laws and regulations regarding sharing medical information about the student.
- Take threats or harassment against an allergic child seriously.

#### Student's Responsibility:

- Should not trade food with others.
- Should not eat anything with unknown ingredients or known to contain any allergen.
- Should be proactive in the care and management of their food allergies and reactions based on their developmental level.
- Should notify an adult immediately if they eat something they believe may contain the food to which they are allergic.

#### **Wellness Policy**

All Catholic Schools are committed to providing a school environment that promotes and protects our children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of the Archdiocese Catholic Schools that all students in grades K-12 will have opportunities, support and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis. Each student attends Physical Education class once a week. In addition:

- Parents are encouraged to provide a healthy breakfast each day, and if packing a lunch for their children to provide only healthy choices from each food group.
- The Archdiocese of Detroit School Hot Lunch program served at all schools meets the nutrition recommendations of the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- Cafeteria workers are trained in foodservice handling and abide by the local health code policies.
- Teachers promote hand washing or hand sanitizing before lunch periods or snack breaks.
- The school provides a clean, safe, and pleasant setting and adequate time for students to eat.

- The school schedules appropriate lunch periods followed by outdoor recess whenever possible. Playgrounds are monitored by adults and checked for safety.
- The school accommodates the tooth-brushing regimens of students with special oral health needs such as orthodontics or high tooth decay risks.
- Parents sending in snacks or special treats are encouraged to provide only healthy choices such as fruits or vegetables.
- Schools accommodate the needs of children with food or drug allergies by providing separate dining areas that are constantly monitored for exposure to known allergies.
- Schools have no soda or candy vending machines on the premises.

The CYO program at the schools is incredibly strong and encompasses 60% of the student bodily from grades 4-8. CYO shows our students the importance of sports, sportsmanship, and camaraderie. Students must comply with CYO guidelines by maintaining grades and participating in school encouraging a physically and mentally healthy child.

The Physical Education program at all Catholic Schools exposes the students to a variety of lifelong activities. Students are taught the benefits of living a healthy active lifestyle and learn that the heart muscle is the most important muscle of all. Along with teaching the game and skill concepts, students learn cooperation and sportsmanship through team building lessons. The students are also taught proper character traits that will stay with them well into adulthood.

At the K-2 grade level, students are taught basic movement patterns along with the manipulation of various sports equipment. The skills they learn at this level will prepare them for the later grades when team and individual games are taught.

At the 3-8 grade level, there are a wide variety of sports activities taught. The purpose is to find an activity that everyone can enjoy and achieve success in. Upon the completion of 8<sup>th</sup> grade, every student should have a broad knowledge of numerous sports and the rules they encompass.

## **Administrative Policies**

### **Attendance**

Students should be at school **no earlier** than 7:45 A.M. Otherwise, they will be expected to report to Latchkey and will be charged for that time. Students should be in school and seated at their respective seats by the time the 8:05 A.M. bell rings. Students who come in after that time are considered tardy, even if only by a few seconds. Students are to enter the building through the front doors (Lafayette St.) only. Parents are asked to **not** accompany their student to the classroom. If it is necessary to visit a teacher, please stop in the office first.

To ensure the safety of your child, please call the office by 8:30 A.M. to report an absence and the reason. Call each day that the student is absent.

### **Absenteeism**

Students who miss school are expected to make up their work. Upon returning to school a written excuse must be presented to the office. Parents who foresee an absence should notify the teacher and the office in advance. An unexcused absence is defined as being absent from school without a phone call, note or pre-arrangement. Any student who has more than 10 days of unexcused absences in a quarter does not qualify for a report card for that quarter. This is regarded as an "F" grade in averaging final marks. Absences for two quarters which result in no grades may result in the student being retained in the same grade for the next year. Parents of students who miss 10 days or more must attend a conference with the teacher and principal. The school strongly discourages vacations on school time.

### **Tardiness**

Students are considered tardy if they arrive to the classroom after 8:05 A.M. Students who are late and miss their first class of the day will be marked absent for that class. More than 8 tardy incidences in the quarter a letter will be sent home and a meeting with the administration may be necessary.

### **Early Dismissal**

Whenever possible, medical and dental appointments should take place outside of school hours. Parents are requested to send a note to the teacher and office or call the office by 8:30 A.M. on the day the early dismissal is to take place. Parents must sign out the student in the Early Dismissal Log Book, which is kept in the school office any time a student is taken out of the building.

### **Accommodations for Specials Classes**

Occasionally there will be times when a child is unable to attend the Specials Classes (Spanish, Gym, Library, Computer, Music or Art). This could be due to an injury or special circumstance. In this instance, every attempt will be made to have an activity pertaining to that class available in the office for the student to work on during that class time.

### **Latchkey**

Extended care is available on site at St. Mary Catholic School both before and after school, with the exception of some half-days and snow days. Latchkey is closed when school is also closed. Morning hours are 7:00 - 8:00 A.M. Evening hours are 3:15 - 6:15 P.M. Because of insurance issues students may NOT be dropped off before 7:00 a.m.

### **Caravan**

No one should be parking in the Lafayette lot and crossing the caravan line to enter the school. IF you must do this because of overflow from the Rectory Lot, please know that in the case of the caravan, it should not be assumed that pedestrians have the right of way. Pedestrians should wait until all of the cars pull up and stop. When cars allow pedestrians to cross the caravan line, it backs up the caravan and most importantly, creates a very dangerous situation, as many drivers are not expecting to see people darting across the lot.

Our expectation is that students in the kindergarten through eighth grade will be dropped off and picked up in the caravan. Parking and walking in should be the exception, rather than the rule.

The procedure for the dismissal caravan on Lafayette Street is as follows: Cars should be wrapping around the parking lot and, if necessary, lining up in front of the Fellowship Center and the Church, heading north into the main school parking lot. No one should be entering at the north parking lot entrance, especially when there are cars already lined up. To help with this, and also to deter the public from parking in the area where we have recess, we will be blocking off the north entrance from 8:30 a.m. through dismissal.

If your child needs assistance buckling their car seat or seat belt, he/she should get in the car and then please pull all the way forward in the caravan line before getting out to help your child.

We hope that everyone fully understands that the purpose in insisting on the proper drop-off and pick-up procedure is to create the safest possible situation for our students. We hear over and over again, from adults who have experienced the arrival and dismissal routines at other schools, that our system is far better than any other. We dismiss over 200 students, safely and orderly, in 15 minutes. Please inform anyone who drops off or picks up your child (grandparents, relatives, babysitters, etc.) of the proper procedure for the caravan.

### **Arrival**

Students are to be dropped off at the Lafayette Street doors. Parents dropping off students drive into the parking lot at the northernmost entrance and drive straight into the lot toward the school, across the front of the building to the front doors. If students arrive before 8:00 AM they must go to Latchkey.

#### **Very Important!**

*Students are to exit their cars from the passenger side only; they should **NEVER** cross in front of or behind a car. Students are to come directly into the building.*

### **Dismissal**

Students are dismissed at 3:15 P.M. Students are to be picked up in the car caravan at their designated doors only. K-3 is picked up on the Lafayette side. Grades 4-8 and younger siblings are picked up on the West Street side of the building. Parents picking up on West Street drive north on West from Lincoln. Students are to enter their cars from the passenger side only; they should never cross in front of or behind a car. If parents need to enter the building for school business at the end of the day, please wait until the caravan is finished.

### **Playground Use**

Students and families may use the playground after school from 3:15 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. At 4:00 p.m., we respectfully ask that all school families leave the playground so that our Latchkey students may use it from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

At 5:00 p.m. the full-day preschool will use the playground.

## **Admissions Policy**

St. Mary Catholic School recognizes its limitations in terms of budget and resources. St. Mary also recognizes the desire of all families for their students to have a Catholic Education. The school is not equipped to help children with severe learning, physical, psychological and/or behavioral difficulties. Children are looked at on a case by case basis. Therefore, in justice, the administration may admit or not admit children based on their needs, the present classroom needs, and what is best for the entire classroom population. This is also a matter of justice to the other parents and children of the school. St. Mary admits students of any race, national or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally offered in the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, national, or ethnic origin or gender in the administration of hiring, personnel and educational policies, as well as athletic and other school administered programs, as required by the terms of TITLE IX of the Education Act of 1972, PL 92-318.

New students may be expected to take an entrance exam. New students entering grades 1-8 will be expected to present the most recent report card and standardized testing from the previous school. Testing may be waived at the discretion of the principal based upon a favorable report card and recommendation from the principal of another Catholic school.

### **All new students are considered to be on academic and behavioral probation for one academic semester.**

New students who do not follow the policies of the school as set forth in this handbook may be asked to seek another school to attend at any time during this probationary period.

An essential criterion for admission is the informed acceptance by the student and parents of the fact that this school is Catholic in philosophy and practice. All students must take the religious education courses offered for their grade level, participate in the worshipping community while in school, and agree to act in a manner consistent with Christian values. Parents/guardians are expected to cooperate with all administrative and educational policies of the school. Parents/guardians who do not fully cooperate with the school may be asked to withdraw their child/children from school.

Children admitted to PK (3) must be 3 by September 1. Children admitted to PK (4) must be 4 by September 1. Children admitted into Kindergarten must be 5 by September 1, 2016.

Since the Fall of 2015, children must be 5 by September 1<sup>st</sup> to enter Kindergarten. This is a state law. Children turning 5 in September, October or November must demonstrate readiness as measured by the Brigance Test AND must have a St. Mary Social Readiness Assessment completed by the child's current preschool teacher. The decision to admit a child who is not 5 by September 1<sup>st</sup>, is determined at the discretion of St. Mary administration.

Acceptance of students for admission or re-admission will be judged individually on the basis of past scholarship and citizenship records. Admission may be denied individuals for any reason deemed to be appropriate by school or parish authorities, including but not limited to the following:

Students with past disciplinary or academic problems

Students who require special services

Students whose families fail to meet financial responsibilities to the school or parish previously attended.

Acceptance of new students will not be final until all school records are received and verified.

### **Admission priority will be as follows:**

Siblings of currently enrolled students dependent on available classroom space.

Children of registered, contributing and participating members of St. Mary Parish.

Other Catholic or non-Catholic students.

## **Basic Requirements for Admission**

Parents must read and be in agreement with the Student Code of Conduct and the Mission Statement of St. Mary Catholic School.

Parents must pledge to support and cooperate with the faculty in:

a. supervising and assisting children in studies and homework.

b. decisively upholding school regulations.

c. making earnest efforts in helping the child attain the goals as stated in the St. Mary Catholic School Mission Statement.

d. seeing that the student attends school regularly and on time.

Students transferring to St. Mary Catholic School must bring current report cards and recent standardized testing with them to apply for admission. They must indicate good marks in conduct and citizenship. **Registration will not**

**be considered final until all records are transferred.** If there is any information of which we were unaware that would disqualify the student from attendance, the student must withdraw.

A student entering Kindergarten or Grade 1 must present a birth certificate and proof of immunizations. To be admitted to Kindergarten a student must be 5 years old by September 1 of the enrolling year. Since the Fall of 2015, children must be 5 by September 1<sup>st</sup> to enter Kindergarten. This is a state law. Children turning 5 in September, October or November must demonstrate readiness as measured by the Brigance Test AND must have a St. Mary Social Readiness Assessment completed by the child's current preschool teacher. The decision to admit a child who is not 5 by September 1<sup>st</sup>, is determined at the discretion of St. Mary administration.

Emergency contact form and all admission forms must be submitted before admission is granted.

### **Registration**

At the time of registration, a non-refundable registration fee must be paid to assure the student a place in the school for the following year.

### **Tuition**

There are three tuition payment options:

Tuition paid in full by July 1 with a 2% discount.

Two payments: ½ paid by July 1, 2018 and ½ paid by November 1, 2018 will be discounted 1%.

12 monthly payments (July-June) or 10 monthly payments (September-June) paid through FACTS Tuition Management Company. The phone number for FACTS is (800) 624-7092.

All records and report cards are held until payments are up to date. School records will not be transferred until any balance owed is paid in full. Access to PowerSchool will be denied if an outstanding balance exists.

An outstanding balance might include tuition, latchkey, book money, library books, service fee, etc.

Please note that students of families with an outstanding balance may be excluded from field trips (especially the eighth grade class trip).

A \$25.00 fee will be charged for all returned checks.

Tuition refunds are not given for a student who is expelled.

Financial Assistance is available to those who qualify. To be considered, you must first fill out the PSAS (The Archdiocese of Detroit Grant) Application. Additional consideration for tuition assistance from St. Mary School/Parish requires completion of the PSAS Application, and the St. Mary Tuition Assistance Application. To qualify for St. Mary Tuition Assistance, you must be a parishioner of St. Mary Parish.

### **Family Service**

Each family agrees upon enrollment: 1.) to work twenty service hours. Service hours can include: Auction, Fish Fry, Lunch/Recess Monitor, Athletic Coach, Scout Leader and Golf Outing to name a few. Volunteering in your child's classroom will not be counted toward service hours; if you are unsure about what volunteer activities are applicable toward service hours please check with the school office. There will be a sign-up sheet at approved school fundraising events that should be signed by the volunteer for the service hours to be applied. The school office will have a record of the service hours worked. Failure to work the hours will result in an assessment of \$25.00 per unworked hour. 2.) fulfill the Auction obligation of purchasing two tickets at \$65.00 each. If a family elects not to do the service an extra \$1,000 in tuition must be paid.

### **Calendar**

The yearly school calendar is published at the beginning of the year. It is sent home electronically and available on the website. Additional copies are available in the office.

### **First Aid, Medication, Emergency Care**

By law, all medications, including prescription and over-the-counter (non-prescriptive) medications, including cough drops, aspirin and Tylenol, may not be administered through the office without a completed "Dispensing of Medication Permission Form". Students requiring any medication during school hours written permission from the parent and the

doctor to the office where the medication will be given as directed. All medications must be in original containers and are to be kept in the office. The Release for "Dispensing of Medication Permission Forms" are available from the office. This form must be completed and signed by parent and physician.

If a child is injured during the school day, the child is cared for by school personnel until the parent arrives. In cases of severe injury, the school contacts the parents, as well as the Emergency Medical Service. If the school is unable to reach the parent, the person designated on the school emergency card will be called. Please make sure that the office is notified in writing of any changes in address or phone numbers.

In accordance with Michigan Public Acts 342 and 343 (Concussion Law) that was enacted June 30, 2013, each student and parent must sign a Concussion Awareness Acknowledgement Form. Please inform office of any concussions that occur outside of school hours.

### **Illness and Recess**

Children are expected to enjoy recess with the rest of their class. Periodically we receive requests for a child to stay inside. We must have a doctor's note in order for a student to remain inside for recess. Generally, children who are too ill to enjoy a short recess outdoors are too ill (and often contagious) to function effectively in the classroom. When in doubt, an extra day of rest at home will contribute to your child's well-being. Our office closely monitors both outside temperature and wind chill to accurately assess the recess situation.

### **Insurance**

The Student Assurance Services handles the student accident insurance for the Michigan Catholic Conference. This insurance provides coverage not handled by a family's insurance. Additional coverage of this type can be purchased by families for after school hours. More information will be brought home or you can call the office at (248) 545-2140.

### **Health**

For protection of all children, please keep your child home if any of the following occurs:

- \* a temperature of over 100 degrees
- \* an undiagnosed rash
- \* sore, discharging ears, eyes, or profuse nasal discharge
- \* intestinal disturbance accompanied by vomiting or diarrhea

If a child has been exposed to any contagious disease, it should be reported to the school. If a child develops signs of an undetermined disease, they will be isolated from the other children. A parent/emergency contact person will be called to take the child home.

All communicable diseases should be reported to the office. The following regulations are set by the Oakland County Health Department.

Students are excluded from classes for the following diseases and cannot be re-admitted without general approval of the Health Department: Diphtheria, Meningitis, Small Pox, Tuberculosis, and Whooping Cough.

Students are excluded from classes for the following illnesses and can be re-admitted by the administration after the time required:

#### **Illness**

Chicken Pox  
Pink Eye  
German Measles  
Impetigo  
Measles  
Mumps  
Ringworm  
Streptococcal/Scarlet Fever  
  
Pediculosis (lice)

#### **Time Required**

\* 10 days from onset  
\* When recovered/ Drainage stops  
\* 4 days from onset  
\* When under medical treatment  
\* When recovered, but not less than 7 days from date of rash  
\* 2 days after swelling is gone  
\* When under medical treatment  
\* When recovered if 7 days from onset or release from doctor  
\* Until lice and eggs are successfully treated. All nits must be removed.

### **Physical Education**

If there is a problem with your child participating in Physical Education class, a doctor's note is required for them to be excused.

## **Immunization Law**

Please note that if you will be using a Waiver for your child's Immunizations that the rules for this changed effective January 1, 2015. There is an information sheet attached regarding the changes, but keep in mind that these waivers now need to be obtained from your county health department. The waivers must be received at the school office by September 28<sup>th</sup> for Preschool and October 28<sup>th</sup> for Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> Grade.

Michigan Law requires that "all children enrolling in any public, private, parochial, or denominational school in Michigan for the first time shall submit either a statement signed by a physician that they have been immunized or protected against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, measles and polio myelitis, and tuberculin tested to determine the presence of infection from tuberculosis; a statement signed by a parent or guardian to the effect that the child has not been immunized and tuberculin tested because of religious convictions or other objections to immunization; or a request signed by the parent or guardian that the local health department give the needed protective injections and diagnostic test."

In addition, the parent of each enrolling child shall submit a statement:

1. Signed by a district, county or city health department director stating that the child has passed the Department of Public Health Preschool Vision Screening Test or
2. Signed by a licensed medical or osteopathic physician or a licensed optometrist indicating that the child has had his/her eyes examined during the preschool years after age 3 and prior to initial entrance.

Neither vision test enumerated in #1 or #2 above is required if there is a statement signed by the parent or guardian to the effect that the child cannot be submitted to such a test because of religious convictions.

Every child must be immunized and tuberculin tested to comply with the law of the State of Michigan. Parents are required to provide the information stated in the law to the school immediately. Health forms will be given to kindergarten students when they are registered.

## **School Communications**

It is important that all communications be read thoroughly as this is our main avenue of alerting you to policies and changes. All inquiries should be brought to the attention of the teacher or office.

We will do our best to answer your questions and assist you whenever possible. We rely on your cooperation to effectively keep the lines of communication open.

All school parents are expected to regularly monitor their email and check website for updates and information.

Parents of students in grade 3-8 are expected to create and monitor a PowerSchool account for each of their children in grades 3-8.

## **Visits to School**

For the safety of our students, all doors are locked after the morning caravan. We have installed an intercom and door buzzer system, as well as, a camera. This helps to maintain the security of all in the building. Once visitors are allowed in they are required to report to the main office.

Parents are not permitted to confer with the teacher or go to the classroom while classes are in session. Parents wishing to speak to a teacher must call the office/contact their teacher and set up a conference time.

If it is necessary to bring forgotten articles of clothing, lunches, etc. to school during the day, they should be left in the office. Anything sent to the office should include name and room number of the child. In order to help students learn personal responsibilities we recommend limiting the number of times you bring forgotten items to school.

It is difficult for your child to receive messages during the school day. Please limit messages to emergencies only.

## **Severe Weather Emergencies**

### **Fire and Tornado**

Procedures for fire and tornado safety are posted in each room. Parents are requested NOT TO CALL the office in the event of a tornado warning. Telephone communication lines must be kept open for emergencies or specific directions from officials.

### **Severe Weather**

If severe weather develops while students are in school, they will be dismissed early only if the parent comes to pick them up.

### **School Closure**

When school is closed due to weather or other problems it will be posted on school website, you will receive an email and it will be announced on WWJ AM950, WJR AM760, WDIV TV Channel 4, FOX 2 WJBK TV Channel 2, and WXYZ TV Channel 7 only. If you have signed to receive a text alert, you will receive a text.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips are a wonderful way for students to learn outside of the classroom. Students must have a signed permission slip from parents. Verbal permission is not acceptable.

Any parents chaperoning a field trip must complete the ICHAT background check and must have attended the Protecting God's Children Workshop. In addition, parents who volunteer to drive on field trips must provide a copy of their driver's license and a copy of proof of insurance showing coverage of \$250,000/\$500,000.

### **Athletics**

Students are eligible to participate in the CYO Athletics program. Good sportsmanship, as well as good grades, are important prerequisites for participation. To participate in this program students must maintain a "C" or better average in all academic areas, as well as their conduct in school. The students represent their school at all school events. Their positive attitude, good sportsmanship, and especially their Christian behavior should reflect the values and teachings of St. Mary Catholic School.

## **Academic Policies**

### **Curriculum**

#### **Religion**

Catholic education is an expression of the mission entrusted by Jesus to the church. Through education, the church seeks to prepare its members to proclaim the Good News and to translate this proclamation into action. (Document of Catholic Bishops)

St. Mary Catholic School welcomes students of various denominations and, as a part of their total curriculum, teaches them daily religion classes, prayer, and periodic prayer services throughout the year.

#### **Participation in Catholic Prayer and Sacrament**

All students of St. Mary Catholic School will participate in religious education classes and attend weekly Mass and other religious services and events.

One must be initiated as a Catholic to publicly minister in the name of the entire Catholic Church. Catholic students who are to prepare for Eucharist or Confirmation do so in parish sacramental processes approved by the Initiation Committee of the Worship Commission of St. Mary Parish and the pastor. Students who have made their First Communion in the Catholic Church are free to go to communion during school Mass.

There are some aspects of Catholic prayer, especially receiving communion, which Catholics believe are appropriate only for Catholic people who have made their First Communion. Catholic Eucharistic theology is unique among Christians. While we invite students of other denominations and faiths to pray with us, we cannot invite them to receive communion. Students of other Christian denominations are invited to receive a blessing during the Eucharist Service.

Families of other faiths who do not wish to become Catholic are welcome to place their children in St. Mary Catholic School. St. Mary Catholic School is committed to provide the same educational and moral environment for all

students, regardless of creed. All students will be treated with dignity and love by St. Mary Catholic School and pastoral staff.

Attendance at weekday Mass does not free a Catholic person from the Sunday Mass obligation, but better prepares him/her for it. We also strongly encourage weekly attendance at services for students of other faiths at their own church or place of worship.

Each student, within the first month of the beginning of each school year, will receive an information form regarding the religious affiliation of their household and the desire for Catholic sacraments. This will be turned in through the classroom teacher early in the school year so that respect for each child's unique situation can be achieved. Families of other faiths who wish to become Catholic follow the guidelines of the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) and/or the Rite of Baptism for Children. The Office of Faith Formation is available to answer any questions regarding this policy.

"Catholic" refers to anyone baptized in a Roman Rite or Eastern Rite Catholic Church or converted through the processes of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). A person baptized in a Roman Rite Catholic Church follows the guidelines of the Roman Rite for the sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation. For this reason, baptismal certificates should be examined by the parents of all students. This should be done as soon as the child begins attending St. Mary Catholic School to avoid confusion later. Catholics are not free to move from Rite to Rite at their own choice.

### **Course Work**

Students have course work in religion, science, social studies, language arts, mathematics, music, art, computers, Spanish, library, and physical education from grades K-8. In addition, grades K-5 have handwriting and spelling.

### **Textbooks**

Textbooks must be kept clean, covered, and free from writing and handled with care. They should not be "stuffed" with extra papers so as to cause damage to the binding. Anyone marring, destroying or losing a textbook will be required to pay the purchase price plus shipping costs for a replacement. It is a good idea for parents to examine their children's books from time to time. Since books may be taken home, all children are required to use a plastic bag or some waterproof case to carry their books to and from school. Students are responsible for all books that are lost or damaged.

### **Library**

Students use the library for research, reading enjoyment, and to learn how to use resource materials efficiently. Classes K-5 will visit the library at least once a week throughout the school year. The Middle School uses the library on an as needed basis and when teachers schedule a time. Sometimes other opportunities may be available upon student need.

### **Graduation**

Eighth grade students must successfully complete the course of studies and have **no** tuition or fees balance in order to graduate.

### **Homework**

Homework policies will vary by grade/teacher and will be given at the discretion of the teacher. As a rule, you can expect that the amount given will be 10 minutes per grade – for example, kindergarten/first grade will have 10 minutes, second grade will have 20 minutes... Please note these times are in addition to any reading logs required of your child or any studying (spelling tests, etc.) that may be required. If the student consistently claims "no homework", the parent should contact the teacher. Actual time needed to complete homework may vary based on the child.

### **Student Evaluation**

Evaluation of student progress is done through class participation, class assignments and homework, projects, and quizzes and tests.

### **Standardized Testing**

All students in grades 2-8 take the IOWA test in the fall. This test is used to determine the learning level and grade equivalence for each child in math and reading. The results are sent home to the parents of students in grades 2-8

with an explanation of the scores. Students in Grades 1, 3, 5 and 7 also take the COGAT Aptitude Test, which is designed to test critical thinking and reasoning skills.

The High School Placement Test is given to all interested eighth graders at area Catholic high schools. It is strongly suggested that students take the test. Eighth graders and their parents are advised of the times and places of testing well in advance.

The State of Michigan Merit Scholarship Award is now tied to the ACT test taken in High School, therefore our students in the seventh and eighth grade do not take the MEAP test. For more information contact the school office.

**Progress Reports**

In grades K-2 progress reports are sent home with all students halfway through the quarter. Parents of students in grades 3-8 can view the student’s grades in Renweb. Parent signature will be required to confirm that student’s academic grades have been reviewed on Rebweb. This gives the parents an opportunity to give the student more support while it is still possible to improve grades. Report dates can be found in the school calendar. Throughout the course of the year the teacher may make contact with parents by note, email or phone as necessary.

**Parent/Teacher Conferences**

Formally scheduled Parent/Teacher Conferences are mandatory in the fall. Spring conferences are by teacher/parent request. Informal conferences may be requested by the parent, teacher or principal at any time. Parents can make appointments to see individual teachers by calling the teacher, emailing the teacher, sending a note through the student. Parents can contact teachers by leaving a message on the teacher’s voicemail by calling the office at (248) 545-2140. Parents are expected to make appointments for a personal conference.

**Report Cards**

Report cards are issued four times a year. The purpose of the report card is to show the student’s academic progress and development in character traits. The first report card must be picked up by the parents at fall conference time. They will not be sent home. This gives the parents another opportunity to impact semester and final grades and achievement. The second quarter report card for grades 3-8 will be available on Renweb for parent review. The third quarter report card must be picked up by the parents at spring conference time. The final report card will be available on Renweb for parent review for grades 3-8. Report cards for grades K-2 will be sent home.

The overall conduct grade on the report card is determined by the entire school staff.

St. Mary Catholic School follows the Archdiocese of Detroit grading scale:

**Grades K-2**

Academic Grading Scale K-2		
P	83%-100%	Proficient
D	72%-82%	Developing
N	71% and below	Needs Support

Effort and Conduct Scale K-2	
A	Excellent
B	Very Good
C	Average
D	Needs Improvement
F	Poor

**Grades 3-8**

Academic Grade Scale 3-8		
A	93%-100%	Excellent
B	83%-92%	Very Good
C	72%-82%	Average
D	60%-71%	Needs Improvement
F	59% and below	Failing
I	I	Incomplete

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8

Effort and Conduct Scale 3-8	
1	Excellent
2	Very Good
3	Average
4	Needs Improvement
5	Poor

following  
grading  
policies  
grades 3-  
have  
been  
created  
based on

current best practices in effective grading, as well as input from St. Mary teachers working on our School Improvement Team.

Homework = 10% of final grade (reinforcement)	Classwork/Practice = 40% of final grade (formative assessments)	Projects/Tests = 50% of final grade (summative assessments)
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- ALL assignment grades entered in grades 3-8 will carry the following weighting when calculating a final grade:
- If an assignment is being used to assess two different standards, two separate grades must be given. (i.e. One grade for grammar; one for science)
- Students who are absent due to illness are given one day to complete absent work for every day that they missed school. Work assigned prior to the student's absence is due upon the student's return to school. Vacations during school time are strongly discouraged. Parents must inform the teachers BEFORE the vacation in order to obtain school work. School work from a "vacation absence" is due upon the student's return to school.
- Classwork that is not completed during the school day is often sent home for completion. In this case, the assignment is still weighted and entered as classwork/practice.
- Grades for assignments will be entered into PowerSchool by Monday of the following week. Large projects and papers may be given an extra week.

Grade Level	Score on Assignments/Tests written as:	Late Assignment Policy
3	Percentage	-Assignment grade may be reduced by one letter grade at the teacher's discretion for chronic late work.
4	Percentage	- Grade reduced 50% if assignment is completed and turned in by the Monday immediately following the original assignment due date.
5		- If the assignment is not turned in by the following Monday, the student receives a 0 (zero) - 2 "late work passes" are given per quarter.
6	Percentage on classwork/homework	- Grade reduced 50% if assignment is completed and turned in the next school day.
7	Percentage and Letter Grade on tests and projects	- After 2 days, the student receives a 0 (zero) for the assignment.
8		- 1 late work punch/pass" is given per middle school teacher, per quarter

- Students may contact their teacher(s) if interested in re-doing an assignment in order to improve a grade.
- Students must contact their teacher within 2 days of the grade being posted in order to request a "re-do".
- Students who elect to re-do an assignment must submit the original attempt along with the new "re-do" and will be required to write a brief letter/explanation comparing the two. What is different? What did they learn as a result of re-doing the work?
- Teachers reserve the right to give alternate versions of an assignment re-do, which may be more demanding.
- Assignment re-does are permitted at teacher discretion.
- Students may be required to submit a plan of re-learning to the teacher. This may include a calendar or outline of steps to complete the assignment.
- Parents must sign and return the original assignment to the teacher.

### Honor Roll

Students must have all A's and B's in every core academic subject and an 1 or 2 in conduct. (A "C" grade is allowed in any enrichment subject, but not less than "satisfactory" in conduct.)

Principal's Honor Roll - Student must have all A's in every subject and has a 1 or 2 in conduct.

### Awards

Awards are given in K-8 once a year to acknowledge our students' achievements.

Certificates Awarded: Honor Roll, Academic Achievement, and Perfect Attendance, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Scholar Athlete, Art Awards and AOD religion test.

### **National Junior Honor Society**

The St. Mary Chapter of the National Junior Honor Society allows students who uphold the standards of scholarship, leadership, service, citizenship and character to become members of the NJHS. Criteria for membership includes achieving and maintaining of a 3.5 GPA made up of all A and B grades. Students must also maintain excellent conduct marks, participate in service and demonstrate leadership in the St. Mary Community. Eligible students in grades 6-8 are able to submit candidacy forms in the second semester of each school year, and new members are inducted each spring.

### **Retention Policy**

Research has shown that student retention often does more harm than good. It admits that it does help in some rare cases, but that for the most part, it not only fails to help, but rather hurts the student. St. Mary Catholic School will have a retention policy for those RARE few who might be helped. There are a few conditions, however. 1.) The principal must be notified about the possibility of a student being retained no later than the end of January and 2.) A plan of work is set up with the parents and the student to try to help the student improve.

The student may be recommended for retention in Grades 1-4 if:

- The student is one grade level behind what is expected for the next grade in reading.
- Test results indicate that the child is more than one grade level below.
- Parents have been advised throughout the second semester that the child is having difficulties and that the plan of work is not being followed or is not helping.

The student may be recommended for retention in Grades 5-8 if:

- The student is failing in three or more major subjects.
- Test results indicate that the child is more than one grade level below.
- Parents have been advised throughout the second semester that the child is having difficulties and that the plan of work is not being followed or is not helping.

### **Special Services**

Students must be evaluated by Royal Oak Public Schools in order to qualify for services such as Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech Therapy, Academic and Psychological Services and Social Worker Consultation Services.

In addition, St. Mary Catholic School employs a teacher who provides direct support to students who struggle academically and socially.

Per Archdiocese of Detroit requirements, appropriate documentation must be provided in order to put in place instructional accommodations.

## **ST. MARY CATHOLIC SCHOOL LATCHKEY PROGRAM**

### **ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES**

Latchkey is a service of St. Mary Catholic School. It is available for children who attend St. Mary and support policies and rules established by the school. The policies contained in this section were formulated by the Program Director and the Latchkey staff. The policies in the St. Mary Catholic School Student/Parent Handbook include the welfare of the children in the Latchkey program. Policies defined will remain in force unless a written communication is sent to you from the Latchkey program. Your cooperation in complying with the regulations will make our work with your children more effective and enjoyable.

### **Latchkey Personnel**

All Latchkey personnel are qualified according to the regulations of the State of Michigan, that is, staff "are of

reasonable character and suitable to meet the needs of children". The program director has "completed a minimum of 60 semester hours of credit at an accredited college or university and has completed not less than 12 semester hours in child development, child psychology, or early childhood education." (R400.5104, 104(1), and R400, 5104,104 (2a).)

### **Admission Policy**

The following must be completed before a child is accepted into the Latchkey Program:

- \* enrollment at St. Mary Catholic School
- \* emergency information card for Latchkey

### **Registration**

The Department of Social Services requires Latchkey to have on file a statement signed by parents and/or physician indicating any physical condition (s) which might deter or limit participation in the activities of the program. The Program Director may refuse admittance to the program due to filled quotas, past history of behavior problems, or truant payments.

### **Latchkey Program Hours**

Latchkey hours before school are 7:00 A.M. - 8:00 A.M. After school hours begin at 3:30 P.M. and run through 6:15 P.M. There is afternoon latchkey on most half-days until 5:00 P.M. Latchkey is open Monday through Friday. It is closed on snow days and on legal holidays when school is also closed. Any child not picked up within 15 minutes of school dismissal will be sent to the Latchkey room. Parents then become responsible for the Latchkey fee. If an unforeseen need for utilizing the Latchkey program arises, please notify the office as early as possible.

### **Fees**

There is a \$25.00 registration fee per family. Latchkey fees are \$6.00 per hour for the first child and \$7.50 per hour for families with multiple children. If you are paying the family rate, fees are not adjusted for school activities. If a parent does not arrive by 6:15 p.m. they are considered late. A late fee of \$10.00 per every 5 minutes late will be added to the monthly latchkey bill. Understanding that circumstances do arise which may cause a parent to be late in picking up, parents 0-5 minutes late = \$10.00 fee; 6-10 minutes late = \$20.00 late fee, etc. If late pick up becomes an occurring problem the loss of Latchkey participation may result. Every month each family will receive a Latchkey schedule. This should be filled out and returned to the office with payment. If you schedule a day that your child does not attend, you will be given a credit. **Latchkey credits are good through the end of the year. They do not rollover into the next year's budget.** If you need to use Latchkey on a day you have not scheduled you will receive a bill for this at the beginning of the next month. Latchkey bills must be paid in a timely manner. Any bills one month overdue will be assessed a \$25.00 late fee.

### **Checking in and Signing Out**

It is important for the parents to assume the serious obligation of signing their child out before leaving the building. Please remind your child to prepare to go home as soon as they see you present. No minor (18 years or younger) may sign a student out for a parent without a letter on file stating that the parents assume full responsibility for the safety of their child. Your cooperation in these areas of concern is most necessary for the protection of your child.

Please inform us of your child's participation in regular extra-curricular activities or if your child is walking home or going with another parent or child. This reminder is to be in written form. This will help us to account for your child's absence from Latchkey.

### **Arrival**

The morning program starts at 7:00 A.M. and children should not be dropped off before 7:00 A.M. Children who have duties (safety patrol, office or classroom projects, etc.) must check in first and inform morning latchkey of the assignment.

Students who arrive at school before 7:50 A.M. will be considered to be in Latchkey. The school is not open before this time and the school cannot be liable for students if they are standing outside prior to 7:50 A.M.

The afternoon program starts at 3:30 P.M. The office will be notified immediately of any Latchkey attendance discrepancies and appropriate action will be taken.

### **Dismissal**

Parents and/or guardians or assigned pick-up person(s) must come into the building to sign their child(ren) out of Latchkey. No child will be released without a signature. Children in the program may be signed out only once. They may not return once they have been signed out and leave the premises.

## Accidents

All accidents are reported to the Latchkey Lead Teacher. Parents will be informed of any minor injury when they pick up their child. Nothing will be applied to the injured area other than soap and water, ice and band-aid.

If a more serious injury occurs the parent or emergency contact person will be notified. If a child must go home, he/she may do so only in the transportation provided by the parent or designated person. In cases of emergency where parents or their representative cannot be located, the Latchkey and/or school personnel will act as the parent representative. By signing the registration/child information card, parents are agreeing to:

Give school, any/all Latchkey personnel/representatives authorization to secure whatever emergency/medical treatment measures necessary for the care and protection of your child.

Waive all claims against the school and Latchkey program and any/all personnel/representatives.

## Illness

For protection of all children, please keep your child home if any of the following occurs:

- \* a temperature of over 100 degrees
- \* an undiagnosed rash
- \* sore, discharging ears, eyes, or profuse nasal discharge
- \* intestinal disturbance accompanied by vomiting or diarrhea

If a child has been exposed to any contagious disease, it should be reported to the school and Latchkey staff. If a child develops signs of an undetermined disease, they will be isolated from the other children. A parent/emergency contact person will be called to take the child home.

## Medication Policy

No medication will be stored in the Latchkey room, but will be accessible to Latchkey personnel. By law, all medications, including prescription and over-the-counter (non-prescriptive) medications, including cough drops, aspirin and Tylenol, may not be administered through Latchkey without a completed "Dispensing of Medication Permission Form". Students requiring any medication during school hours must bring both written permission from the parent and the doctor to the office where the medication will be given as directed. All medications must be in original containers and are to be kept in the office. Release forms are available from the office.

## Lost and Found

Please use visible identification to mark all items of apparel as well as lunch boxes and backpacks. Before leaving the building with your child(ren), check to see that you have all of their belongings. Check the Lost and Found for missing items. Items will be displayed for two weeks and unclaimed items will be given away after that time.

The Latchkey personnel assume no responsibility for damaged, broken or missing items, or any personal possessions a child brings from home.

## Procedures and Activities

Children in the morning program will be permitted to do school work or read. Children in the afternoon program may participate in quiet games, puzzles, or socialize in conversational tones. After check-in for the afternoon program, children will have the opportunity to change clothes. Those wearing dress shoes for school can bring play shoes for safety on the playground. Comfortable clothing should be worn that will prevent knees, arms, and legs from getting skinned in case of a fall during playtime. Please be sure your child has appropriate play clothes for daily weather conditions. The children will be given a snack time during the afternoon program. This snack must be provided by the parent. We encourage you to provide a healthy snack such as fruit, vegetables, cheese and crackers, etc.

The children will be given the opportunity to do any homework assignments. Children begin their work during this time and any remaining homework is to be finished at home. **At the beginning of the school year Latchkey parents will choose the length of time they wish their child to work on homework. The choices are one hour, a half an hour, or none at all. This will be enforced throughout the school year.** It is the parents' responsibility to make sure assignments are completed. Latchkey personnel are not responsible for the homework a child does or does not do.

The children will be given indoor and outdoor (weather permitting) play time. Please do not send any toys to school as they are easily broken and will not be replaced. We will provide an adequate amount of toys/games to ensure an enjoyable time for your child. Parents requesting a child to remain indoors must send a written note stating the reason for the request (illness, cold, etc.) This must be signed by a doctor.

### Activity Schedule

3:30-3:40	Report to Latchkey Attendance taken
3:40-4:00	Snack while seated at tables Children may change into play clothes
4:00-4:45	Supervised play (on playground weather permitting)
4:45-5:30	Homework time Supervised play (on playground weather permitting)
5:30-6:15	Games/Projects Book/Puzzles

This schedule is a general guideline and may vary occasionally.

### Behavior and Conduct

Children are expected to follow all school rules and the guidelines set up by those in charge. They are expected to cooperate with all personnel and the other children in the program. Parents will be notified if their child has difficulty functioning in the environment. If the child's behavior continues to be unacceptable to our program, it may result in suspension or exclusion from Latchkey. A parental conference will be required should this occur.

### Guidelines

Children are to maintain a friendly attitude toward all members in the program. Poor attitude, unsafe behavior and lack of respect for any person will not be tolerated. Children are to follow the directions and instructions of the Latchkey staff. Students are responsible to help put away activities they have worked on. Each child is expected to respect the rights and properties of other students. We encourage respect at all times for everyone both in speech and attitudes. Therefore, shouting, ball throwing, running, and unruly behavior is not acceptable. Running, ball games and tag are for outdoors only. The lavatory is to be used for necessity only and permission must be obtained to leave the room for any reason.

We have 4 basic rules in the Latchkey room:

- Walk in the Latchkey room and in the hallways.
- Be respectful of others.
- Use good manners.
- Follow the schedule.

We have 5 consequences posted for failure to follow the rules:

- Private time
- Loss of recess time
- Phone call or parent contact
- Suspension from Latchkey
- Loss of Latchkey privileges

Unacceptable behavior would include the following:

- \* disrespect toward Latchkey staff
- \* rowdiness and roughhousing
- \* destruction of property, games, etc.
- \* taking toys of other children, etc.
- \* going into someone else's backpack
- \* leaving the school premises without permission

Other guidelines for expected behavior and conduct may be found elsewhere in this handbook.

Students are expected to operate within the boundaries of their role as student, involving themselves in activities and practices which will help them to realize spiritual, academic, social and physical growth.

Students are expected to respect the property of others and to take pride in the appearance of their school buildings and grounds. Students should assist in keeping the building and grounds free of paper and trash.

The school administration reserves the right to protect the interest of the greater school community. Any student who chooses to repeatedly disrupt the latchkey program of the school through either overt or covert misbehavior will be asked to withdraw from the program.

### **Conflict Resolution**

All conflicts should be addressed at the lowest level whenever possible. Parents finding themselves in conflict with another person should first go directly to that person. If a conflict is not resolved at this level, the Program Director should be contacted. Conflicts left unresolved at this point would be addressed to the principal. Further appeal may be made to the pastor.

### **Exclusion**

In most cases, several disciplinary measures are tried before exclusion is enforced. This may include suspension from the program for a specified period of time. Parent cooperation is essential during this time to help a child understand which behavior/attitudes are acceptable. Children who continue to disregard acceptable practices will be excluded from the program. Delinquent accounts and/or failure to comply with terms of established policies will result in exclusion from the Latchkey program.

## **After School Room/Fellowship Center Use for Approved Extracurricular Activities**

### **School Room Use**

Please leave the approved room in a clean and neat manner. If you move furniture, please put it back in the manner in which it was found. Also, materials in the classrooms are for classroom use only and not to be used for the after school activities.

### **Fellowship Center Use per St. Mary Parish**

The Fellowship Center is for the use of the whole parish, therefore, a policy has been established for all groups to adhere to, for the sake of the ministry of St. Mary.

1. Safety
  - a. St. Mary is extremely concerned with making the premises of St. Mary a safe environment for all people.
  - b. The outside doors of the Fellowship Center are to be locked at all times.
  - c. The outside doors of the Fellowship Center are never to be held ajar (by any means) before, during and after practices/activities.
  - d. If parents/guardians desire to enter the Fellowship Center Gathering area, they must be "let in" by someone already in the building.
  - e. During practice/activity, if there is an emergency, which requires the need for a student to leave early, they are to call the coach (present at the practice) of the student on his/her cell phone so that he/she may open the door for the parent/guardian.
  - f. Coaches are required to give their cell phone number to the parents/guardians.
  - g. Coaches are required to have their cell phone with them during all practices.
  - h. Coaches/parents/guardians are asked to monitor who is let into the Fellowship Center. That is, they are asked to make sure that no strangers are let into the Fellowship Center.
2. When leaving the Fellowship Center
  - a. The Fellowship Center Gathering Area is to be left in a condition so that it may appear clean and in order for those who would look in, any time during and after the practice.

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## The Joy of Children

Children are often a challenge  
to our patience and understanding.  
They're a demanding and awesome responsibility,  
but oh, Lord, what joy, what wonder,  
what richness they add to our lives!

We thank you, Lord, for all the pleasures they bring  
for the feel of a newborn baby nestling in our arms,  
for the smile of a toddler responding to our love,  
for small outstretched arms reaching for a hug,  
and tiny upturned faces  
planting wet kisses on our cheeks.

We thank you for toys on the floors and balls on lawns,  
and happy, healthy children playing in the yard;  
for bruises to kiss, report cards to praise,

and drawings to display on refrigerator doors.

We thank you, Lord, for bouquets of yellow dandelions  
held up by tiny mud-caked hands,  
for the shouts of victory voiced by breathless,  
jubilant young ball players,  
for tousled heads resting peacefully on pillows  
in the quiet of the night.

We thank you for the excitement of a daughter  
preparing for her first date;  
for the exultation of a teenager  
learning to drive a car.

What priceless joys, what rich treasures  
You give us, Lord...  
To store up in the attics of our memories.

By Renee Bartkowsk