

SAINT MARY
STAR OF THE SEA SCHOOL



FOUNDED 1923

Student-Parent Handbook 2024-25 School Year

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This handbook contains policies and procedures applicable to the school. The school reserves the right to change any of its policies and procedures and apply them as circumstances as warranted.

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SMSS SCHOOL DISCIPLINE POLICY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM
SMSS STUDENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

APPENDIX A- CARLINE ARRIVAL and DISMISSAL LOCATION CAMPUS MAP

All schools in the Diocese of Richmond are subject to diocesan policies. Any contrary statement of policy, procedures, programs, or practices, including but not limited to, any such statement contained in any handbook or manual prepared may be superseded by the Diocese of Richmond.



Principal's Message

Dear Students, Parents/Guardians and Families,

Welcome to the 2024-2025 school year at Saint Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School (SMSS)! The spiritual and learning experience at SMSS involves students, parents/ guardians, teachers, and administrators working together so that all children may achieve their fullest potential. Everyone is encouraged to adopt the theme for this school year of **"...let your light shine before others!"** *Matthew 5: 14-16* When this occurs, we are one step closer to fulfilling God's purpose for each individual, and in sharing a successful year for all children in the tradition of Catholic Education.

We look forward to an exciting school year filled with hope and continued academic excellence for all our wonderful students.

This handbook was prepared to support our students, parents/guardians, and families by providing information regarding the mission, policies, procedures, and practices followed at SMSS. Everyone is encouraged to become thoroughly familiar with the school, its activities, and this handbook. I encourage everyone to keep this handbook readily available and using it as a handy reference related to questions that may arise.

We invite everyone to know about and understand the information provided in this handbook with the understanding that, when necessary, adjustments or changes may occur. The "Student/Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Form" at the back of this handbook must be completed and returned to school. The handbook will be available through the FACTS/SIS Family Portal and on our school website.

Our entire school faculty and staff look forward to working with each of you in the school year ahead. Thank you for your continued support of and dedication to our amazing school.

Believe always,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JB', is positioned above the printed name of the principal.

Joseph Branco, Ed.S.
Principal

Be a light for all to see! *Matthew 5:16*

Profile

Saint Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School (SMSS) is a Catholic regional school, which operates under the auspices of the Diocese of Richmond and Office of Catholic Schools. The school is located in Hampton, Virginia, and serves families throughout the Hampton Roads community. Lay administration, religious sisters, and teachers provide quality religious and academic education for students ranging from Junior Kindergarten (3 years old) through grade eight.

Mission

Saint Mary Star of the Sea School (SMSS) provides a Christ-centered Catholic education to PK3 through 8th grade students of all faiths in the tradition of the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia. The spiritual, intellectual, and social development of all students is provided in a safe and disciplined environment. With a solid foundation in academic and moral excellence, students are prepared for success in high school and beyond.

Vision

Our shared vision is to provide a Christ-centered education environment where students grow in faith, truth, knowledge, and love through the study of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, while fostering lifelong learning and discipleship.

Administration

Principal: Joseph Branco, Ed.S.

Vice Principal: Sister Immaculata Francis O.P.

School Information and Abbreviation

Telephone Number: 757-723-6358

Fax Number: 757-723-6455

E-Mail: admin@saintmarystarofthesea.com

Website: www.saintmarystarofthesea.com

The ***Saint Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School*** name may be abbreviated within this document to read as ***SMSS***.

School Hours

Junior Kindergarten through Grade 8:	7:45 AM - 3:00 PM
Before the Bell (before-school care) program:	7:00 AM - 7:45 AM *
Beyond the Bell (after-school care) program:	3:15 PM - 5:30 PM (All)*

Note: * = Students must be registered in the BTB program to be eligible to participate. Student safety is of paramount concern, no students shall be left unsupervised before 7:45 AM or after 3:15 PM.

Good Parent/Guardian/Family Clause

Saint Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School (SMSS) welcomes all families and students desiring a Catholic education. As a Roman Catholic school in the Diocese of Richmond, we joyfully exercise and take seriously our responsibility to teach our Catholic faith and morals in all fullness and especially as expressed in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC). It is possible, though, that some parents, guardians, families, and non-Catholic persons whose religious practices and beliefs do not coincide fully with Church teaching, may experience conflict as we promote and instruct students on these teachings, particularly as they relate to marriage and sexuality. We seek to partner with parents to assist a child, especially when matters of this nature arise. We, therefore, commit to guiding each family to seeking pastoral care and support in such matters.

Parents, guardians, and family members of SMSS students are asked and expected to abide by all guidelines, policies, and procedures as described in the handbook. They are further expected to conduct themselves with language (tone/word choice) and behavior according to the highest standards of decorum, respect, love, and charity.

While sincere questions of the practices of the Catholic faith to understand them more deeply are welcome, purposeful disruption to the school community, public defiance, and challenge of Catholic truths or morality would indicate a student, parent, guardian, or family are no longer partners in our evangelical mission and thus, may be denied admission or may be asked to leave the school. Incidents or episodes which do not reflect these standards are subject to review by school administration and/or diocese. Students may be unenrolled by the school due to unbecoming, uncompliant, and disrespectful parent or family member behavior as determined by school administration.

Statement on Philosophy Regarding Curriculum

Saint Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School exists to provide a Christ-centered education where students may grow in truth and love. Through the study of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, this school fosters lifelong learning in discipleship. The learning environment is directed toward the spiritual, intellectual, and social development as well as the physical well-being of each student and family.

Through an integrated curriculum that accommodates the diversity of learners in a global society, Saint Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School prepares students for life. By incorporating a variety of learning activities, teachers address the varied intellectual needs of our students. With a focus on the whole child, every effort is made to provide a relevant education to prepare them for daily life and for the ultimate goal of eternal life in heaven. The families are an integral aspect of the educational program. Therefore, by forming a partnership with the school, families play an active role in the education of their children.

The faculty and staff live the faith and witness it to their students. They provide opportunities for their students to express the faith with the celebration of Mass, prayer (private and communal), and the integration of the faith within every subject taught. Virtues are studied and applied on a daily basis. The faculty and staff strive to reflect Christ and His teachings in their thought, words, and actions.

Statement on the Instruction of the Human Person

Saint Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School (SMSS) welcomes all families and students desiring a Catholic education. As a Roman Catholic school in the Diocese of Richmond, we joyfully exercise our responsibility to teach Catholic faith and morals in all fullness and especially as expressed in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC). It is possible, though, that some parents, guardians, and non-Catholic persons whose religious practices and beliefs do not coincide fully with Church teaching, may experience conflict as we promote and instruct the teachings on the human person, particularly as they relate to same-sex attraction and gender dysphoria.

SMSS seeks to partner with parents to assist the child, especially when matters of this nature arise. We, therefore, commit to guiding the family to pastoral care and support. While sincere questions of the practices of the Catholic faith to understand them more deeply are welcome, purposeful disruption to the school community, public defiance and challenge of Catholic truths or morality would indicate a student, parent, or guardian are no longer partners in our evangelical mission and thus, may be denied admission or may be asked to leave the school.

School personnel, parents, and students should be informed of the school's Catholic identity and policies that relate to gender identity and gender ideology in the handbooks. Faith is integrated into all aspects of the school's activities. It would be inconsistent with the school's identity and mission to teach, promote, or encourage an understanding that is contrary to Catholic teachings. According to the Catholic Faith, a person's sexual identity is rooted in one's biological identity as male or female. So a person's biological identity and gender identity are considered to be one and the same.

In Catholic schools, all curricular and extra-curricular activity is rooted in, and consistent with, the principles of Catholic doctrine. Catholic schools should:

- Support students with gender dysphoria by treating them with sensitivity, respect, mercy, and compassion.
- Require that participation on school teams be according to biological sex.
- Require that names and pronouns be in accordance with the student's biological sex.
- Designate Catholic sex education, uniforms and gender appropriate dress, bathrooms, locker rooms, showers, and sleeping accommodations on trips be according to biological sex.
- Maintain names in school records according to the student's biological sex.
- Provide reasonable accommodation to a private bathroom for use by any student who desires increased privacy.

In case of a specific request, consider in a compassionate way, on a case-by-case basis, the physical and psychological needs of a student based on the following questions:

- What is the specific request of the student and/or parents?
- Is the request in keeping with the teaching of the Catholic Church?
- Is the school reasonably able to accommodate the request?

The Graduate at Graduation

Our aim for a Saint Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School (SMSS) Graduate includes an integrated curriculum focused on Academics, Faith, and Citizenship that accommodates the diversity of learners in a global society and prepares students for life as:

Academics

- A diligent seeker of truth---Students have a love for truth and a thirst for knowledge in their classes.
- A creative problem-solver---Students develop and use analytical and critical thinking skills.
- A confident public-speaker and writer---Students cultivate their public speaking and writing skills through activities and competitions.
- A lover of the fine arts---Students are given opportunities to explore personal creativity and a love for the arts within classes and activities.

Faith

- A friend and follower of Jesus---Students develop their relationship with Jesus through daily prayer, religion classes, day-to-day interactions, and discussions.
- A participating member of a Faith community---Students are provided opportunities to deepen their prayer lives through communal and private prayer.
- A strong witness to the Faith in word and action---Students grow daily in their understanding of the Catholic faith so they will have the zeal to explain it in both words and actions fitting to their stage of development.
- A compassionate advocate to those in need---Students serve in their parish, school, and local communities through class activities, field trips, and school wide events to support those in need.

Citizenship

- A leader---Students reach an understanding of themselves and others, exercising leadership according to their own personality and temperament.
- A contributor to the common good---Students are taught and encouraged in a spirit of cooperation, service, and responsibility among their peers.
- A person of character---Students are prepared for the duties of good citizenship through development of character through leadership.
- A Faithful Steward of God's World---Students have an appreciation of natural resources and their role in protecting them.

2023-2024 School Theme

"...let your light shine before others...!" Matthew 5:14-16

Prayer for our Students

Lord, watch over these students as they face each day with hearts and souls trusting in You. May their minds be open to grow in the certain knowledge of Your world as they wonder, ask, imagine, create, and share in the faith of family, friends, and our school community.

May they be proud of their daily efforts by doing their best always to encourage others while discovering their talents, strengths, and weaknesses while serving others as Jesus asks us to do.

May they be filled with the Holy Spirit to believe, hope, love, and by their choices today and always, be a light for all to see now and into the future. --Amen--

Absences, Tardiness, Dismissals

Absences

Proper attendance until a child's eighteenth birthday is mandatory under the Code of Virginia 22.1-254. School administration will retain full authority to determine, for each student, the number of days that count toward the 180 days minimum requirement and his/her grade placement according to 22.1-98 of the Code of Virginia. In order that a student receives full credit for a year's work, regular attendance is necessary. It is the parent's/guardian's and the student's responsibility to assure that the student attends class every day. It is mandatory to notify the school that your child will be absent by 8:00 AM by emailing the homeroom teacher or by phone to the main office. If a student is absent from class for three (3) or more consecutive days (excluding the weekend), a doctor's note (cleared to return to school) is required for the student to be readmitted to school. Students will not be excused from participation in any class including physical education or dismissed early without a parent's note indicating the reason for the non-participation or absence. Students who are absent from school are precluded from participating in extracurricular activities both after school and in the evening.

Excessive unexcused absences may result in non-promotion and/or non-graduation. For the safety and protection of your child this procedure must be followed. An absence resulting from an illness, will only be excused when a signed parent's note is received within two days of the student's return to school. Absences associated with a prolonged illness (in excess of three days) require a doctor note upon the student's return to school. Absences related to a death in the family, religious holiday, and other extenuating circumstances may only be excused by school administration; all other absences or failure to provide a signed note after two days of a student's return will be recorded as unexcused. Make up work will be given to parents/guardian after an absence extends more than 3 consecutive days. If the absence is less than 3 days, the student will receive the work missed when they return to school.

Vacation Trips-- Parents/guardians are asked to plan family vacations during scheduled school breaks. Parents/guardians are also asked not to extend the school's scheduled breaks by leaving early or returning late. If parents/guardians choose to schedule a trip outside of scheduled breaks, the children are responsible for any schoolwork, homework or test that is missed. Students will be informed of assignments when they return to school and assignments may be made up at that time. It is at the individual teacher's discretion what, if any, assignments can/should be sent during vacations. Due to the additional pressures placed on children, vacations while school is in session are highly discouraged, and those days missed are unexcused.

Tardiness

Students are expected to be in school on time. **Students arriving after 8:10 a.m. are considered tardy.** Students must enter the main entrance of the school and report to the office to gain admittance to their respective classrooms. Promptness helps to develop good work and organizational habits.

Early Dismissals

Parents/guardian should try to avoid scheduling dental or medical appointments for children during school hours whenever possible. If a student is to leave the building other than at normal dismissal times, the parent, guardian, or responsible adult (indicated in writing by the parent or guardian) must sign for him/her out of school at the main office. The names of those people who are allowed to pick up the child must be on the emergency forms. Picture identification is required and presented by everyone whenever a student is picked up early and/or signed out of school; this includes parents/guardian, guardians, or responsible adult noted by the parent.

Attendance Indications on FACTS SIS

A: Absent - Student is absent due to personal illness, severe illness or death in the family, exposure to contagious disease, religious holidays, extremely inclement weather, or school-related activities for which participation has been granted by the school, or out-of-school suspension. Parents have sent notifications (note or email) before or after the absence confirming one of these reasons. This absence category is considered excused once a written note is received by the main office and is expected within two days of a student returning to school.

P: Present - The student is in attendance, on time.

ED: Early Dismissal - Student is dismissed early from school due to personal illness, severe illness or death in the family, exposure to contagious diseases, school-related activities for which participation has been granted by the school. Parents have sent notification (note or email) before the early dismissal. On a quantitative basis, an early dismissal constitutes a student being present for a half-day of instruction.

ED130 Early Dismissals after 1:30pm - Student is dismissed early from school after 1:30pm. On a quantitative basis, a dismissal after 1:30 constitutes a student being present for a full day of instruction.

T: Tardy - Student is tardy and an acceptable reason is provided and approved. Some acceptable reasons include but are not limited to doctor's appointment, illness of a sibling, illness of a parent or guardian (causing for an unplanned interruption in morning routine), major traffic emergencies (causing for multiple students from different families to be tardy) etc. The front office may occasionally announce tardies are excused typically due to a confirmed traffic accident.

Consequences for tardies/absences/early dismissals whether excused or unexcused:

- Five (5) tardies/absences/early dismissals in one grading period (Quarter)- Email notification from Registrar stating student has reached **five** tardies/absences in the quarter will be sent to alert parents/guardians considered for informational and first warning purposes only.
- Ten (10) tardies/absences/early dismissals in one school calendar year - Letter from administrator to parent requesting a parent-administrator conference to develop a regular attendance plan is expected.

- Fifteen (15) tardies/absences/early dismissals in one school calendar year - A Parent/Administrator conference will be scheduled to discuss academic preparation and/or retention, It is important to note that excessive absences may also be a violation of school attendance within most localities pursuant to the Code of Virginia 16.1-278.5 and 16.1-228.
- For 7th/8th graders – It is important to note this caution that tardy, absence, and early dismissal data are regularly requested on high school applications for admission. Excessive tardies/absences will jeopardize the student earning credit for high school credit-bearing courses. Students with more than eight class absences, within a *given semester*—excused or unexcused—may receive a failing grade for that course or the actual class grade, whichever is lower, unless a waiver has been approved by school administration in consultation with the Office of Catholic Schools.

Academic Accreditation and Associations

SMSS is fully accredited by Middle States Association Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools (MSA), through the accreditation of the Diocese of Richmond. SMSS is also a member of the Virginia Council of Private Education (VCPE) and National Catholic Education Association (NCEA)

Academic Probation

Each student is responsible for the satisfactory completion of projects, classwork, and homework in a timely manner. Grades on tests and quizzes should be commensurate with the student's achievement. A student who does not fulfill his/her academic responsibilities or fails a core subject in a quarter will be placed on academic probation for the subsequent quarter. During this period, the evaluation of a student's progress is monitored as follows:

- The teacher will note the student who is experiencing academic difficulties in either assignments or test scores and will contact the parents/guardians to inform them of the possibility of academic probation.
- If improvement is not made by the student, written verification that the student has been placed on probation will be forwarded to the parents/guardians.

Conditions and Consequences of Academic Probation

The parents/guardians and student will confer with the administration and the classroom teacher. The teacher will outline the student's program for improvement.

- The teacher will inform the parents/guardians of the student's progress. The process will follow the stated format:
 - Parent contact

- Periodic meetings with the student
- Quarterly report card
- Parents/guardians will agree to check student grades regularly.
- If a student is successful in meeting his/her academic responsibilities, the student will be removed from academic probation and the parent/guardian will be notified in writing.
- If the student is unsuccessful in meeting his/her academic responsibilities, the administration will review the student's continued enrollment in the school.

Academic Requirement for Extra-Curricular Activities/Sports

Our extra-curricular activities exist to promote good sportsmanship, teach fair play, and allow for student participation outside the academic environment. Participation in such represents a position of recognition and often bestows the position of role model upon the student participants. For that reason, high standards of behavior are expected from students participating in these activities. Students participating in extra-curricular activities are expected to meet the following criteria:

- maintain at least a 76% average in all subject areas and
- must not receive more than one behavior referral in any one-week period. Any student on suspension may not participate nor attend any school sponsored events.

Students who do not meet the minimum academic criteria above will not be allowed to practice or play but may attend the game/event as a spectator.

Academic and Behavioral Standing

All applicants to Saint Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School must be in good academic and behavioral standing in order to be considered for acceptance. Copies of report cards and educational testing must be submitted with the application. A recommendation form from the previous teacher and/or principal attesting to the academic ability and behavioral standing of the student is expected to be submitted at the time of application.

Academic Testing, Readiness Screening, and Exams

Online computerized standardized tests (currently NWEA MAP Growth) are given each year to assess the individual achievement and ability of students in grades 1 through 8. Students are regularly assessed within the classroom using formative and summative assessments on curricula presented in accordance with the Diocesan Consensus Curriculum. Students in grades 5 and 8 participate in the ACRE (Assessment of Catechesis Religious Education) assessment in the second semester annually.

Semester examinations for students in Grades 6 through 8 are administered at the conclusion of each semester. Courses bearing high school credit (such as advanced math, science, and world history) will require a final examination which may encompass a comprehensive assessment of the entire school year.

Students in the early learning grades (JK-K) may be administered a readiness screening assessment such as the Brigance Test prior to entering Kindergarten. Additional locally developed readiness screening assessment instruments may be used as necessary to assist with student readiness determination for upcoming grade level entry.

Acceptable Use Policy Computer/Technology Use

Technology and Internet Acceptable Use Policy

All parents and students are expected to agree to the terms of the SMSS Technology and Internet Acceptable Use Policy as part of their enrollment agreement and will be kept on file with the Technology Department. **Saint Mary's is a student cell phone-free campus.** Technology use is meant for educational purposes. Access to network services is provided for students to conduct research and other educational goals. Students are expected to act in a considerate and responsible manner. **Access is a privilege – not a right.** Access entails responsibility and any misuse according to the policies outlined may result in suspension of privileges.

Technology/Chromebook

Students must agree to the policies for proper use of Technology/Chromebook at the beginning of each school year. Technology/Chromebooks are available for student use in the school library and classrooms.

Use of the Internet/school network comes with the understanding that assigned login credentials will be monitored using network filtering software such as Go Guardian. Everyone is responsible for accessing only appropriate websites and reporting any accidental access of inappropriate content as soon as it occurs. Damage to technology/Chromebook will result in the replacement of the device at the student's expense, and/or if necessary discontinued use of devices in school.

The following are unacceptable computer behaviors and will be referred to school administration for appropriate consequence/discipline:

- Harassing, insulting, or threatening others
- Derogatory comments
- Sending, displaying, or downloading offensive messages or pictures
- Using obscene language
- Damaging computer systems or computer networks
- Violating copyright laws
- Submitting documents from the Internet as a student's personal work

- Using another person's sign-on and/or password
- Trespassing in someone else's folder, work, or files
- Intentionally wasting limited resources
- Using the network for commercial purposes
- Revealing a personal phone number, name, or address of one's self or another

Electronic Mail (Email)

The use of Email by school personnel and parents/guardians **concerning confidential student matters**, including grades and behavior, is permitted for school communication only. It is important to remember that Email is seldom a secure channel of communication. For this reason, we encourage phone calls or face-to-face conferences between parents and the school regarding difficult, sensitive, and/or confidential student matters.

Email will often be used for informational purposes such as newsletters, class activities, etc.... . Communication with school employees should be conducted through their official school Email account or through the main school office as much as possible. Professional boundaries are expected with school personnel and communications with parents. The use of personal contact or cellular phone numbers is discouraged.

Teachers are expected to be teaching and supervising during school hours and will not always be able to respond quickly to Email or phone messages. Responses should occur within 24 business hours. Teachers may use the prerogative of corresponding in a daily folder rather than email, if necessary.

Admissions

Saint Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School (SMSS) is a regional Catholic school; therefore it is the policy of SMSS that all children be considered for admission according to the following priorities:

1. Children whose families already have children enrolled in the school.
2. Children whose families are registered, practicing Catholics at one of the local Catholic parishes.
3. Children of non-Catholics.

The school upholds a nondiscriminatory policy and admits qualified students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to our students. The school endeavors to accommodate students with special needs, as the school's resources and capabilities reasonably permit. The school reserves the right to decline admission of students whose needs cannot be met or impose unreasonable conditions of attendance were indicated under the circumstances. Any student's first year of attendance at SMSS is considered probationary.

In seeking admission for their child(ren) at SMSS, parents do so with the understanding that financial obligations will be reviewed as part of the admissions process and that parents are responsible for their payment of tuition and fees if they desire that their child(ren) remain at the school. Failure to meet financial obligations and responsibilities could result in a denial of admission to the school. The school reserves the right to require that payments be current in order for students to take exams, complete course work, receive report cards, and have records transferred.

Age Requirements

Age requirements are in accordance with the Code of Virginia. Students entering:

- Junior Kindergarten (3) must be 3 years of age on or before September 30.
- Junior Kindergarten (4) must be 4 years of age on or before September 30.
- Kindergarten must be 5 years of age on or before September 30.
- A first-grade student must be 6 years old by September 30 and have successfully completed his/her kindergarten year.

Registration

- Re-enrollment of existing students and enrollment of their siblings takes place beginning around the first week of February each year.
- Registration of new students for the next school year takes place beginning in the third week of February each year.
- Registration after the February time period may occur on a rolling basis and with the understanding that students may be assigned to a waiting list.
- A **non-refundable fee** is charged per student and is required at the time of re-enrollment for existing students or registration for new students.
- Generally, only students transferring from another Catholic school or from out-of-state will be accepted for the 7th and 8th grades and only after admission review by school administration.
- Readiness screening assessments may be administered to all prospective students to determine reading and math skills placement.

Parents who wish to enroll their child(ren) at SMSS must complete and submit an online application/registration form through the FACTS/SIS system. Additionally the following documents will be required and requested by SMSS from the previous school with parents completing a school records release request form:

- Current school year report card.
- Standardized testing completed in the previous two academic years.
- Any learning disability or special educational evaluations from the diagnosing professional for academic accommodations review/determination of support resource availability.
- Behavior/School Infractions Report.
- Recommendation from current teacher/school principal.
- Request for Release of Records for the previous school attended
- Birth Certificate.
- Catholic parents only; parents provide a copy of baptismal certificate for their child.

Medical/Physical

A physical examination is required when a student enters school for the first time and all immunizations must be updated as required. Virginia Health Forms are available from the school's main office available electronically through FACTS Family Portal, Resources tab. A student cannot be admitted to school without a completed Virginia Health Form.

All students must have completed the series of Hepatitis B vaccinations, and all 7th grade students must have a TDap booster before school begins, in accordance with state law. Virginia law requires the state Department of Health to provide parents of rising sixth grade girls with information on HPV and HPV vaccines. According to this law, schools (including nonpublic schools) are responsible for providing this information to those parents. The decision to vaccinate their child for HPV remains one of parental choice. Each year the school is required to report the immunization status of all Kindergarten, 7th and 12th grade to the Virginia Department of Health by October 15th.

Parents or guardians who object to the administration of immunizing agents for their child on the grounds it conflicts with their religious tenants or practices must send the request to the Office of Catholic Schools for review/approval before being admitted to the school.

Admission of Non-Catholics Informed Consent Clause

Our school serves a variety of purposes including the academic, social, and physical development of students. However, the primary purpose of our school is religion. We exist for the purpose of evangelization and catechesis: that is, the proclamation of the Gospel and the formation of the entire school community in the Catholic faith. Our school offers a complete Catholic religious education program and makes every effort to develop the faith in all students so that they may live a full Christian life. Non-Catholics may be admitted to our school with the informed understanding and acceptance that parents/guardians agree through a signed application/registration form are permitting their child(ren) to attend religion classes, religious functions, and recognize that religious expectations/teachings are offered as part of the school program.

Wait List

If space is not available a student may be placed on a waiting list. The waiting list exists for the current year only and reapplication is required each year if a student remains on a waiting list beyond the current school year. If space becomes available after the registration/ enrollment process closes, wait listed students may be notified accordingly.

Advancement/Development Office Information

The Advancement/Development Office organizes programs and events to benefit the school. This is especially important in our mission to keep tuition rates and costs down for families who

want Catholic education for their children. The actual expense of operating Saint Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School exceeds our tuition charges; therefore the Advancement/Development Office

is critical in closing this gap. Several important events help communicate the mission and vision of the school including:

Fellowship Events

- Welcome and Back To School Nights
- Veterans Day Prayer Ceremony
- Catholic Schools Week/Open House
- Grandparents Day
- Volunteer Appreciation Day
- Donor Appreciation Event
- Additional Special Guest Events

Fundraising Events

- EISTC Tax Credit for Tuition Assistance Campaign
- Low Country Boil
- Sentinel Appeal Campaign
- Fun Run
- Annual Golf Tournament

Agenda/Planner

Students in grades 2 - 8 are encouraged to use a school agenda/planner to serve as a homework pad and organizational tool. School agenda/planner are provided as a helpful way to record assignments for all academic classes.

Amendment of the Handbook

The policies and procedures contained in this handbook represent the best judgment of the school staff at the time of publication. Circumstances can change over the period of the school year. The Principal reserves the right to add, delete, or make amendments to this handbook as needed to ensure the safe and effective operation of the school. Changes to the handbook will be made in writing and forwarded to the parents/guardians/families through normal distribution. Any situation not included in the handbook will be handled at the discretion of the Principal.

Anonymous Threats to School Safety

In accordance with diocesan policy of maintaining safe school environments, any student proven to have made an anonymous threat to school safety shall be expelled without recourse

or the possibility of re-admittance to school. Any instructional time lost in school evacuation resulting from a threat to school safety shall be made up.

Asbestos Inspection and Management Plan

On October 22, 1986, the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) was signed into law. This requires all public and private elementary and secondary schools inspect for friable (meaning capable of being crushed into a powder by hand) and non-friable asbestos, and to develop asbestos management plans that address asbestos hazards in school buildings while implementing response actions in a timely fashion.

The Asbestos Inspection and Management Plan for SMSS is available for review upon request to school administration.

Athletics

SMSS provides an athletic program open to middle school students (to include 5th grade, with the permission of their parents and coaches) of all abilities and experience levels through the Peninsula Independent Athletic Association (PIAL). Athletics are an important part of the total school program at SMSS and work in conjunction with the other educational experiences to provide students the environment and opportunity to develop the values of character and ethical decision-making. The opportunity to participate in interscholastic athletics is a privilege that carries with it responsibilities to the school, the sport, other students, the family, and the community, as well as the student athlete. Students play sports on teams according to their biological sex unless otherwise noted below. With the sufficient number of eligible students, SMSS may field teams in the following interscholastic sports (if coaching staff is available):

- Fall: Cross Country and Soccer (Co-ed); Volleyball (girls)
- Winter: Basketball (boys and girls, separate teams)
- Spring: Baseball (boys)- Girls may be allowed if no softball team; Softball (girls)

Eligibility

Students in grades 5-8 must be in good academic standing, noted previously in this handbook, for tryouts and continued participation once selected to a team. Students must also be able to fulfill his or her commitment to the team for the duration of the season. Once selected to a SMSS team sport, priority should be given to this team over involvement in community league sports or other extracurricular activities. Students should be guided to participate in one sport per season. This allows a student-athlete to fulfill expectations for academics while enjoying a sport. Some exceptions of participating in cross country and another sport but this should be balanced with student ability to maintain academic expectations and personal interests.

Sportsmanship and Athletics Code Of Conduct

At SMSS, athletic competition contributes to the development of character and school spirit.

Sportsmanship and fair play are an important part of this experience. SMSS expects coaches, players, faculty, students, and parents to represent our school in a manner that is respectful of others on and off the field of competition. If a student is serving a detention, In or Out of School Suspension (ISS or OSS), or is not in school by 9:00 AM, they will not be permitted to participate in games scheduled for that day.

Before participating in the student athlete's first scrimmage or contest of each season, the student and his or her parent/guardian must acknowledge receipt of, and agree to abide by, the Athletics Code of Conduct by signing and returning the acknowledgement form to the Athletic Department. The Athletics acknowledgement form will be distributed to students interested in athletics at the beginning of each season.

Fees

An athletic fee per student/per sport must be paid by the end of the first week of practice, in order to receive a team uniform and continued participation at team practices. Fees are made payable to Saint Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School.

Communication with Coaches/Athletic Director

Should a concern arise, the parent and/or student-athlete should talk to the coach first. Coaches' contact information can be obtained from the Athletic Director. If a resolution does not occur when talking with the coach, parents or students should then contact the Athletic Director if they feel that additional communication is necessary. If the Athletic Director is unable to resolve the concern, then a meeting with the Principal and the Athletic Director may be scheduled.

Before/Beyond the Bell

SMSS offers parents a before and after childcare program entitled Before/Beyond the Bell **formerly known as *Before School Care/After School Care***. The program is offered to parents at an additional fee billed monthly or on an *as-needed* (drop-in) basis. Students enrolled in the Before the Bell and Beyond the Bell program are provided with homework assistance, a nutritious snack, and supervised recess. This program is functions under the Commonwealth of Virginia's Religious Exempt Daycare program criteria.

General Information

Rules for before and after school care are the same as classroom rules, namely, students are to be considerate and respectful to all staff and other children. Parents will be informed of repeated behavior problems and infractions will be issued if behavior warrants them. The discipline policy as outlined in this Student-Parent Handbook will be followed. Once students have completed their assignments, they should have a book to read. Maintaining a quiet room for the remainder of the students is expected. On noon dismissal days, students will need to bring lunch and a drink because the cafeteria is not open.

Before the Bell (BTB) Care

BTB is available beginning at 7:00 AM in the school cafeteria for students who arrive at school early. (Students should not be dropped off at school before 7:00 AM.) Students who arrive anytime between 7:00 and 7:45 AM will be taken to BTB and may enter their classrooms at 7:45 AM. A flat rate fee is charged per family per week.

Beyond the Bell (BTB) Care

BTB program is available from 3:15 PM until 5:30 PM for students in grades JK - 8.; this service is also available for all students on early dismissal days. Parents will be billed at an hourly rate of \$15 for the time that their children are in BTB, unless they use a payment plan. Parents whose children remain in BTB after 5:30 p.m. will be charged \$1.00 per minute for this service

Before and Beyond the Bell Rates (*with completed BTB plan on file with the school office*) :

1. After School-4:30 PM: \$1,245 per child for the school year (includes discounted before school rate)
2. After School-5:30 p.m.: \$2, 065 per child for the school year (includes discounted before school rate)
3. One hour or less: \$696 per child for the school year (over one hour converts to the drop in rate)
4. Drop-in rate (no plan): Before school: \$15.00/week per family and Afterschool Care: \$15/hour per child.

BTB Program Overview

BTB: Full time PK students are offered after care beginning at 2:30 PM. Regular full day dismissal begins at 2:30 for PK students. K-8 students are offered after care beginning at 3:15- 5:30 PM. K-8 students start dismissing at 2:55 (after prayers) until 3:15 PM.

The students in BTB are divided into two rooms according to the grade levels. Pre-K through 2nd Grades is in the BTB Care Room in the lower building and 3rd through 8th grades are in the cafeteria. Each room has a general routine schedule as follows:

- Sign-in: Children come directly to the appropriate after-school care room. Once students are signed-in, they cannot leave until a parent or designated adult signs them out.
- Snack: A small snack is provided and is held for a period of 15 minutes in the afternoon.
- Homework: Students will have up to 40 minutes to complete homework for students in grades 3-8. This time should be a quiet time and once homework is completed students

should read silently until quiet time is concluded. If students do not finish homework during homework time, it is understood that further time on homework will take place at home. The ASC workers are not considered tutors and therefore are not expected to help with homework on a personal basis.

- Outdoor recess: Weather permitting students may have up to 30 minutes outdoors on the school playground during BTB. Appropriate play is expected, and seasonal clothing must be worn.
- Sign-out: For the safety of each student and according to legal guidelines, it is important that a parent or designated adult signs out students from BTB and marks the time for billing purposes. For students participating in one or more of the after-school activities, they will be checked into BTB once their activity ends, and they are dismissed.

Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are announced each day during morning announcements following morning prayers; parties will not be held in class. Birthday invitations may not be passed out in school unless every child in the class receives one. The school office will not accept delivery of balloons, flowers, etc. – no exceptions for student birthday celebrations. SMSS participates in a wellness program and in support of our students with known food allergies, **only edible birthday treats which are commercially prepared listing all ingredients used in preparing the item may be brought in to share with classmates at the end of the school day.** Edible birthday treats are limited to cookies, cupcakes, or doughnuts. An alternative food safe treat for students with known allergies should be considered/provided as well. Birthdays may be celebrated in class with other non-food items distributed, such as stickers, pencils, etc... thus eliminating the concerns for food allergy related items in the classroom.

Parents/guardian are reminded that by law, they are responsible for any minor attending a party at their home. Teachers are not allowed to chaperone non-school sponsored student parties.

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy

“Every human being is created in the image of God and redeemed by Jesus Christ, and therefore is invaluable and worthy of respect as a member of the human family.”

“The body of Catholic social teaching opens with the human person, but it does not close there. Individuals have dignity; individualism has no place in Catholic social thought. The principle of human dignity gives the human person a claim on membership in a community, the human family.” (Taken from Byron, William J. S.J., *Ten Building Blocks of Catholic Social Teaching*. (2010). America: The National Catholic Weekly. American Press Inc.)

This section is intended to serve notice to students, their parents, and members of the SMSS

community, that bullying behavior is an immediate cause for intervention that could include immediate suspension or expulsion. All persons –those engaging in bullying behaviors, victims of bullying, or witnesses to the victimization of another either in person or virtually through cyber bullying– must realize that bullying is a community concern requiring community-wide accountability and commitment to both its prevention and prompt, appropriate response if and when it occurs.

The Bullying policy guidelines provided in this handbook will be reviewed and/or updated at least annually. These guidelines shall apply to students and members of the school staff, including but not limited to educators, support staff, nurses, and administrators.

The faculty and staff shall be trained annually on this policy. Relevant sections of the plan relating to the duties of faculty and staff shall be included in the school employee handbook.

SMSS prohibits bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation as defined below. Bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation can occur on or off school property, and during or outside of school hours. In general, the Code of Virginia addresses certain behaviors associated with bullying which may also result in punishment under Virginia statute.

Definitions

“Bullying” is generally accepted as the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extra- curricular activity or paraprofessional of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim’s property; places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property; creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of the school. For the purposes of this section, bullying shall include cyber-bullying.

“Cyber-bullying” is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying shall also include: the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions included in the definition of bullying.

“Retaliation” against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation

of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying shall be prohibited.

“Hostile Environment” is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student’s education.

“Aggressor” is a student, *or a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional*, who engages in bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation.

“Target” is a student against whom bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

“Staff” includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, and bus drivers, and athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

Formal Procedure for Reporting

Students should report all bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation to teachers or staff. Staff and teachers must report all bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation to the principal or designee.

Parents/guardians, and others should report all bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation to the principal or designee.

All reporting may be done verbally or in writing. The reporting of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation may be made anonymously; however, no disciplinary action shall be taken against a student based solely on an anonymous report. The principal and/or designee will respond to and investigate all **credible** reports of bullying and ensure proper documentation. This investigation will provide for the following:

Safety of the target

The principal or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include but are not limited to predetermining seating arrangements in the classroom, at lunch, or on a bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the target; and altering the classroom schedule if necessary to reduce that aggressor’s access to the target. The principal or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during or after the investigation, as necessary.

Protection of the reporter or witness during the investigation

The principal or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting a student who has reported/witnessed or provided information during an investigation of a bullying situation. These responses may include but are not limited to the same responses noted for the safety of the target.

Notification, including the parents/guardian of both the target and the aggressor, as well as notification of law enforcement, if warranted

- a. Parents/Guardians: Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or designee will promptly notify the parents/guardian or guardians of the target and the aggressor, and of the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the principal or designee contacts parents/guardian or guardians prior to any investigation.
- b. Notice to another school: If the incident involves students from more than one school, the principal or designee will notify by phone all schools so that each may take appropriate action.
- c. Notice to Office of Catholic Schools: After determining that bullying has taken place, notice shall be given immediately to the superintendent and/or designee.
- d. Notice to law enforcement: At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, if the principal or designee has a **reasonable** basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal or designee will notify the parent/guardian consistent with the law and reporting protocols with appropriate agencies.

Investigation

The principal or designee will investigate promptly all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved.

During the investigation, the principal or designee will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents/guardian or guardians, and others, as necessary. The principal or designee (or whoever is conducting the investigation) will remind the alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Interviews may be conducted by the principal or designee, other staff members as determined by the principal or designee, and in consultation with the school counselor, as appropriate. To the extent practicable and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the principal or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The principal or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation.

Determinations

The principal or designee will decide based upon all the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal or designee will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefitting from school activities.

The principal or designee will:

- 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and
- 2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary.

Depending upon the circumstances, the principal or designee may choose to consult with the students' teacher(s) and/or school counselor, and the target's or aggressor's parents/guardian or guardians, to identify any underlying social or emotional issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development.

The principal or designee will promptly notify the parents/guardian or guardians of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. All notice to parents/ guardian must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the principal or designee cannot report specific information to the target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

Range of disciplinary actions that may be taken against an aggressor for bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation

SMSS will include bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation into the age-appropriate disciplinary consequence that is included in the student/parent handbook. These disciplinary consequences may include, but are not limited to, suspension and/or expulsion.

Any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension and/or expulsion.

At the discretion of the principal or designee, recommendations for counseling or referrals to additional support services may be made available to targets, aggressors, and/or family members. The cost associated and implementation of these additional measures will be at the discretion of and paid for by the parent/family

*****Nothing in this bullying policy is intended to prevent school administration from taking disciplinary action against a student for conduct that does not meet the definition of bullying, as defined above, but nonetheless is inappropriate for the school environment. *****

Business/Finance Office Information

Tuition, Financial Aid, and Textbook Information

Saint Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School (SMSS) is proud to offer Catholic education with a rigorous academic program at a tremendous value. The school and academic programming is prepared with the understanding that the school operates on the collection of the tuition to achieve the school's annual education goals. Tuition does not cover all the costs of operating the school.

SMSS closes this gap through fundraising and the generous donations of families, parishioners, benefactors, and supporters.

The enrollment of a student is a binding contract on which the annual school budget is developed from. The parent/family obligation to pay the full tuition and fees is unconditional and no portion of the charges paid, or outstanding balance will be refunded or canceled in the event of withdrawal, dismissal, suspension, or absence of the student(s) from SMSS. In

the event of any such separation from SMSS, any unpaid balance for the full amount of the tuition shall become at once due and payable. Should withdrawal be necessary due to extenuating circumstances, such as military orders or significant family medical event, the decision to release liability under an active tuition agreement will be left to the sole discretion of the Principal in consultation with the School Board Finance Committee.

It is the Principal's responsibility and sole discretion to suspend or dismiss any student who fails to maintain the academic standards of SMSS, who violates SMSS regulations, or whose conduct is not in the best interest of the student and/or of SMSS.

It is understood that SMSS may withhold records of any student whose account is in arrears and that a student will not receive a grade for tests for final exams if his or her account is not current.

Application Fee

The Application Fee is a non-refundable fee that must accompany each new application. The fee is (\$175) per child, not to exceed \$300 per family. Re-enrollment fees are (\$150) per child prior to the deadline typically occurring during the 2nd week in February.

Tuition

Saint Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, or gender in awarding financial aid. **The award is based on available funds, the financial need of the family, and the number of applicants requesting financial aid.**

SMSS families have the following three options for paying tuition:

- Payment due in full by August 15th each year, paid directly to the school or,
- Semi-annual payments by August 15th, and January 15th semi-annually paid directly to the school or,
- Monthly payment plan through FACTS Tuition Management Company

A \$25 late charge will be imposed on all amounts overdue, including before and after-school care. A \$30 fee will be applied to account for each returned check via FACTS.

To be considered for the in Parish Catholic tuition rate the following applies:

- A valid Baptism certificate must be on file with the school
- Family must be registered in a Diocesan parish

- Military families attending an on-base parish should provide a letter of registration from the Archdiocese of Military Chaplains

Financial Aid: Tuition Assistance Application Process for Current Families (Deadline MARCH 1st)

To be eligible for tuition assistance consideration, the child's enrollment contract must be completed, and a FACTS agreement must be set up with scheduled payments. The SMSS application fee is non-refundable.

- Tuition Assistance application is available to families who are not business owners or do not have business income.
- Assistance is available to families who have children registered in prekindergarten through grade eight.
- All applications must be completed online with **FACTS Grant and Aid** website.
- Tuition Assistance decisions are made after review by the Principal and Financial Aid Committee prior to the start of the school year.
- All applications must be completed by **March 1st**, in order to be eligible for **Diocesan Assistance** in Round 1. That means all required/requested documents, especially Forms 1040, W2 for the most recently completed tax year, as well as submitted and received by FACTS Grant and Aid Management by March 1st.
- Self-employed families who have not previously applied are eligible to submit their documentation by June 1st, for a second round of funding.
- There are multiple rounds of financial aid which are reviewed by an anonymous committee. Families are urged to submit a completed FACTS application by the deadline of March 1st. Typically, 70% of all financial aid is awarded in Round 1. Awards are typically announced for Round 1 by May 31.
- Round 2 deadline is June 1, and awards are typically announced prior to the start of school in August.
- The school makes every attempt to have a 3rd round of financial aid in which the application deadline is August 1, and awards are typically announced by mid-September.
- Students receiving tuition assistance are expected to achieve academically and make a positive contribution to the school. A financial aid award may be rescinded due to a low-grade point average without attempts to improve, chronic behavioral issues of a student or any behavior of a parent/guardian/student disrespecting the Catholic identity of SMSS faculty, staff, families, students, or volunteers.
- If you have questions, please contact the Business Office at 757-723-6358 or email finance@saintmarystarofthesea.com.

Curriculum and General Fee

The fees for K-8th is \$550 and for Pre-Kindergarten \$250 and paid by July 1. This fee can be paid by check/money order or credit card.

Confidentiality of Financial Statement/Need

All information received is strictly confidential and is reviewed only by the Financial Aid Committee. **Applications are reviewed anonymously based upon family need, amount of financial aid available, and number of families submitting requests for assistance.**

Referral for Collection i.e. PAYMENT IN ARREARS

The account will be considered delinquent after 2 consecutive months of no payment. The account may be referred to the Finance Council for further action, up to and including the students not being permitted to attend school until the account is current. When or if the account is referred to an attorney for collection, the parent/family will be obligated to pay all collection fees including court and attorney fees. According to the tuition agreement, paragraph D, any account referred to an attorney for collection is subject to the additional sum the greater of:

1. 33 1/3% of the outstanding balance owed for collection and attorney's fees OR
2. The actual amount of attorney's fee, costs, and expenses incurred.

Financial Withdrawal

The enrollment of a student is an annual contract, and there is no rebate or credit for absence or withdrawal for any reason or for suspension or dismissal after the session starts. Should withdrawals be necessary due to extenuating circumstances, the decision to release liability under this agreement will be left to the sole discretion of the principal in consultation with the Finance Committee.

Parents/families are required to pay tuition through the month that students are withdrawn. Military and company transfer in excess of 50 miles from SMSS are considered extenuating circumstances which the principal will review as they occur.

Withdrawal prior to the first day of school will result in a refund of all fees except application and enrollment fees, which are non-refundable. It may take up to 60 days to process less 15%.

If the parent/guardian/family without notice/consent of the school withdraws a student, any payment due under the active tuition agreement shall become immediately due and payable, without extension.

Bus Service

SMSS does not currently operate a regular bus service. The school does own and operates a bus that serves as transportation for scheduled school field trips and activities. When students use the school bus for field trips, they must abide by the Student Code of Conduct. Specific Bus Safety rules are as follows:

1. Students must stay in a seat for the duration of the ride and are not permitted to walk in the aisles until the bus has stopped.

2. Students may not put their hands or head outside the windows at any time and must keep clear of the emergency exit in the back.
3. Any disruptive or inappropriate behavior on the part of a student may cause him/her to not be permitted to ride the bus.
4. The bus driver will notify the principal of any concerns over student misbehavior. It will be the principal's decision as to what actions will be taken.

Cafeteria

Students at SMSS can either bring their own meals from home for lunch or order from a selection of lunches on a monthly basis. The cafeteria is managed by a food service manager and the kitchen meets the standard requirements for food preparations/service.

A monthly lunch menu is available to assist with planning for lunch and posted online in FACTS/SIS Family Portal. The cafeteria manager will send out a monthly email notification when the lunch ordering window is soon to close for the upcoming month. Parents can order lunch (done monthly) through the FACTS/SIS Family Portal as well as prepay for lunch orders using the lunch order tab.

Students are encouraged to bring a nutritional snack for the daily snack break. Carbonated/caffeinated sodas or energy drinks are not allowed at school. Parents should consider the age of each child when packing lunch—for example, small children have a difficult time assembling “Lunchable”-type meals. Students should be able to open and independently eat their lunches and snacks.

If a student did not pre-order a lunch and needs a lunch, lunch will be provided for a fee and will be billed to the parent. The students should inform the teacher if he/she forgot lunch

Expectations for the Cafeteria

Students eat their lunches in shifts by grade level within the cafeteria facility.

Cafeteria behavior expectations should rely upon and reflect proper etiquette to include Christian values. Students are assigned cafeteria seats by homeroom teachers and are expected to talk quietly/conversational voices during lunch as well as display good eating habits.

All students must remain seated during the lunch period until dismissed by the supervising adults. No student may leave the cafeteria without permission from an adult/teacher.

The sharing of food items between students is not permitted as this presents health concerns for any student who may have an allergy to certain food items. Students with known food allergies will be assigned designated seating consistent with providing an area that supports his or her needs for an allergy safe seating location. Cafeteria staff will monitor to the extent possible students and prevent the sharing of food items.

No food or drinks are to be taken outside the cafeteria unless directed by school administration.

Students are expected to eat lunches provided and not waste food

Students are expected to clean up after themselves and may be required to assist with disposing of trash and lunch items (unconsumed food or drinks) in appropriate receptacles.

Excessive noise may result in brief periods (not to exceed ten minute) of silent lunch for individual student, a class, or the entire lunchroom.

Running and horseplay are not allowed in the cafeteria. After lunch, students are expected to line up quietly and orderly.

Parents/guardian may not bring lunch directly to students. Students are welcome to bring their own lunch from home if they do not order lunch at school; commercial fast-food lunches are not encouraged.

Parents may not drop in to eat with their children. Due to limited time and space in serving lunch to our students, this is not convenient.

Students are required to bring their own lunch "accessories" - napkins, spoons, forks, straws, etc.

Calendar

A yearly calendar is distributed at the beginning of the school year. A monthly calendar that identifies daily school events is available on the school website as well on the FACTS Homepage. Changes made to the school calendar will be communicated to parents/guardian in a timely manner.

Car Line Procedures (Morning Drop-Off and Afternoon Pick-up)

General Procedure

SMSS is situated on a campus that consists of limited parking and public access roadway areas. This prohibits students from safely walking to-or-from these areas without adult supervision.

******Cooperation and patience are required from everyone to ensure the safety and security of all students, families, and school personnel. Please follow the directions received from school staff at drop-off and dismissal locations at all times.******

Parents provide the primary transportation for their child(ren) and as vehicle operators are subject to vehicle regulations including observation of posted speed limits, parking, and school safety as outlined by the Commonwealth of Virginia. The speed limit within the SMSS campus areas

including access to public roadways and parking areas during school drop-off and afternoon pick-up is 10 mph. Appropriate signage/traffic cones are established identifying the areas within the school zone. Speed limits within the congested school parking aprons in all areas of campus building such as loading and unloading zones should not exceed 5 mph.

Fire Lane/No Parking Restricted Areas are marked with a solid yellow line along the designated curbs and must be kept clear at all times. Please refrain from parking in handicapped spaces marked in blue unless you possess the appropriate handicapped placard.

We respectfully ask that drivers refrain from cell phone use while driving on campus. Students, parents, and employees are frequently walking in our parking areas, and drivers who use cell phones are unable to pay proper attention.

The main school parking lot (located in front of the school main entrance) will be closed for general short term (30 minute) parking (from 7:45-8:00 AM) due to student/parent pedestrians. No student may be dropped off before 7:45 AM unless going to *Before the Bell BTB*. Please see *Before the Bell* guidelines in this handbook for the drop-off location associated with *Before the Bell*.

All drivers will pull as far forward in the designated line to maximize the number of students exiting the cars at one time. Please do not allow your children to unload until you have pulled up as far as possible. Please follow signs and directions from staff, and never pull out of the line once your child has unloaded. **Stay in the line at all times, do not cut out of line if your child has unloaded.**

Arrival Plan: 7:45 AM Arrival Procedure

Students in grades Pre-Kindergarten through 4th shall use the drop off area on Water Street (also known as the “**Circle**”); now called the **Blue** line on the car line map found in Appendix A

Students in grades 5th through 8th are dropped off on Willard Avenue near the gym gate area and proceed through the gate; now called the **Gold** line on the car line map found in Appendix A

General Dismissal Guidelines

In order to provide a safe and efficient exit from school, the vehicle should pull up to the assigned pick-up location. The driver must remain in the car at all times. The carpool number of the family will be relayed to the teachers via walkie-talkie. The student[s] will remain in their classrooms or the hallway until their carpool numbers are called over the intercom. Do not tell your child to exit the classroom before his or her number is called. For the safety and security of all students, students must remain with their teachers until their numbers are called.

Parents who pick up students on Willard Avenue (Gold line) must approach Willard from the direction of Mellen Street and pull up on the side of Willard closest to the school. **A student may not cross the street to get into the car.** If the line is backed up, cars should not block Mellen Street, but should line up on the other side of Mellen Street and cross the intersection once there is room. Cars should not turn left or right from Mellen Street onto Willard Avenue if cars are lined up across the street.

All students who are being picked up after school will be assigned to one of two designated pick-up areas: the "Circle" on Water Street (Blue line) or Willard Avenue (Gold line).

All families will be issued two copies of their assigned car number. This number must be displayed on the passenger side of the windshield when you are in the carline. Do not remove your number from being displayed until AFTER the child is physically in the car.

If students carpool with another family, students will need that family's number also. If parents need an extra copy made for that purpose, please email the request to the office.

Students who attend Beyond the Bell Care on a regular basis will also be assigned a number in the event that they are ever picked up at dismissal.

The safety of children is of primary importance to all of the faculty and staff. Please refrain from using cell phones during this time to give your full attention to safety during dismissal.

If students are planning to leave school with an adult other than a family member, written permission from their parents/guardians must be given to the teacher the morning of intended dismissal. For late changes to parent pick-up plans, a phone call to the school main office to inform the school is required to provide the safe dismissal of your student.

Important: Parents are not permitted to enter the gates and walk to pick up students. To ensure the safety of our students, parents are asked to refrain from conferencing with teachers while the teachers are supervising dismissal of students. Please schedule a time for conferencing outside the dismissal time.

Dismissal Plan: 3:00 PM Dismissal Procedure

On most days, dismissal takes about ten minutes. Everyone's cooperation and courtesy are required to help ensure a smooth dismissal. The safety of our students, parents, and school staff is our greatest priority.

Regular School Day--- Location noted is where a student will go to, and parent should line up to wait for their child(ren)

- Circle Pick-up (Blue Line) = Students in grades 5-8 with a younger sibling in grades K-2.
- Circle Pick-up (Blue Line) = Students in grades K-2 who are the youngest or only.
- Willard Pick-up (Gold Line) = Students in grades 3-8 who are the youngest or only.

Noon or Early Dismissal Day--- follow the same procedure as noted for Regular School Day; dismissal time will typically be 12PM unless otherwise announced. Please Note: Pre-K students typically will dismiss at 11:20 AM at the Circle with the exception of those few PreK students who have older siblings at the school. In this instance those Pre-K students with older siblings may remain until noon/early dismissal of their siblings.

Running Late Pickup--- All students who are not picked up by the designated dismissal times (either on regular, noon or early dismissal) will be escorted to Beyond the Bell Care. The BTB entrance located on Willard Avenue, across from the baseball fields, will be used for this purpose. A fee will be assessed for late pickup while your child is in BTB.

Care of Books and School Property

Students are expected to use workbooks/textbooks and school materials with care. Jesus expects you to be a good caretaker of all the property that you own or are allowed to use.

You show this respect by treating all school property and personal property as if it were a gift loaned by Jesus.

1. School hardcover books are to be covered and well cared for. Students may NOT write in any textbooks. Negligence will result in a fine, which will be used for the replacement of damaged books.
2. Students who lose their books will be charged for the lost text.
3. Students writing on walls or damaging property will be required to do clean-up work and pay for the repairs.
4. All school property such as computers and other technology are to be used for the benefit of all students. Damage to any school property, equipment, computer or software through improper use or vandalism will be subject to a fine for damage or replacement. Students are only permitted to access their own saved work on computers - accessing, copying, tampering with or destroying another student's saved work is subject to detention or other disciplinary actions, including suspension of computer privileges.

The student will be responsible for any textbook/property that is lost or damaged. Final report cards will not be issued to any student who has not returned or paid for lost or damaged books/property.

Cellular Telephones, Other Portable Telecommunication Devices, and Electronic Devices

While we respect a parent's decision to provide an electronic device for their child(ren), we do reserve the right to limit device use should the device come to school. **Cell phones, smart type watches, electronic toys, iPods, MP3 players, video games, headphones, etc., are not to be used during the school day (7:45 AM-3:15 PM); device use limitations also extend to Before/Beyond the Bell for those students enrolled in the Before/Beyond the Bell program.**

Electronic devices (cell phones, smart type watches, toys, iPods, MP3 players, video games, etc.,) must be turned off and stored appropriately in designated containers in students assigned homeroom. **If a student is found to be using a device during the day without permission, the student will be directed to take the electronic device to the office and meet with an administrator. The electronic device will be given back at the end of the day for the first offense. Any future offenses will result in parent(s)/guardian(s) contacted to come and pick up the electronic device. Students may not use their electronic device to take pictures or recordings of themselves or others; posting anything to Social Media is not acceptable.**

SMSS assumes no responsibility in any circumstance for loss, destruction, damage, theft, or charges made on monthly statements for a cellular telephone, portable telecommunication device, or electronic device.

Cheating

Cheating or copying the work of another (plagiarism) is a serious offense. A “0” (Zero) may be given for any work in which a student has cheated, copied, or given their work to be copied. Students are expected to do their own work in their own handwriting unless instructed to work cooperatively by their teacher. Any work not completed by the student will NOT be accepted.

Parents/guardians will be notified of the cheating infraction and any appropriate disciplinary action issued at the discretion of the school administration.

Classroom Interruptions

In order to facilitate learning in the school environment, classes should not be interrupted during the school day. Please remember that the teachers must be present to all of their students beginning at 7:45 AM, and that teachers are legally required to supervise all of the students present. If a parent/family needs to communicate with the teacher, please do so by Email or contact the main office. Teachers will make every effort to get back within 24 business hours. Teachers are not expected to answer Emails during instruction time, and this will most likely occur at the end of the school day.

All visitors must report to the office and conduct all business at the main office. In order to maintain a safe school environment no visitors will be permitted in the school without approval from school administration.

In order to teach children age-appropriate responsibility, parents may not accompany their children to their classrooms when dropping them off at school. Parents who are picking up their children for early dismissal must meet their child at the school main office to sign them out.

Classroom Organization

Students in grades Pre-K through 4 are assigned to one self-contained classroom. Students in Grades 5-8 are departmentalized. For the 5th grade, except for math, science and the co-curricular classes, students will stay in their classrooms with the homeroom teacher who teaches the other subjects. The 5th grade will remain in the elementary level while grades 6, 7 & 8 are considered middle school grade levels.

Middle school students are assigned a homeroom teacher who is responsible for the students' academic and extracurricular activities entrusted to him/her for the school year.

Closing Exercises (Graduation)

Participation in closing exercises (graduation) is a privilege, not a right. The school has the right to deny any student from participating in closing exercises if, in the view of the school, the student's conduct or academic or disciplinary record indicates that the privilege should not be extended.

Commencement

Eighth grade students who have completed the prescribed course of study and maintained a suitable discipline record are eligible to participate in commencement ceremonies if all financial obligations have been met. The administration and the eighth-grade teachers determine procedures for commencement ceremonies and celebrations.

Communication

Effective communication is the single, most important factor that assures a positive relationship between the home and school. Several modes of communication exist at our school to help keep parents informed of policies, activities, upcoming events, and student progress.

SMSS utilizes several forms of communication as listed below:

Student-Parent Handbook- updated at least annually and released at the beginning of the school year.

School Calendar At-A-Glance ---- listing of school events anticipated for the upcoming year. Distributed typically at the beginning of the school year and/or updated if major changes occur.

School Website & FACT/SIS Application (Family Portal) — electronic formats that serve as a repository of online information for the SMSS community and are updated frequently. The school website address is:

www.saintmarystarofthesea.com

SMSS Principal Updates---- periodic electronic mail distribution of upcoming events typically

released as needed a week preceding the upcoming event as a helpful reminder.

Sentinel Development Quarterly--- pamphlet outlining major events prepared by the SMSS Advancement/ Development Office highlighting school and student events for our community supporters.

Sentinel Monthly Messenger--- Monthly communiqué prepared by the SMSS Principal, highlighting school and student events as well as state of the school information.

Additionally, communications are described in this handbook and are listed alphabetically under the appropriate topic such parent-teacher conferences, correspondence, and/or report cards.

Conduct Violations

As a student enrolled at SMSS, he or she is expected to accept and cooperate fully with routine matters of rules, regulations, and discipline. The following, though not all-inclusive, is a list of conduct that violates the Discipline Code.

- **Abusive, profane, or vulgar language** — any inappropriate language used on school premises
- **Bullying** – aggressive behavior that is intentional, consistent, and involves an imbalance of power repeated over a period time
- **Cheating** — the taking or giving of schoolwork/exam/academic information that is not one’s own or if the teacher has reasonable cause to suspect such an action
- **Cyberbullying** – bullying by e-mail, through social media, or transmission on other electronic devices
- **Damaging any school, church, or personal property**
- **Disrespect** — any improper attitude displayed toward a teacher, staff member, volunteer parent, administrator, or another student
- **Disruptive classroom behavior** — disturbances in class, the lunchroom, such as sidebar conversations or talking out during direct instruction, slamming books, unnecessary noises, any disruption deemed by the teacher to interrupt the educational process
- **Dress Code Violation** — any infraction of the dress code after a warning has been given
- **Forgery** — handing in a paper signed or written by anyone other than a parent/ guardian
- **Gum chewing/eating in class** — gum is not permitted on campus. Snacks may only be eaten at the designated time
- **Harassment** --- verbal or physical intimidation or threat thereof; including sexual
- **Invading the privacy of another’s desk** — teacher or another student
- **Out of Bounds** — being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Any behavior or inappropriate language that causes the learning atmosphere to deteriorate or be disrupted, or which infringes upon the rights of others in the school, will not be tolerated, and may

subject the student to reasonable corrective measures. Reasonable corrective measures may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Teacher redirection of student with or without warning of possible further consequences
- Teacher-student conference
- Time-out in the classroom or main office
- Silent lunch
- Detention after normal school hours on a designated day and time
- Formal written office referral to administration
- In-school or out-of-school suspension imposed only by administration

Student shall receive a written form of notification using a Behavior Alert Form/Notice provided through FACTS/SIS notifying/addressed to the parent and copy to administration.

Serious infractions may result in an immediate detention (depending on context or circumstances such as previous admonishments or infractions), suspension, or dismissal from school and applies to students on campus, traveling to or from field trips, or at school-sponsored functions.

SMSS reserves the right to discipline the student when, at the discretion of the administration, the student's interest or that of the school will be best served by such action.

SMSS also reserves the right to suspend, dismiss, or deny enrollment to any student whose progress is unsatisfactory or whose conduct, general attitude, or habitual actions, or those of the parent(s) or guardian(s) are contrary to the interest of the school or in violation of the school's rules and regulations as stated in the Student-Parent Handbook.

Confidentiality

Faculty, staff, and volunteers of Saint Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School (SMSS) will keep confidential information entrusted to or discovered by them in the process of their area of responsibilities. Information which involves harm to one's life, health, or safety must be reported to the school principal or designee immediately. All faculty, staff, and volunteers must sign the Confidentiality Statement made available by the school administration

Civil/Criminal Law Violations

Students alleged to have committed a civil or criminal crime may be dismissed from Saint Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School for the duration of indictment and trial. Readmittance will be at the discretion of the Principal in consultation with Diocese of Richmond Office of Catholic Schools.

Criteria of Acceptance

Application to Saint Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School (SMSS) implies a willingness by all students and their parents/guardians/families to adhere to the school policies and philosophy.

Students will not be accepted to SMSS until all applicable application paperwork (such as report cards, birth certificate, behavior report, immunization, testing, IEP/504, etc...) are received and verified. Mid-year transfer students will submit a letter of recommendation from their present teacher and/or principal and a copy of their latest report card in addition to the items outlined for admission.

Curriculum and Instruction

Saint Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School (SMSS) incorporates the Consensus Curriculum established by the Diocese of Richmond. This curriculum can be found electronically on the Diocese of Richmond website under the Office of Catholic Schools tab.

All students are required to take the core subject of theology, language arts, math, science, and social studies. Co-curricular resource classes may include Technology/Library, Art, Music, PE/Health, or World/Foreign Language

Curriculum

It is our desire to provide students with the religious, academic, and social skills that will carry them through life. The primary reason for our existence is the spiritual and religious development of our young people.

Course Offerings

- Theology classes and Weekly Mass
- Language Arts and Literature
- Mathematics- Pre-Algebra, Algebra I, Geometry, or Honors
- Social Studies including U.S History, World History I, or Civics
- Science
- World/Foreign Language: Exploratory Foreign Language, Spanish I
- Resource Courses: Art, Music, Physical Education, and Technology

Library

All grades are scheduled to visit the library each week. Students have access to library materials each school day when a class does not occupy the library. Library books must be returned before another book can be checked out. Should a library book be lost or damaged, the student is responsible for paying the replacement cost. End-of-year report cards will not be issued until all library fines are paid.

Curriculum Modifications and Accommodations

In an effort to enable students with certain *mild* special needs to participate in SMSS and to assess fairly their competence, effort, and progress, it is necessary to make certain modifications in the curriculum and provisions for grading these students. These measures are taken according to specific circumstances so that high expectations are nevertheless maintained for all students. Only those students who have received designated evaluation requirements are eligible to receive the curriculum modifications and adapted grading on assignments and report cards.

Eligibility is determined on a year-to-year basis. To ensure that parent(s) understand why their child is receiving curriculum modifications and adapted grades, as well as which modifications and accommodations are being made, a written agreement among the principal, teacher(s), parent(s), and the student (when applicable) is discussed and signed.

Instruction

The instructional expectations provided in support of the consensus curriculum is designed to be challenging and is intended to help promote self-worth through accomplishment. It requires cooperation among teachers, parents/guardian, and students to reach its full potential for individual students. Academic expectations at SMSS are rigorous and intended to prepare students as life-long learners through high school into college/university study.

Theology

Saint Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School recognizes religious education as a lifelong process. The school's program involves ongoing spiritual experience and formation, both individual and communal, for each stage of the student's development. We educate the heart, mind, and soul. The religion program includes doctrine, scripture, sacraments, and morality. Faith experiences include liturgies at school and at Church whenever possible. We follow the guidelines of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Students in Grades Junior Kindergarten through 8 attend Mass regularly.

******Students involved in sacramental preparation will be required to participate in preparation programs within their home parish as outlined in Diocesan sacramental preparation policy guidelines.******

Pre-Kindergarten (3 or 4 years old)

The Pre-Kindergarten Program is for children who are three or four years old on or before **September 30th** for the program they will enter beginning in August each year. The Pre-Kindergarten Program at SMSS incorporates the areas of language arts, math, art, music, science and discovery, social studies, self-help, and gross motor skill development. The emphasis is on language, activity, and movement with major emphasis on large muscle activity. Appropriate activities make use of dramatic play, toys, puzzles, and blocks. Opportunities are provided for students to listen to simple stories and verbalize their knowledge, comprehension, and feelings related to each story. The focus of this program is to encourage oral language development and

provide learning experiences that enhance emotional and social growth. Skills are practiced and enhanced through thematic-based units offering a variety of learning activities.

Pre-Kindergarten students should have good bathroom habits and be able to take care of his/her own lavatory/toileting needs (i.e. wiping, re-dressing, etc...). In the event that your child has an "accident" faculty and staff are not authorized to re-dress your child. Your child may ask to use the lavatory at any time. Children will be accompanied by the teacher/aide when using the lavatory. Please note that you will ALWAYS be called in the event that your child has an accident with a bowel movement. In the event that your child has an accident while at school, be sure to return an extra set of clothes to the school the following day! Children may ask for assistance with clothing. Please make sure your child has a spare set of clothing in the classroom (i.e.: underwear, socks.)

Kindergarten

The Kindergarten Program is for children five years old on or before **September 30th**. The classroom is organized into learning centers designed to develop a love of learning. Time and space are organized to encourage active exploration, self-directed play, and freedom of choice at various learning centers, as well as to provide teacher-directed and structured group activities. The curriculum provides instruction in math and reading readiness skills. It also fulfills the need for different learning styles, multilevel activities in a child-oriented environment where children are given the opportunity to grow in a variety of ways. Expectations for reading instruction are determined to be that by the second half of the kindergarten school year students will move from letter sounds in isolation to reading single words to short phrases and word combinations to simple sentence to simple/single short sentence reading books.

Grades 1-8

Reading

The school's reading program is multidimensional. It is expected to be a balanced literacy approach that makes use of many kinds of literature to promote reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Phonics instruction is provided at appropriate grade levels. Through reading motivational programs and activities, students are encouraged to read for pleasure as well as for instructional purposes. Parents/guardians are encouraged to read with their children at least 20-30 minutes each day. Students in middle school grade levels are expected to read daily outside the classroom. It is recommended that they read at least 40-50 minutes each day.

English/Language Arts

English instruction focuses on the study of grammar, composition, oral language, listening skills, spelling, and penmanship, and also includes the acquisition of information literacy skills. It is an integrated program that may use whole language, phonics, and literature-based instructional techniques/strategies. The reading program focuses on traditional and respected literature supplemented with expected independent reading. The use of leveled reading material assists students in building confidence with reading skills involving decoding, fluency, and comprehension. Additionally, middle school grade levels will emphasize literacy skills through long and short fiction,

poetry, speeches, drama, and other assorted non-fiction approaches to understanding.

Writing

Writing is an essential skill that benefits students for the rest of their lives. Introducing and practicing writing with engaging activities in elementary school fosters confidence and a lifelong love of writing. Providing adequate time for students to write is one essential element of an effective writing instruction program. Daily writing opportunities and instructional time will focus the necessary skills/strategies to become effective writers. SMSS students will experience the four main types of writing styles: expository, descriptive, persuasive, and narrative, while understanding that each of these writing styles is used for a specific purpose.

Mathematics

The math program offered is based on the development of age-level appropriate concepts and knowledge that helps the student reason and problem solve concrete problems. Emphasis in the early years is placed on developing numbers and number sense through understanding of the basic concepts of math computation and estimation. Students gain an understanding and knowledge of specific mathematical fundamentals at each grade level; students are expected to have complete mastery of their times tables and other mathematical processes that are applied to the problem-solving processes. Students advance their knowledge and application ability as they continue on through the grades. In middle school, pre-algebra is taught as well as a heavy concentration on geometry in 6th through 8th grades.

Science

Students are taught a balanced content and application of the scientific principle of discovery to process skills in the areas of earth, physical, and life sciences. The program provides experiences that stimulate curiosity and imagination, develop thinking and logic skills, and nurture an appreciation and concern for our environment.

Social Studies

Social Studies provides students with the background necessary for becoming knowledgeable, productive, and responsible citizens. Students are given opportunities to practice thinking, problem solving, decision-making, and social skills. The social studies curriculum in grades 5-8 elaborates on the skills begun in the primary grades. The courses include world geography, ancient civilization, Virginia history, United States history, and/or Civics. The middle school history program will be heavily supported with lectures, notes, learning centers, and numerous approaches to understanding the importance of historical study.

Computer/Technology

Students are exposed to computer/technology use while completing assignments throughout the curriculum when necessary. Assignments are aligned with the learning objectives specified by the Diocesan curriculum.

World Language

Students in Grades 1-8 may have the opportunity for classes in an approved foreign language, currently Spanish depending on availability of a teacher for the language provided. Students are introduced to the basic language and provided with an opportunity to practice these skills through conversational experiences. The emphasis is placed on the development of the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) with special attention in middle school lessons being given to listening and speaking skills. Grammar and vocabulary learning, rather than being the focus of instruction, are integrated into lessons. The programs vary as to the depth and duration of study as well as the starting point. There is no guarantee that a foreign language will be offered in any grade if a teacher is not available to provide this resource.

Physical Education

All students (Junior Kindergarten - Grade 8) will receive weekly instruction that is age appropriate and/or tailored to their personal abilities. The P.E. program should:

1. attain maximum motor development, physical fitness, and well-being;
2. attain desirable social growth; and
3. utilize acquired movement and motor skills in worthwhile leisure activities.
4. incorporate health and nutrition instruction to support good health choices

Music

All students (Junior Kindergarten - Grade 6) will receive weekly instruction in musical theory, styles, and appreciation. Students learn songs for Mass, special school programs and personal enjoyment.

Art

All students (Junior Kindergarten - Grade 8) will receive weekly instruction. Art develops awareness and sensitivity to natural and human-made environments, increases imaginative expression through the use of art materials, promotes an understanding and appreciation of self and others, and furthers aesthetic growth through visual discrimination.

Extracurricular Activities

Students who are interested in participating in extracurricular activities are encouraged to do so. Extracurricular activities typically meet after school and vary depending upon interest and availability of volunteer sponsors. A sample listing is provided below and volunteer sponsors are welcome to speak with school administration if interested in supporting an activity:

- Bible Study
- Public Speaking
- Book Club/Study
- Journalism/School Newspaper

- Sewing
- Chess
- S.T.R.E.A.M.

National Junior Honor Society and Student Council Association

Students interested in either of these organizations are subject to eligibility requirements associated with each organization. **Application eligibility to these extracurricular activities does not automatically guarantee selection.** Criteria for application is published in separate documentation and shared with interested/eligible students at appropriate times during the school year.

National Junior Honor Society

Students in 7th and 8th grade who exhibit academic success, leadership, character, service, and good citizenship may be nominated by the Middle School Faculty to membership in the National Junior Honor Society. The nomination process takes place in the spring of each school year, and students are nominated on the basis of proven academic success (honor roll), behavior, service, and responsibility. Academic and conduct standards must be maintained throughout their time at Saint Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School.

Student Council Association

The establishment of a Student Council Association will be explored during the 2024-2025 school year. More information will be released during the first quarter of the school year by the school administration.

Discipline and Code of Conduct

At Saint Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School, we are proud of our students and school! We expect that our students will conduct themselves in a respectful, appropriate manner, showing pride in themselves and their school community. The policies of the school are based on the gospel principle of respecting each individual as made in the image and likeness of God.

Each child at Saint Mary is a Saint Mary student at all times.

It is impossible to foresee all situations which may arise, this clause empowers the faculty and administration to take reasonable disciplinary action for any behavior which violates the spirit and philosophy of Saint Mary Star of the Sea School, even though not specified in this handbook.

As a school, our major goal regarding student discipline is to reinforce the positive and to help students make good choices daily. Our school rules and regulations are based on the following:

- † treat everyone with kindness, respect at all times, and greet others, especially adults, when they pass them in the hallways or meet them around the school
- † be a good listener and seek help from teachers whenever needed
- † be responsible for your actions-- keep hands and feet to self, quiet and walk in the hallways
- † respond to adults with “Yes, ma’am,” “No, ma’am,” “Yes, sir,” or “No, sir” when appropriate
- † stand and greet visitors when they enter their classroom
- † keep our school clean
- † be a friend to everyone and offer to help other students, teachers, staff, and parents
- † always do your best to pursue truth and knowledge according to your ability, accepting responsibility for your learning
- † abide by the dress code- neatness and cleanliness should be a daily priority

Addressing poor choices should be a learning opportunity for every student. While it is understood that students are not perfect all the time, a student who makes a poor choice, reacts in a negative manner, or just doesn't follow expectations, must understand that their actions may result in either verbal or physical harm or injury to others.

The overarching goal for every student at Saint Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School is to be safe at school at all times, and to achieve success with every learning opportunity.

It is also understood that a poor choice/decision by a student should not carry a penalty that isn't appropriate to the choice/decision. It should be dealt with in a fair and respectful manner. This is the philosophy on which we base our school discipline procedures. We want students to make good choices and be positive contributors to our school. We will rely upon a tiered system, so that when a student makes a poor choice, it can be addressed as quickly as possible. Please keep in mind the following goals when reviewing how SMSS will handle discipline:

- To strengthen and clarify communication between home and school.
- To tie inappropriate behavior more closely to appropriate consequences.
- To be both proactive in teaching our children to make good choices (change student behavior) and dealing with inappropriate behavior consistently.

Discipline Code

The essence of Christian discipline is self-discipline. The rules of the school aim to safeguard a student's liberties rather than curb them. The observance of rules ensures that each person's freedom and rights are protected.

Correct training in discipline means that a student learns to accept rules and regulations presented by class/school authority. Students are expected to exhibit demeanors which reflect favorably on themselves and the school. They are expected to show respect and consideration for one another and their teachers, thus creating a harmonious atmosphere within the school. All students must recognize their responsibilities and obligations and discharge them in accordance with school regulations. Students who fail to comply with school policies and regulations must accept the consequences.

The discipline code applies to students and to parents/guardians both in school and at school-sponsored events. This also applies to the school community and outside the school community where behavior is contrary to Catholic teaching or could bring disrepute or embarrassment to the school.

Self-Discipline Includes:

1. Respect for and consideration of others.
2. Obedience to and respect for adult authority and class/school rules.

Students will:

- a. honor the directions of teachers and school personnel; refrain from disputing, arguing or otherwise debating the authority of an adult
 - b. comply with the rules and procedures of the class and school
 - c. cooperate with proper participation in celebrations, prayer experiences, assemblies, etc.
 - d. refrain from activities and speech contrary to the moral teaching of the Catholic Church.
 - e. not leave school property (buildings, recess area, Dining Hall, etc.) at any time without permission.
 - f. remain in assigned areas at all times.
 - g. respect school property and the property of others.
3. Obedience to and respect for civil law.

Students will not:

- a. possess or use a weapon or potential weapon.
- b. engage in violence of any kind.
- c. engage in the use of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- d. threaten another's safety or physical well-being.

Classroom/Incident Level of Discipline

Teachers establish a set of classroom rules so that students know how everybody will behave. These classroom expectations are fair and allow for all students to be successful in school. Our general expectations are also developed so that all students can be successful. When the rules/expectations are not followed, the student will be addressed immediately. This helps to ensure the safety for all students and to stop the inappropriate behavior. This should be the extent of the discipline, but if not, then the next level of discipline will be initiated.

If a student continues to make an inappropriate choice, he/she WILL receive a written form of notification including a Behavior Notice provided through FACTS/SIS.

Please view this as both a consequence from the teacher AND a communication tool for you. Discuss the incident with your child, note what action you have taken at home, if necessary, sign it and have your child return the form the next day. Continued infractions WILL result in a referral to the main office for school administration review and appropriate consequence.

In grades Pre-K to 4, teachers typically establish classroom rules and follow a discipline plan according to age-appropriate levels of behavior and consequences. These rules and plans are determined by individual classroom teachers, reviewed by school administration, and communicated to students and parents at the beginning of the school year.

In grades 5-8, the expected behaviors and consequences according to merit/demerit program are found in this handbook.

Merit/Demerit Program

In order to help students make positive choices and to create a positive climate for learning, SMSS uses a merit and demerit system to address behavior. The system below will provide rewards for positive behaviors and consequences for negative behaviors.

This program is intended to assist students in making good choices daily. Our ultimate goal is to develop students who are self-disciplined and good citizens. The merit/demerit program will be used in the 5th through 8th grade focusing on good behavior and is not connected to academics.

Any faculty and staff member can issue merits and demerits. Students who demonstrate the following POSITIVE BEHAVIORS can earn MERITS: The following are examples of Merits, but are not limited to them:

- Demonstrating Responsibility (returning important documents, reporting incidents)
Demonstrating Kindness (assisting a classmate)
- Demonstrating Citizenship (pride in school)
- Demonstrating Good Manners (holding the door, saying please and thank you)
Demonstrating Integrity (honesty, returning lost items)
- Random Merits (school spirit, observed activity, and assembly behavior)

Every student has an opportunity to earn merits. Merits and Demerits and expire every nine weeks. Every nine weeks student earned merits/demerits will start back at zero.

Merits/Demerits will be documented, and parent contact made accordingly using the FACTS/SIS system. Students will be able to “buy back” demerits based upon the following criteria:

5th and 6th grade students need 3 merits to buy back 1 demerit.

7th and 8th grade students need 4 merits to buy back 1 demerit.

Students who have ZERO demerits (or a zero balance) may attend designated earned events, dress down pass, cafeteria treat, or receive additional announced privileges.

Any student who has received a suspension (In School or Out of School or Bus Suspension) during the given 9-week period will not be allowed to attend an upcoming/future middle school wide event in that 9 week period. Suspensions cannot be bought back.

Students who demonstrate the following **NEGATIVE BEHAVIORS CONSISTENTLY** will earn **DEMERITS** for the following:

- Not Following Directions
- Being Out of The Assigned Area
- Late To Class
- Off-Task Behavior
- Excessive talking
- Gum chewing
- Eating in class
- Uniform violation
- Talking in line
- Lack of materials
- Class disruption

IMMEDIATE DEMERIT will include:

- Dishonesty/Lying
- Disruptive Behavior
- Disrespectful Behavior
- Defiant Behavior
- Horseplay in and out of class (playing around in restrooms)

The Following **CONSEQUENCES** Will Be Assigned When Demerits Are Earned for Negative Behavior:

- 1st Demerit – demerit notification sent home.
- 2nd Demerit- demerit notification sent home and parent phone call made by the teacher giving the 2nd demerit
- 3rd Demerit- student conference with teacher(s), parent phone call made by the teacher giving the 3rd demerit, teacher can offer the parent a conference at this time.
- 4th Demerit- After School Detention (ASD) assigned, detention form sent home, student returns signed ASD form to the teacher who issued the 4th demerit (if the student does not return signed form, teacher will call parent to confirm detention and a second detention will be issued)

Teachers are able to bypass demerits and issue a detention when deemed necessary. All detentions may be held after school on Tuesday or Thursday from 3:00-4:00 with the teacher issuing the detention in the teacher’s classroom.

After School Activities/Game days. If a student is involved in extracurricular activities, the student will not be allowed to participate in the game or activity; the student must serve the detention.

A student who exceeds 5+ Demerits within a nine-week period will be referred to a school administrator and may receive the following:

- Additional after school detention days
- In School Suspension
- Out of School Suspension

Students will automatically be referred to school administration for the following behaviors:

- Fighting/Hitting
- Inappropriate Language/Vulgar or Rude Actions (extreme disrespect)
- Bullying/Harassment
- Weapons/Threats
- Drug/Alcohol Possession
- Theft/Vandalism/Destruction of Property
- Technology Violations
- Gang Activity

Office/Incident Level of Discipline

If a student is not responding to the consequences administered by the teacher/staff, then the student should be sent to the office. The student will then speak with an administrator about their referral to the office. If warranted, consequences may include removal from class for a short period of time, behavior essay, detention, silent lunch, formal in-school conference with parent and student, in-school, or out-of-school suspension.

Once a consequence is determined by school administration, parents/guardian will be notified accordingly. It is important to note that if a student is involved with another student in making a poor choice a consequence may be handed out to both students, but a parent will only be notified of their own child's consequence. Privacy laws do not allow us to share what another student may receive as a consequence. Stopping inappropriate behavior is the goal for all consequences administered, not to find out if the other student received an adequate or same punishment. Addressing inappropriate behavior is at the school administration's discretion and is guided by expectations of maintaining a safe school environment.

Policy related to maintaining a safe school environment includes certain categories of student behavior that require specific discipline consequences. Students who are found to be in possession of dangerous items such as weapons, knives, drugs/alcohol, or a student who displays behavior deemed to be extremely harmful to self or others will be referred to the office immediately. School administration will address discipline issues in an expeditious manner in order to maintain a safe learning environment for all students and staff.

Consequences

The consequences for a poor choice made by a student depend upon how serious the wrong is and how often it has been done. Repeated offenses will always involve notifying the parent(s). The following are some consequences for poor choices:

1. Removal from class for a short period of time to reflect on actions.
2. Silent lunch
3. Behavior Essay
4. Detention/Remaining after school.
5. Excluding a student from an upcoming field trip.
6. Removal from class (In-school suspension) or school (Out of school suspension) for one or more days.
7. Recommendation for expulsion/administrative withdrawal from school for severe/serious violations.

Office Referrals

When a student is sent to administration for disciplinary consequences, it is regarded as a serious matter and will be reported through FACTS/SIS Behavior Notice as a record of the student's visit.

The following may apply:

1st Referral A conference with the student regarding the unacceptable behavior: Parent notification will be made; consequence discussed with parent.

2nd Referral Repeated unacceptable behavior will result in contacting parent and a conference scheduled if warranted; consequence discussed with parent.

3rd Referral Continued unacceptable behavior will result in contacting the parent and a conference held to discuss the establishment of a behavior contract. The establishment of a behavioral contract may also include provisions for dismissal/withdrawal of the student from school.

It is in the best interest of all students that communication between home and school are consistent and focused on work together for maintaining a safe environment for all students

Detention

Detention may be served anytime but will typically be held after school on Tuesday or Thursday from 3:00-4:00 pm, in the classroom of the teacher who assigned the detention. Depending on the offense, detention may be longer in time. The detention will only occur after parental notification and the return of a signed detention slip. Failure to return a detention slip on the following day will result in an additional detention. The parental notification is only a notice that the child is receiving detention, and the parent signature is required as it notifies the teacher/staff

that parents/guardians are aware of the consequence. Detentions are issued to students as a reminder that their behavior effort is unacceptable.

Teachers may issue detentions for infractions such as repeated incomplete assignments, disruption of class, horseplay, or other inappropriate behavior. Teachers issuing any detentions must inform an administrator immediately. Students serving detention will be required to complete a written Behavior Reflection activity provided by school administration.

Suspension

Suspension is invoked for serious infractions of school policy and shall be within the jurisdiction of the principal or administrative designee. If suspension is being considered parents/guardians will be notified and a conference/meeting requested with the Principal or designee. The principal will inform the parents/guardians of the seriousness of the infraction and seek their immediate cooperation in a corrective program designed to address the student's needs. Suspension categories may involve In-School or Out of School Suspension consideration determined by the Principal or administrative designee.

In-School Suspension will be held in school in a supervised area allowing the student to complete assigned classwork with dismissal at a time to be arranged with the parent. A student may also be suspended Out of School for persistent failure to correct behavior patterns or for serious actions involving physical harm to others, harassment, or significant disrespectful behavior.

Suspensions may last multiple days and is at the principal's or designee's discretion. A suspended student WILL NOT be allowed to return to school until a Parent-Administration conference is held, except if a conference was held (either via phone or in person prior to the suspension taking place) the student may return without further conferences being held. A student may not participate in extracurricular activities, directly or indirectly, while serving a suspension.

When necessary, parents/guardians and students shall sign a formal agreement in which they signify their understanding and agree to assume responsibility for future behavior.

Any report of the suspension and/or signed written agreement prepared for a student will be filed with the student's scholastic record.

School administration in conferencing with parents/guardians may deem it necessary that a student seek additional support through formal counseling for severe infractions, as necessary.

Expulsion/Permanent Dismissal

Expulsion, the permanent termination of a student's enrollment, is a most serious matter, and should be invoked only as a last resort. A student may be removed from class and expelled if he or she is involved in a serious offense or has established a pattern of unacceptable behavior that presents concern in maintaining a safe school environment.

If expulsion is determined by the principal to be necessary, and after consultation with the

Diocesan School's Superintendent, parents/guardian(s) will be notified for an in-person Parent-Administrator conference to take place.

The principal shall notify the parents/guardians or guardian of the reasons in writing and shall file a copy of this notification with the Superintendent. In judging the justification for expulsion, the principal will consider the extent of the school's previous efforts to remedy the problem and will look for, but is not limited to, such reasons as:

- Possession of a weapon (real or look alike)
- Possession/Selling drugs
- Chronic refusal to obey reasonable rules
- Inability to profit from instruction due to continued disruptive behavior
- Chronic, willful absence or tardiness
- Immoral conduct
- Bullying/Harassment (including cyberbullying)
- Repeated behavior disruptive of self or another pupil's schooling/education

The school reserves the right to dismiss any student at any time where the school considers the conduct of the student or parent/guardian to be inconsistent with school policy, the good of the school community, or Catholic teachings. Students who are dismissed may apply for re-admission after one full year from the date of dismissal/expulsion. Only school administration in consultation with the Diocesan School's Superintendent will determine whether re-admittance is appropriate.

Discipline Communication

The intent of notification involving discipline via an email, phone call, meeting or other method is to inform you of the reported incident. This allows for an open line of communication to discuss concerns and to address specific needs as they arise.

Communication will occur as soon as it is practical, and every attempt will be made to communicate with a parent/guardian before the end of the school day. The FACTS/SIS Behavior Notice will be used to document conduct infractions and/or discipline consequences.

Dress Code

We take pride in the appearance of our students. Proper dress reflects and affects the quality of school conduct and schoolwork. Students should be dressed in a manner that indicates cleanliness and Christian modesty. Students are expected to be in complete uniform at all times. School uniform items should bear school logos as required. The school uniform is to be worn in a respectful manner with a sense of pride and dignity at all times on school and church property, and at designated school events.

All students attending SMSS will be attired in the complete school uniform. No deviations in the uniform will be allowed, except in specific situations as approved by school administration. Every

Tuesday is Dress Uniform Day for All-School Mass. When necessary, the appropriateness, cleanliness, and neatness of student attire and accessories will be determined at the discretion of school staff and administration.

Occasionally, school administration may call for special dress down days or make exceptions to the required uniforms, in which students/parents/guardian will be notified in advance. On P.E. scheduled days students may wear their P.E. uniform (applies to middle school students) the entire day; the practice of changing into or out of uniform will not be necessary. Students in the lower grades may wear their sneakers or gym shoes on the days they have P.E. scheduled.

Students should wear uniform items that are seasonally appropriate. A seasonal uniform change announcement will be made around November 1st and May 1st noting the seasonal change for the wearing of long pants as well as sweater vests (November) or shorts (May). Note: seasonal uniform change announcements may be necessary if weather conditions require adjustments to the scheduled November or May announcements.

Information outlining uniform requirements can be found in the Uniform section of this handbook.

Emergency Drills

Emergency drills, plans, and procedures are present at SMSS. All faculty and/or staff members receive periodic training to remain vigilant and prepared for emergencies on campus. The school also utilizes security cameras to monitor multiple areas on campus, safety devices, and emergency notification applications to support overall campus safety.

Our students also receive instruction through periodic drills on the procedures to use in case of an emergency such as fire, bomb, lockdown, earthquake, and inclement weather (tornado). Additionally, the local emergency responders may be involved several times a year. During any drill, students are to follow the directions provided such as exiting in a quiet, orderly fashion, or not running and talking during emergency drills.

In the classroom, students are to follow their teacher through their assigned exit and line up outside the building in the assigned area. If students are in the cafeteria during a fire drill, they are to exit through the nearest door and line up outside the building.

In the event of an emergency evacuation, all faculty and students will exit the school building in a quiet orderly fashion and will report to designated assembly areas. Should the evacuation cause an extended retention of students at the assembly area, no student will be released from the area until: the regular dismissal time for that school day, or the principal has announced an early dismissal and parents/guardian have been contacted, or the parent/guardian of the student signs the student out of the assembly area.

SMSS will conduct these important safety drills periodically throughout the school year. While it is understood that conducting these drills may elevate some anxious responses in students and adults, the conduct of the drills remains as an important protocol in preparing everyone in

maintaining a safe school environment.

Every effort will be made to prepare students and staff with these planned drills. Likewise, if a drill is in progress, entry into the school will be prevented and you may be required to wait until the drill has concluded. Anyone visiting the school during a drill will be required to follow the directions of school staff and/or administration. You may not be allowed to enter or leave the building until the drill is complete and/or it is safe to do so.

In the event an unplanned drill is initiated parents/guardian(s) are reminded that notifications will be made as soon as it is safe to do so. Please follow the instructions provided by any notification received from the school and/or local emergency agency.

Field Trips/Work

Field trips/work are designed to correlate with teaching units and to achieve curricular goals. Grades are permitted to take up to two field trips/work during the year. This varies with the location and the cost of the trip. Individual teachers in consultation with the administration reserve the right to restrict or deny student participation on any field trip due to, but not limited to, poor conduct or effort.

Parent chaperones are often needed on field trips/work and the teacher may determine participation when needed. Siblings are not permitted to attend field trips when parents are chaperoning.

Any chaperone must have submitted a completed Virginia Department of Social Services Child Protective Registry Form and the Diocese of Richmond Volunteer Select Application as well as having participated in the Diocesan VIRTUS program.

A written, official permission slip, signed by a parent/guardian, is required before a child will be permitted to attend a field trip. Verbal permission cannot be accepted. Where both parents are unable to sign the form, there should be a notation on the form explaining the reason: e.g. both parents on deployment, one parent has sole custody, etc.

Students participating in any field trip are expected to travel to and from school with the school group. Arriving at or dismissing from the field trip location site is not approved as transportation arrangements are developed based upon total participants. Parent chaperones should avoid bringing siblings as this may distract from assigned responsibilities and in adequately supervising assigned students in a group.

Forgotten Items

Any items forgotten at home and later brought to school should be left at the office. Items should be labeled with the student's name and grade. Typically, students are not permitted to call home

for forgotten homework, projects, PE uniforms, or items of a similar nature, as these are the responsibility of the children.

Fundraising

Fundraising opportunities throughout the school year are an important obligation for each family. Tuition alone does not cover all educational program expenses therefore participation in one or multiple fund-raising events held throughout the school year is expected from each family.

Information related to each fund-raising event will be provided as it becomes available. Additional information about Volunteering and Stewardship can be found in this handbook. **Students are prohibited from door-to-door solicitation for all school-sponsored fundraising.**

Grades and Progress Reports

Grades

Typically, K-2 students should look for graded formative and summative assignments/assessments with success criteria in weekly folders. Grades for students in grades 3-8 are available at any time through FACTS/SIS. Each quarter (interims are mid-quarter) dates are posted on the school calendar as are end of quarter grading period ending dates. Parents are encouraged to view their child's academic progress on a regular basis through FACTS/SIS for Grades 3-8.

Report Cards

Report cards will be distributed electronically at the end of each quarter. Final report cards are not distributed to students with any outstanding balance on tuition/school accounts.

Diocesan Grading Scale

Kindergarten, 1st Grade, and 2nd Grade Grading Scale - All Courses, Self-Discipline, & Work Habits
3 = Meeting grade level standard; applies skills consistently and independently
2 = Developing grade level standard; applies skills inconsistently with or without support
1 = Below grade level standard; unable to apply skills with support
^ = skill requires improvement

3 rd , 4 th , and 5 th Grades Grading Scale - Major Courses		
A+ = 97-100	A = 93-96	A- = 90-92
B+ = 87-89	B = 83-86	B- = 80-82
C+ = 77-79	C = 73-76	C- = 70-72
D+ = 67-69	D = 63-66	D- = 60-62
F = 59 and below		
^ = skill requires improvement		

3 rd , 4 th , and 5 th Grades Grading Scale - Resource Courses, Self-Discipline, & Work Habits
3 = Meeting grade level standard; applies skills consistently and independently
2 = Developing grade level standard; applies skills inconsistently with or without support
1 = Below grade level standard; unable to apply skills with support
^ = skill requires improvement

6 th , 7 th , and 8 th Grades Grading Scale - All Courses		
A+ = 97-100	A = 93-96	A- = 90-92
B+ = 87-89	B = 83-86	B- = 80-82
C+ = 77-79	C = 73-76	C- = 70-72
D+ = 67-69	D = 63-66	D- = 60-62
F = 59 and below		

Grades 6-8

The report card will include grades for each quarter and semester, with a final grade reported at the end of the year. Schools will record semester exam grades on the report card for high school credit courses. If available, all high school credit bearing courses will take a midterm and final exam. Midterms and finals will each count 20% of the semester grade. (Example: Q1: 40%, Q2: 40%, E1: 20%= Semester 1 grade. The same for semester 2. Then, Semester 1 and Semester two grades are averaged for the final grade). As students enter another level of transition at this developmental stage, self-discipline and work habits will continue to be monitored, modeled, and supported. While student conduct will not receive a formal grade on the report card, SMSS will continue to incorporate these expectations into teaching and learning experiences.

Grade Percentage

The following percentage is established as the overall percentage of the total grade received by a student in grades 3 through 8.

Tests: 55%
Quizzes/Labs, etc.: 30%
Classwork/Homework, etc.: 15%

Out-Of-School Projects and Enrichment Activities

When out-of-school projects are assigned, the following guidelines should be followed:

1. Teachers should provide clear and specific instructions with the purposes of the project clearly stated in a rubric or syllabus.
2. A variety of projects should be provided so that students have several alternatives.
3. Students should not be penalized because they lack the necessary materials to complete assignments. Suggestions should be provided for obtaining project materials that require minimal or no cost.
4. Criteria for project evaluation should be clearly stated with a rubric when the project is assigned. Reasonable and definite time limits for project completion should be given. Follow-up reminders of deadline dates should be given.

Missing Assignments/Make-Up Work

The expectation is for all students to complete assignments on time. Students shall be permitted to make up work because of excused or unexcused absences, including in-school or out-of-school suspensions using the following guidance:

1. When a student is absent for more than three consecutive school days, the school work should be sent home upon request of the parent. Typically, twenty-four hours' notice of the request must be given. Students that miss one to three consecutive days should make up the work within five school days after the student is well enough to return to school.
2. When a student is absent due to personal reasons and has received prior approval from the principal, school work should be sent home with the student upon request after a twenty-four-hour notice has been given. Assignments provided in advance are due upon the student's return to school.
3. When a student is absent on the day of an assessment (a test or project due date) but was in school the day before the test or project due date, the student will be expected to take the test or turn in the project upon return to school.
4. Students who are present but fail to complete an assignment may receive a 10% deduction per day that it is late.
5. It is the student's responsibility to complete all the work missed when absent. Students have up to five school days to complete the work for full credit. Exceptions may be made for extended absences. Penalties for work turned in after the five-school day make-up period may be imposed but should not be more than 10% per day.

6. In the case of an intentional absence (e.g., skipping class or school) students shall not be permitted to make up work for credit and should receive a 50 for any work assigned on the day/class period of the absence

7. Teachers should use a M in grade book for all missing work with a comment of either “absent” or “missing.” This will compute as a “ZERO” until work is made up so as to not inflate/deflate grades in FACTS.

Assigning A Grade of Zero

Realizing the importance of students completing all assignments, a grade of zero should only be assigned in the following situations:

1. If it is documented that a student has cheated on an assignment, a grade of zero should be given.
2. In the case of an intentional absence (e.g., skipping class or school) students shall not be permitted to do make-up work for credit and should receive a zero for any work assigned on the day/class period of the absence.
3. If after a reasonable amount of time (no more than ten school days unless an extenuating circumstance exists), a student fails to **attempt** an assignment, a grade of zero may be given.
4. Consideration of assigning a minimum grade of 50 for extenuating circumstances may be warranted. Teacher will consult with the principal as necessary.

NOTE: The principal/administrative designee will make the final decision to determine if extenuating circumstances exist.

Academic Punishment

A student’s academic grade will be based on his or her individual achievements and timely completion of instructional requirements. Grades will not be reduced as a punishment for poor conduct or attendance. Other types of discipline other than academic punishment should be employed when necessary.

Harassment

Conduct by students or by parents/guardians, or by anyone acting on their behalf, incompatible with the educational and religious mission of the school is grounds for disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, the immediate dismissal of the student, as well as reporting the incident to the appropriate legal authorities where appropriate.

It is the intent of the school to provide an educational environment free from all forms of improper threats, intimidations, hostility, and offensive and inappropriate behavior. Such improper conduct

may take the form of unwanted verbal or physical behavior, verbal or written derogatory or discriminatory statements, and behavior not otherwise conducive to the educational and religious mission of the school.

The school prohibits harassment, including sexual harassment, and such instances should be reported immediately to school administration.

Sexual harassment refers to any unwelcome sexual attention, sexual advances, and requests for sexual favors or other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment is unacceptable conduct and will not be tolerated. Any student or parent/guardian who is determined to have violated this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal of the student.

In the case of threats of violence or harassment, in any form, including oral, written, or electronic, by a student against any member of the school community, where a student is suspended but not dismissed, psychological or psychiatric clearance may be required before the student returns to school. Bullying, harassment, or violent behavior will not be tolerated. All members of our school community are expected to discourage, prevent, intervene, report, and otherwise appropriately address these behaviors. All forms of cyberbullying on computers at school or home are unacceptable.

School administration reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of any disciplinary action taken. The principal or designee are the final recourse in all disciplinary situations and may waive any and all regulations for just cause at her/his discretion.

Health/School Clinic

A health/school clinic is maintained by trained office/school staff or trained parent/nurse volunteers when available. Students who are injured or become sick are assisted while at school, and parents will be contacted by the school main office when their child needs to be picked up due to illness or in some unique instances if medications need to be administered per medical order.

Food Allergies

Children with food allergies must have a **Food Allergy Management Plan** from their physician, a medication administration form signed by a physician, and medication brought to the clinic/school by the parent. School Clinic/Office personnel will review food items when a student is allergic to certain foods or items. We kindly ask that parents supply safe snack foods for snack time, parties, or special occasions (**in a closed container**) if their child has a known allergy.

Preventing a child from having an allergic reaction begins with everyone's help. It is important that children understand that food items should not be shared with others. An allergy free table in the cafeteria will be reserved for our students with known allergies, and all are reminded to educate the students and staff regarding food allergies. Signs are posted on

classroom doors and notification is sent home to classes in which there is a student with severe allergies.

In conjunction with our wellness policy, soda is not permitted as a lunch beverage. Cake or other sugar treats are highly discouraged for classroom celebrations as well as food allergy concerns. In a limited capacity some treat such as cupcakes, cookies, or doughnuts may be permitted but these must be commercially prepared, and a listing of ingredients provided to ensure food allergy precautions are applied. Fruit, pretzels, other healthy snacks, or non-food treats such as pencils and stickers may be sent to school as a good alternative for celebrations such as birthdays.

Lactose Intolerance

Children with lactose intolerance are required to provide a doctor's note to the clinic, if they would like to substitute juice for milk at lunch. A new doctor's note is required each school year.

Lice Policy

Immediate exclusion of students with pediculosis will occur. A student may return to school only if the infestation is cleared and the student is nit free. Upon return to school, the nurse/school staff must check the student before he/she can be readmitted to class.

Medication Policy

Needed medications (prescription or over the counter) must be kept in the clinic and administered by authorized personnel. All medicines must be brought to school by the parent, not the student. School policy allows dispensing of medication under the following guidelines:

- A physician's written statement indicating medication requirements must be submitted to the clinic.
- Parent's signature must also appear on the physician's statement.
- Medicine must be in a labeled prescription bottle.

Children with life-threatening ailments (asthma, severe allergies) may be allowed to carry

necessary medications (inhalers, EpiPens) provided the parent notifies the office in writing whether they want their child or their child's teacher to carry the medication or to keep the medication in the school main office or health clinic.

Students with a cast or immobilization device (brace, crutches, ace, sling, etc.) must provide medical documentation that includes:

- Diagnosis of injury
- Estimated length of time of need for the device
- Activity restrictions (including gym, recess, or classroom)
- Weight-bearing status of any lower limb casts (full, partial, toe-touch, or none)

Forms for physician medication orders may be obtained from the clinic or main office. For the safety of all students, medication (prescription or over the counter) is not permitted in the possession of any student during school hours, or on school grounds.

Medical release forms will be sent home to be signed for field trips.

Clinic Hours - The clinic operates during regular school hours with a near full-time school nurse or Medication Administration Trained (MAT) staff. The clinic provides first aid for school-related illnesses and minor injuries. The clinic is not equipped or designed to care for out-of-school injuries/illnesses and is not intended to take the place of parent directed medical care.

On occasion when volunteers/resources are available, vision and hearing testing will be conducted on students in K, 3, and 7. Information on scoliosis (grades 4-8) and eating disorders (grades 5-8) will be sent home to parents. All students (JK-8) may attend an educational presentation on dental health.

Emergency contact information is online through the parent portal, FACTS SIS, and can be updated at any time. This information is used to contact you if an emergency arises in school with your child. Information should be updated throughout the year if necessary.

If you suspect that your child is ill, do not send him/her to school that day. A child must be fever free and free from vomiting or diarrhea for at least one full day before returning to school. If a student becomes ill while in school and is sent home due to fever, vomiting or diarrhea even if it is at the time of drop-off, they must remain home the following day, and the emergency card procedure will be followed. **If a parent is called to pick up a sick child, the parent is asked to do so immediately.**

Regulatory Information

Virginia State Law requires a physical examination and immunization certification from a physician for all students entering school. All immunizations must be up to date prior to school entry. This requirement will be strictly enforced. Good health plays an important role in the learning process. Special circumstances regarding a child's health should be made known to the school office and clinic.

The school maintains an AED and several staff members are CPR trained for the safety of our faculty, staff, and students. In accordance with Federal and State regulations, SMSS follows the policy on HIV/AIDS procedure as promulgated by the Office of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Richmond.

Medical Rules

If a student is ill, he or she will be sent to the clinic or school main office to determine whether the student will be sent home. **Once a phone call is made by the nurse, principal, or secretary to the parent it is important that the child is picked up within the hour.** The parent/guardian/

caretaker is to report to the office to sign the child out and is responsible for taking the student home. Please keep your child home from school if your child has:

- a contagious illness such as strep throat, flu, or chicken pox
- had a fever of 100° or higher within the past 24 hours or is vomiting or has diarrhea
- red/pink eyes, or has drainage from the eyes
- head lice which have not been treated
- skin rashes, irritations or blisters that have not been cleared by a doctor

Please note that this list is a guideline. The school nurse/administration reserves the right to dismiss students deemed too ill to be in school.

In order to be excused from P.E. over an extended period, a student must have the written permission from a doctor. In order to be excused from P.E. on a single occasion, a parental note stating a specific reason for the exclusion must be provided.

Policy on Administration of Over-the-Counter Medication in School

(in accordance with policy issued by Board of Registration in Nursing)

- A. Students requiring any medication, including cough drops, during school hours must provide the health clinic/main office with medication.
- B. For administration of any over the counter medication, written parental consent must be obtained for each student and kept along with medication order sheet/MAT consent form, completed, and signed by a physician.
- C. Student's health record, including current medications and any known allergies, must be on file in the health office/clinic prior to administration of any medication.
- D. A record documenting the name of student, date, time, dose, and reason for administration of medication will be kept with student medication on file in the office.
- E. If written consent is not on file for a student, the parent must come to school to administer the medication.
- F. Over-the-Counter medications should be brought to the health clinic/main office in unopened, original packaging.

Policy on Administration of Prescription Medication in School:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students requiring prescription medication during school hours will be able to attend school, to provide minimum standards for safe and proper administration and storage of such medication, and to assure proper documentation of administration of prescription medication.

- All medications, prescription as well as over the counter cannot be administered by the school nurse/MAT trained staff without the appropriate forms signed by both parent/guardian and physician.
- All medications must be provided by the parent/guardian and it is absolutely imperative that all medications be brought to the health clinic/main office by the parent/guardian. Medications are not to be brought to school by the student

- If the school health advisor/nurse is not available a trained Medication Administration Trained (MAT) staff member may be utilized or the student's parent must come to school to administer medications.

For any prescription medication, i.e., inhalers, pain medications or emergency medication:

1. The pharmacy-labeled container must be brought to the health clinic/office by the parent for verification and recording prior to taking such medication. It is important to verify medication/prescription expiration dates prior to dropping off medications off at the school health clinic/main office.
2. There is written authorization from the student's parent/guardian that the student may self-medicate, and information is provided as to the nature of the illness.
3. The student will report to the health clinic/main office to take the necessary medication at the prescribed time.
4. The student will not be permitted to keep the medication in his/her possession.
5. A record will be kept in the health clinic/main office with the student's name, nature of illness, medication name, dose, frequency, and time to be taken. This record will include verification that the medication has been self-administered at the prescribed time. Also, the parent/guardian will be notified of any failure to take, or any side - effects of the medication.
6. Whenever possible, a back-up supply of the medication will be kept in the health clinic/main office and will be stored properly.
7. Physician's Orders must be submitted with parental permission form.

Severe Illness Outbreak

SMSS follows the guidelines of the Diocese of Richmond who may follow the Virginia Department of Health or local health authorities if severe conditions arise. We will determine in consultation with the diocese when school closure, full or partial, as necessary per health authority guidance.

Health Records

In accordance with Virginia Department of Public Health regulations, the following is required of school children:

1. Immunizations, lead levels, and physical: all students entering Pre-school or Kindergarten.
2. Vision and hearing: all children in grades K through 8; referrals when necessary.
3. Scoliosis testing: all children in grades 5 – 8, unless excused by a family physician. We must receive a written report from the doctor that the screening has been completed.
4. Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis (TDAP) - Grade 7

High School Visits

In early fall, various high schools may arrange for classroom presentations relating to their programs for eighth grade students. Eighth Grade students and parents/guardians should plan to visit these schools to discuss the opportunities available to them at each school. Visits to high schools should be arranged through the parents/guardian with the respective high school.

Homework

Homework is part of the total education of the student and is meant to advance the spirit of learning. It is intended to reinforce concepts presented in class and includes both written and study assignments. In the primary years, it is essential that parents oversee home studies and practice. As the student progresses beyond the primary level, the student should gradually assume greater personal responsibility. Ultimately, the student should assume total responsibility for both written and study homework.

Incomplete homework assignments jeopardize mastery of content and potential academic achievement. Notwithstanding, homework is not meant to place a burden on the student and family. It should be understood that factors such as attention span, study habits, supplies needed, and a good study environment could cause the listed time allotments to vary. The following are time allotment guidelines for homework encompassing both written and study assignments:

- Kindergarten: 15 minutes
- Grades 1 and 2= 30 minutes
- Grades 3 and 4= 45 minutes
- Grades 5 and 6= 60 minutes
- Grades 7 and 8= 90 minutes

Students are responsible for making up work when absent (study work and tests included). Make up work will be given to parents/guardian after an absence extends more than 3 consecutive days. If the absence is less than 3 days, the student will receive the work missed when they return to school. Homework assigned in the classroom is the official homework and is also posted in FACTS/SIS

Honor Code

Students at SMSS are committed to the values and virtues upon which our school was established. It is expected that they pledge to uphold the values of being honest in everything that he or she does, says, or writes.

Students accept the duty and responsibility to report any violations of the honor code to a faculty member. By upholding the guidelines of the honor code, each student contributes to the greater unity of the SMSS student body.

As a student of Saint Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School, each student pledges:

To be honorable in all of my work. Cheating is harmful to all involved. Cheating includes giving and/or receiving any answers on a quiz, test, homework, or other designated assignments. And, to refrain from willfully taking any property of another. Stealing is a direct violation of what we stand for at SMSS.

All students should place a “cross” ⊕ next to a student’s name on all assignments, quizzes, and tests indicating the student acknowledgment of the honor code.

Honor Roll and Student Recognition

There are three categories that make up the honor roll and student recognition at SMSS:

First Honors (Principal’s List),
Second Honors (Honor Roll), and,
Sentinel to Watch Award for Effort & Citizenship.

Students in grades K-8 are eligible for recognition of their achievements in academic and/or citizenship/effort through the following criteria at each recognition level:

- **First Honors-Principal’s List** – This academic award is for students in Grades 5-8. Students must earn a 93 or above average in all subjects and demonstrate commendable effort and citizenship; grade 5 students must earn a 3 in work habits and self-discipline and must have 2 or 3 in Specials courses.
- **Second Honors-Honor Roll** – This academic merit award is for students in Grades 5-8. Students must earn an 83 or above in all subjects; grade 5 students must earn a 2 or 3 in work habits and self-discipline and must have a 2 or 3 in Specials courses.
- **Sentinel to Watch Award** – This award is given to two students in each grade in Grades K-8 per quarter who demonstrate the virtues of Gospel living through kindness, courtesy, respect, cooperation, truthfulness, and obedience. This award is recommended by the homeroom teacher to students who show tremendous effort in academics, behavior, etc., but who do not qualify for First or Second Honors due to grades. Students must have no negative comments on their report card or major disciplinary issues.

House System (an initiative started in SY 2023-2024)

Faculty/staff and students in Grades 5-8 are assigned to one of six SGGs Houses: Bakhita, Elizabeth, Francis, Joseph, Pedro, Rose. Each house possesses special qualities, a motto, color, and mascot. The purpose of the House system is to build relationships, encourage students to pray to their saint for intercession, create small communities within our large school community, cultivate student leadership, ensure that students have adult mentors, create school spirit and enthusiasm, and complete service projects for our local community.

Faculty/staff are expected to promote the House system. Houses will be recognized for their collective effort. House meetings occur approximately once per month. Sorting of students will occur by school administration for this first school year and in late spring of the 4th grade year for future sorts.

Lower grade levels are assigned a house as well and are urged to pray to their specific saint for special intercession:

- **Junior Kindergarten: House of Francis**
- **Kindergarten: House of Pedro**
- **Grade 1: House of Joseph**
- **Grade 2: House of Rose**
- **Grade 3: House of Elizabeth**
- **Grade 4: House of Bakhita**

Illness

Students should not attend school when they are sick. The school has the responsibility to remove from the classroom and send home any student with a suspected communicable disease, fever, or vomiting.

A student who has been sent home for a communicable disease must have a written note from a physician in order to return to school, or proof that they have passed the time of contagion. All students returning after an illness should bring a written explanation from their parents.

Students should be fever free (below 100 F) and/or not have vomited/diarrhea for a period of 24 hours without medication before returning to school.

Inclement Weather Procedures

School Closings – Inclement Weather

An e-mail, FACTS/SIS, and/or text messages will be sent in the event of an emergency closing and an announcement will be made on SMSS social media as well as on local TV Channel WAVY-10.

SMSS generally consider but do not follow the inclement weather announcements made by the local public school district as they have the means and resources to determine road conditions over a large geographical area, however SMSS administration will make the call on closures that impact our school. Closing of school includes the cancellation of all extra-curricular activities (including sports, practices, clubs, and other meetings) that have been scheduled for after school and evening hours.

Understanding that parents/families may need to plan or arrange if an anticipated school closure is

expected due to forecasted inclement weather, the SMSS principal will typically decide or provide an initial notification around 6pm the evening before any inclement weather closure.

Delayed Opening

If SMSS has a delayed opening, students should not be dropped off until the time announced in the delayed notification. If there is a delay, there will be no morning Before the Bell care. We realize that late openings present problems for some parents/guardians; however, there will not be any school personnel on campus to supervise students arriving before the designated delayed opening time. If there is a two-hour delay, there will be no half-day Junior Kindergarten.

Early Dismissals

In the event of an early dismissal, typically due to inclement weather conditions, an email, FACTS/SIS, and/or text messages will be sent to notify parents/guardians of the early dismissal time. Depending on the circumstances, Beyond the Bell and after school activities when offered may also be suspended/closed as warranted.

Please note that there is a school in Virginia Beach, named “Star of the Sea School”. Our school is listed as **Saint Mary Star of the Sea School**. Please be sure your family’s emergency contact information is updated with the school office.

Insurance

Students enrolled in Saint Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School is afforded *Special School Time Accident Policy* under the Diocese of Richmond Student Accident Insurance. School accident insurance information will be made available to all families at the beginning of the school year. This is typically completed through an online distribution/link to the insurance information website. Parents/guardian are asked to complete the process form and return it to school even if school insurance is not needed. If a student is injured, it should be reported to the main office as soon as possible so that the insurance process may begin.

Legal/Custody Issues

Parents are asked to inform school personnel when legal custody of a student resides with one parent. To determine the custodial parent/guardian, it is important for the school to have a copy of the custody decree or court order adjudicating that determination of custody. This Court Order/Custodial Agreement is placed in a confidential file related to your student’s record. This will help school personnel make appropriate and effective decisions when the need arises. Custodial parents/guardians are likewise asked to supply copies of restraining orders if the need arises.

Those individuals who have legal custody of the student may attend school meetings,

participate in educational decisions, and review educational records regarding that student. Persons who do not have legal custody (including those with visitation rights but not legal custody) may have no educational rights and may not participate in these matters without the custodial parent permission. The school may require a custodial parent to sign an agreement form regarding parental participation of non-custodial parents at meetings or events if necessary.

Access to Student Records by Non-Custodial Parent

The school abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment. Thus, non-custodial parents will be given access to the academic records and to information regarding the academic progress of their children, unless there is a court order specifically stating that the non-custodial parent is denied access to such information. Unless a court order or custody agreement specifies otherwise, each parent/guardian with legal custody is entitled to access all school records of the student. School records of a student may be disclosed only upon written request of the parent/guardian with legal custody unless the school is mandated by a subpoena or court order.

Every change of address, phone number, or family name must be reported to the school main office as soon as possible for updating of the *FACTS SIS* profile. Up-to-date records are needed in case of emergency, please inform us of any changes as soon as they occur.

Release of a Student to Non-Custodial Parent

A student will not be released to a parent/guardian that does not have physical custody without the written consent of the custodial parent/guardian. To determine the custodial parent/guardian, all separated or divorced parents of students enrolled in the parish school must provide the school with a copy of the court order or custodial agreement adjudicating that legal determination of custody. This Court Order/Custodial Agreement is placed in a confidential file related to your child's scholastic record.

Lockdown Protocol

Saint Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School is committed to ensuring the safety and security of all students, staff members, and visitors to our schools. In the event of an emergency situation, SMSS works closely with appropriate local, state, regional, and federal public health and safety officials to respond promptly and effectively to minimize any threat to the health, safety, and/or security of those in our schools. Depending upon the nature and scope of the emergency, school staff will act at the direction of the school principal in coordination with appropriate emergency management personnel.

In the event of an emergency, SMSS may be placed into one of three levels of lockdown status. Depending upon the nature of the emergency and the advice or direction of authorities, students may be held in school, dismissed early, or evacuated. The school's primary relay emergency information to all families will be through the *FACTS/SIS* Parent Alert System (PAS). Parents and guardians may also monitor public announcements made on local news outlets, the school's

website (<http://www.saintmarystarofthesea.com>), and to other local radio and television broadcasts.

It is important to note that in the event of a lockdown all parents/guardians may be directed to a reunification site once it is appropriate and safe to do so. Please follow the instructions received during any emergency lockdown notification.

Logo

The Saint Mary Star of the Sea School (SMSS) logo may not be used on any items (t-shirts, letterhead, etc.) without the express written permission of the principal.

Lost and Found

Parents MUST properly mark all belongings with their child's first and last name. Students may claim lost articles during lunch/recess periods. At the end of each month, articles that have not been claimed may be placed in the Used Uniform Closet or sent to the Thrift Shop.

Media Release

Student pictures may be used as part of our public relations efforts on the school website and/or written publications. Occasionally, SMSS submits articles and photos to *The Catholic Virginian*.

By giving permission to the school to use photographs of your student, you are also giving permission for those pictures to be used on all Diocesan digital media sites and the Catholic Virginian. In addition, if photos are used in *The Catholic Virginian* your child's first and last name may be used. Media Permission is implied unless written notification is received from a parent requesting no photography/video and acknowledged by the school.

Notice of Non-Discriminatory Policy Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Richmond

"Catholic schools administered under the authority of the Catholic Diocese of Richmond comply with those constitutional and statutory provisions, as may be specifically applicable to the schools, which prohibit discrimination based upon race, color, sex, age, marital status, handicap or disability, national origin, or citizenship in the administration of their educational, personnel, admissions, financial aid, athletic and other school administered programs.

The Diocese reserves the right, however, to determine whether and under what circumstances priority should be given to Catholics for certain employment positions, in addition, for Catholic employees, conformance with religious tenets of the Catholic faith is a condition of employment, and all employees may be prohibited from performing, teaching, or advocating in the workplace

any practices or doctrines which are inconsistent with the religious tenets of the Catholic faith. Consistent with the foregoing, it is the policy and practice of the Diocese of Richmond and the parish to provide equal employment opportunity in employment, promotions, wages, benefits, and all other privileges, terms, and conditions of employment.

This policy does not preclude the existence of single sex schools, nor does it conflict with the priority given to Catholics for admission as students. This policy also does not preclude the ability of the Catholic Diocese of Richmond to undertake and/or enforce appropriate actions with respect to applicants or students who teach or advocate on school property or at school functions any practices or doctrines which are inconsistent with the religious tenets of the Catholic faith.”

Office Records

Parents/Guardians are requested to notify the school office in writing or by email of any change of home telephone numbers and/or addresses, business telephone numbers, and telephone numbers of emergency contacts so that office records may be accurate, complete, and up to date. They are also requested to make those changes to their *FACTS SIS* profile. Any change in custody agreements must be sent to the office when applicable.

The student’s emergency data card (known as the Emergency form) is maintained in the school office. Parents may review their child’s school record when 24 hours advance written notice is provided to the school, and parent requesting the review is the legal custodial parent. The school reserves the right to hold all records until all financial obligations to the school are fulfilled.

Parent Teacher Communication

A successful learning environment requires a three-way division of responsibilities among the student, teacher, and parent/guardian. When circumstances occur, whether academic or behavioral in nature, in which it is necessary for a parent to discuss a student’s progress with the teacher(s), the parents/guardian and teacher(s) should first determine whether or not the student should be present for all or part of the conference. The administration is available for these conferences at the request of either party.

All parties to a conference should feel free to halt the proceedings if common courtesy and professional respect are not being demonstrated, or the conference is being directed in a personal vein against any party instead of looking for resolutions to the student's situation.

Parents/guardian and teachers are cautioned not to engage in spontaneous, unscheduled conferences since mistaken impressions may be conveyed due to a lack of detailed information or haste on the part of either party.

Parents/guardian are encouraged to contact the teacher if a problem arises. Conferences may be scheduled after 3:15 p.m. Please allow the teacher sufficient time to resolve the situation.

If a parent is not satisfied with the resolution, then the parent should contact the principal. If the issue remains unresolved, the next step would be to contact the superintendent.

With departmental grades (grades with numerous teachers), it is recommended that all the students' teachers be involved in any summative conferences to give a more complete overview of the student's performance.

Discussion of a student's performance is a confidential matter that should never be discussed at a school social or other school event. While it is convenient since a teacher may be present at these events it is important to refrain from discussing student information while attend these functions at school.

Parent-Teacher-Student Conferences

Formal Parent-Teacher-Student Conferences are scheduled in the fall and spring (as needed) each year. Student attendance with parents is permitted for grades 1-8. Conference days for students will be counted as school days. Dates for conferences will be published in the yearly and monthly calendars that are sent home. Requests for additional conferences must be made in writing to the teacher so that a convenient time may be arranged.

No teacher is permitted to leave students unattended for impromptu meetings with parents/guardians. Unannounced or spontaneous visits to the classroom are not permitted.

If scheduled conference appointments cannot be kept, please notify the office at least 24 hours ahead of the scheduled conference. Appointments with the principal and/or assistant principal will be honored after the parent and teacher have already met to discuss the child's needs.

All appointments with the principal must be made through the school main office.

Parent and Teacher Organization (PTO)

The Parent and Teacher Organization (PTO) is a collaboration between the school and school community to ensure students are receiving the highest advantage in academic, physical, social, and spiritual education. The PTO may be organized with a Board of Officers consisting of volunteers within the school community who may serve as: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The governance of the PTO, Officer term limits, and guidelines are typically established in a set of By-Laws; currently SMSS PTO does not have a set of PTO By-Laws.

All school parents are encouraged to become involved and participate in the PTO and in supporting all sponsored events throughout the year. A room parent volunteer may be assigned to each class/homeroom during the school year to assist with events and is considered to be an active member of the PTO by default. Room parents are an extension of the PTO and will follow the guidelines for room parents outlined by the PTO and school administration.

PTO events help support the school in the effort to provide additional funds for field trips, instructional materials, and other needs designated by the school administration. Families are strongly encouraged to participate, but this program is not meant to be mandatory. For any fundraising program, the school prohibits students from going door-to-door.

Parking

In the event that you need to park and leave your car, note the sign indicating limited parking times on Willard Avenue on the school side (up to and including the lower building). Please use the parking places in front of the main office, East County Street, or the gravel lot next to the Phoebus Little League ball fields. Do not park on the residential side on Willard Avenue opposite the upper school building and cafeteria.

Parties/Picnic and Student Gifts

Two class parties may be held each year in grades Junior Kindergarten through grade 8; typically one before Christmas break and the other at the end of the school year in June. These events are meant to be a time for fellowship and celebration for the students in the assigned classroom. PTO room parent volunteers may assist with these events. It is important to understand that these events are meant for student currently enrolled at SMSS, we kindly ask that siblings not attend these events due to limited space/class size.

Student gifts such as balloons, flowers, and all other types of student gifts disrupt the class environment and are not allowed during the school day. Please avoid deliveries of these items to the school for your child.

Personnel Availability

The SMSS staff is comprised of qualified and Diocesan approved lay administrators, teachers, religious, and/or trained/qualified support staff. A variety of additional programs are offered to our students throughout the year by qualified instructors from the local community under the supervision of administration.

Teachers may be available by appointment and typically after 3:15 PM until 3:45 PM, schedules permitting. It is recommended that an appointment is scheduled whenever a parent wishes to meet with a teacher to avoid impromptu meetings.

Administration may be available by appointment during the school day from 9:00 AM until 2:00 PM. Additional times may be arranged outside the normal administrative times listed above but may require 48-hour notice in scheduling.

Please call the school main office to schedule a meeting with a teacher or administration.

Plagiarism

SMSS promotes academic integrity by encouraging everyone in the school community to demonstrate high standards of personal honesty in academic work, interpersonal relationships, and all school activities. By promoting academic integrity, the school lays a foundation where students do not demean their character, damage their credibility, or jeopardize their future.

Any form of dishonesty, plagiarism, or cheating violates the expectation of academic integrity at SMSS and may result in a student receiving a zero (0) if it is determined that a violation of the academic code of integrity occurred. Repeated violations may also result in additional consequences following school administration review of the reported infraction.

Prohibited Items

Personal items brought to school for educational purposes should be at the request of a teacher. Students are not to bring nor use on school premises such things as: radios, tape players or recorders, cards, cameras, CD, DVD, MP3 players, CDs/DVDs, pagers, cigarette lighters, JULE/Vape devices, matches, phones, laser pointers, video games, skate boards, inline skates, Heelys, or other items determined by school officials as distracting to the learning process. Any items displaying immoral or unchristian words, characters, or logos will not be allowed on school property or at any activity sponsored by SMSS. Any of these items may be subject to being confiscated and later picked up by the parent.

School administration reserves the right to determine what words, characters, and logos are inappropriate for young people in our Catholic school environment. Any student not in full compliance with this policy may be excluded from class until the parent/ guardian of that student has come to school to pick up the item in question. Parents/ guardian are reminded to not allow their child to test the rules. Your cooperation with school rules will assist your child in having respect for themselves, you, and school personnel.

Promotion and Retention

If a student is performing unsuccessfully at his/her present grade level, it may prove beneficial for him/her to repeat the grade. Retention provides students with the time to grow socially and intellectually, enabling them to succeed in following grades.

Parents/guardian(s) of students having academic difficulty should arrange for a parent/teacher conference when necessary and at least at mid-year. Parents/guardian(s) of students in danger of retention will be officially notified and a parent/ teacher conference will be required at that time.

There are no social promotions at SMSS. Students are promoted to the next grade level based on their academic achievement, meeting attendance and behavior requirements, with teacher

recommendation, and final review/approval by the school administration. If extenuating circumstances exist, such as a prolonged absence experienced by a student due to significant severe illness, then on a case-by-case basis a student may be considered for placement in the next grade level by the principal.

A determination of promotion to or placement in the next grade level will be made by the principal based upon a review of the student's academic standing and/or student's ability to handle the coursework for the grade level under consideration.

Promotion or Retention Procedure

Promotion and retention are based on an evaluation of academic, attendance, behavior, social, and emotional growth. Promotion to the next grade level depends on successful completion of all subject areas. Advancement is based on the student's daily performance, test results, recommendations of teachers, and his/her ability to complete work successfully. Careful assessment of a student's performance and ability is undertaken before retention is recommended. Parents will be informed in writing of potential retention following the end of the second quarter and a conference scheduled with parents. Typically, the review regarding non-promotion is a collaborative one involving the principal, teacher(s), and parents. However, the final retention decision remains with the school principal to make. No child may be retained in a grade for more than two years.

Retention is usually considered as an alternative during the primary grades and can be very beneficial, such as a *bonus* year for a learner. Retention in the primary grades (Junior K through 2) will be based on academic and developmental readiness. A child must be ready socially, emotionally, as well as academically, to be considered for promotion to the next grade.

Students in grades 3 – 8 who have a failing average in two major subjects on the final report will not be considered for promotion to the next grade. A failing average in one subject may require summer classes or tutoring in order to be promoted. In the event a student attends summer classes or receives tutoring, documentation must be presented to the administration before the beginning of the next school year. Cost associated with attending summer classes or tutoring is a responsibility of the student's parent.

Students who have significant academic challenges may be referred for appropriate evaluation/testing either through the local education agency (public school) or at parent's expense for private evaluation/testing. Parent consent for academic evaluation/testing to address specific concerns must be received before any evaluation/testing is requested. In the event testing is recommended or previous testing has been completed, results must be made available and kept with student records. When testing is recommended, it will be required that this be completed in a timely manner so that the student can best be served at SMSS. There will be no special accommodations made for students unless evaluation/testing results and/or a plan of action is on file in the school office, and the school has the appropriate resources to support the child's needs.

Purchasing Uniforms

School uniforms are available for purchase at Flynn & O'Hara, While purchasing blue and light blue uniform items from Flynn & O'Hara is recommended it is not required.

For more information, refer to www.flynnohara.com.

Flynn & O'Hara Uniforms-Woods Corner Shopping Center
1920 Centerville Turnpike
Virginia Beach, VA 23464
757-479-2100

Flynn & O'Hara will custom make a uniform for any student whose height, weight, or build deters the regulation proper fit of the ready-made uniforms.

Used uniforms are also available for sale. Often these are usable, outgrown, clean uniforms which are donated to the school for resale. Because these items are for sale at a discounted rate, the used uniform closet is not to be used exclusively for uniform needs.

In the event a student has an accident (usually toileting related) we can issue a child a used uniform item if the parent is willing to purchase the item. Please understand that we do have limited clothing items available in the clinic, and a parent will be called to bring another clothing item if necessary.

Recess and Physical Activity

Physical education is part of the school curriculum for all students. Children learn the benefits of exercise, cooperation, sportsmanship, and teamwork, as well as the satisfaction of accomplishing certain developmentally appropriate physical skills.

All students are required to wear athletic shoes for P.E. for safety reasons, shoes should fit securely, and be tied at all times.

Field Day is held once a year so that the children may compete in cooperative games.

If a child cannot participate in P.E. for medical reasons, the child must have a written excuse from a doctor explaining the nature of the child's condition. If a child cannot participate in P.E. due to a short-term illness, less than two days, a written excuse note is required from the parent or guardian.

A recess break typically lasting up to 20 minutes is a necessary part of the school day. Whenever the weather permits, recess is held outdoors. If a child needs to be kept from participating in recess for health reasons, a doctor's note is required.

Religion

Religion, as taught in our school, is a way of life, not merely a subject. It is important, therefore, that this way of life be supported and supplemented in the home. Parents/ Guardians are encouraged to participate in developing their child's relationship with God by being witness to the values taught in school and by fostering a personal prayer life within the family.

Catholic parents/guardians are expected, outside of what is provided at school, to see that their children participate at a minimum in Sunday Mass and receive the sacraments of Penance and Eucharist often. Non-Catholic students must attend religion classes and participate in all liturgical services at school. They and their families are also encouraged to develop and to follow the worship practices of their faith.

Reporting Child Abuse/Mandatory Reporting

Saint Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School (SMSS) abides by the Child Abuse Prevention, Adoption, and Family Services Act. This law mandates that all cases of suspected abuse and/or neglect be reported to Child Protective Services. **All SMSS school administration, faculty, and staff are mandated reporters.**

Respect for and Care of School Property

One of the basic practices of the Christian community is respect for property—one's own and that of others. Students are encouraged to take pride in their school building and classrooms. They are to handle equipment and materials with care. Students and/or their families or guardians will be required to make financial restitution for any deliberate damage caused to school property or to the belongings of another.

Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians

- Ensure their child's compliance with school attendance requirements and promptly report and explain absences and tardiness to the school.
- Assist their child in being properly dressed in her/his uniform.
- Take an active interest in the overall school program.
- Communicate regularly with the school concerning their child's conduct and progress.
- Discuss report cards and assignments with their child.
- Bring to the attention of the school any problem or condition which affects their child.
- Maintain current home, work, and emergency telephone numbers at the school.
- Cooperate with the administration, teachers, and staff in their efforts to achieve and maintain a quality school.

Responsibilities of School Personnel

- Maintain an atmosphere conducive of academic achievement and good behavior.
- Be in regular attendance and on time; be prepared to perform their duties with appropriate working materials.
- Exhibit an attitude of respect toward individuals and property; conduct themselves in a responsible manner at all times.
- Plan a flexible curriculum to meet the needs of all students.
- Promote positive behavior practices and restorative discipline based upon fair and impartial treatment of all students.
- Encourage parents/guardian/guardians to keep in regular communication with the school.
- Encourage parental participation in school affairs.
- Model task organization and management skills to ensure classroom time-on-task.
- Serve as appropriate Catholic Christian role models.
- Develop a cooperative working relationship among staff, students, and parents/guardian.

Responsibilities of Students

Self-Discipline

Students are expected to display behaviors reflective of self-discipline as they:

- Cooperate with others
- Follow school and class rules
- Manage transition time
- Practice the Catholic value of respect
- Practice self-control
- Respect authority
- Work without disturbing others

Work Habits

Students are expected to demonstrate work habits as they:

- Apply organizational skills
- Listen to and follow oral directions
- Read and follow written directions
- Use time wisely
- Work carefully and neatly
- Work independently when instructed to do so

Class Participation

Students are expected to participate as they:

- Give attention and respect to the teacher/adult at all times.

- Show respect and concern for other students through a willingness to share and take turns.
- Avoid talking over others or engaging in student sidebar conversations as fellow classmates sharing in a lesson is not productive to the learning process.
- Participate actively in class and engage in all lessons.

Safety

General Expectations

The following expectations have been established to ensure the safety of our students and must be adhered to by each student:

- Running is not permitted at any time within the school building or in moving from one place to another on the school premises.
- All exterior doors must remain shut and locked. No doors may be propped open and left unattended. Entrance to the school building may be obtained through the doors located at the main school office after ringing the doorbell.
- All visitors must report to the school's main office.
- No student may leave the school premises at any time without permission. A violation of this regulation will result in an appropriate consequence. Every student must stay within the established boundaries when outdoors during assigned recess times.

Physical Education Safety Rules

Student safety is the primary focus during Physical Education while in the gym and on the activity field. Students whose behavior affects the safety of others will be removed from the class and possibly face appropriate consequences.

- Using self-control, good manners, and sportsmanship is part of Physical Education.
- No student may leave the designated activity area without teacher permission. The designated activity field is limited to the perimeter of the field. No student is permitted in the ditches, neighboring yards, streets, or to pass the fence leading to the bay.
- Consequences for not following safety rules for Physical Education could include disciplinary consequences including involving school administration.

Playground/Recess Safety Rules

SMSS is fortunate to have a playground facility. In order to provide a safe environment, the following rules must be followed:

- No running or playing tag on the equipment.
- Only go down the slides.

- No jumping off equipment.
- No throwing of mulch, sticks, or any other items on the playground.
- No tackle football or dodge ball games are permitted.
- No rock throwing is permitted.
- Students are to listen to the direction of adults supervising the playground at all times.
- Rough or dangerous play may result in suspended recess privileges.

School Counselor

SMSS has a part-time school counselor through a partnership with Catholic Charities of Eastern Virginia. The school counselor provides information regarding psycho-educational testing, as well as resources and support to the teachers and parents with students experiencing emotional or academic difficulties. Our school counselor can also be a valuable resource when addressing student conflict resolution and provides student support through individual, group, and classroom lessons. Parents may contact the school counselor during normal school hours through the main office. An opt-out form must be completed if parents do not wish to utilize this service.

School Hours

Regular school hours are 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM. The school main entrance will open when the 7:45 AM bell rings. Students arriving before 7:45 AM must report to Before the Bell entrance and will be charged a fee.

Students should not be in the schoolyard alone before 7:45 AM. The school assumes no responsibility for your child before school hours if they remain alone in the parking areas/ schoolyard/campus. Students should be accompanied to the school's entrance at all times.

If you must bring your child earlier than the starting time, please use the Before the Bell services available beginning at 7 AM and an hourly fee applies.

Dismissal on regular school days begins after the end of the day prayers starting at 2:45 PM; students will typically begin to dismiss between 2:50-2:55 PM. Any child not picked up by 3:15 PM will be escorted to Beyond the Bell and an hourly fee applies if a Beyond the Bell plan has not been previously selected.

Dismissal on professional half days will be announced whenever held. Any child not picked up by the dismissal time will be escorted to Beyond the Bell, if available that day, and an hourly fee applies.

After 3:15 p.m. the school building is locked. Students and/or parents are not allowed to re-enter classrooms after school hours to retrieve forgotten items.

Searches

At any time and in order to maintain a safe school environment, it is the responsibility of school administration to conduct a search of a student’s desk, locker, or personal property (e.g. backpack, jacket, etc...) where a reasonable expectation/cause is present to do so. The parents/guardian of the student who is searched will be notified accordingly. While maintaining a safe school environment the parent does not need to be present before a search is conducted.

Sex Offenders Living within Catholic School Communities

Parents can check the Virginia State Police website to learn of any sex offenders located within the same or contiguous zip code area as the school.

Written notification from the Virginia State Police on the registration or re-registration of any sex offender located within the same or contiguous zip code of the school may be obtained by requesting this information from the State Police.

The information provided by Virginia State Police from the sex offender registry shall not be used for intimidation or harassment purposes.

Sexting

Sexting is defined as “sending, receiving, or forwarding sexually explicit messages, photos, or images via cell phone, computer, or other digital devices.” This can include sending intimate pictures or video via text message or through apps such as Snapchat and Instagram. The electronic transmission or receipt from one minor to another of any photograph or video that depicts nudity may constitute illegal sexting. Students engaged in sexting will be subject to serious disciplinary consequences which may include expulsion from school. In addition, the school administration may report instances of sexting to the Child Protective Services (CPS) and/or local law enforcement for appropriate investigation related to violations of law.

Smoking/Vaping

Smoking and/or vaping in a school building and on school property as it applies to school operation is prohibited at all times within the school building, in its parking lot, playing fields, and other school property. This prohibition applies to faculty, staff, parents, and all visitors to the school. Smoking or vaping on the sidewalk in front of the school building is not allowed.

This policy includes cigarettes, cigars, pipe or any other matter or substance containing tobacco, as well as the use of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes), personal vaporizers, vape pens, e-cigars, e-hookah, vaping devices, mood systems, pod systems, or any similar systems.

Social Networking

Social networking has changed the way we communicate and share information with one another. The term Social Networking includes, but is not confined to the use of blogs/wikis, message boards/forums, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and other posting technologies such as YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, etc.

Students are not permitted to use social networking sites while at school. Students and parents should be familiar with and adhere to the School's *Code of Conduct*. It extends to the use of social networking sites and covers issues such as cyberbullying, harassing, and the defaming that might occur online.

Faculty and Staff are not permitted to be "friends" through social networking sites with any SMSS student. Appropriate and professional boundaries regarding use of social media are expected with students, parents, and school staff at all times.

Any inappropriate comments on social networking sites about school staff or other students are considered public and could be grounds for discipline at the school level (even if images or comments are posted outside of school) especially if it disrupts the safe, orderly school environment or detracts from maintaining a safe learning environment. Everyone is encouraged to avoid using social media platforms as a means of airing dissatisfaction, grievance, or otherwise spreading rumors. Concerns are best addressed through meaningful conversation with school administration whenever necessary.

Standardized Testing/Assessment

Students in Grades Junior Kindergarten (4) and Kindergarten may be evaluated frequently throughout the school year using classroom teacher observations, standardized academic screening instruments, and/or online assessments such as MAP Skills Checklist. Students in Grades 1st-8th are assessed throughout the school year using classroom teacher observations, formative and summative assessments, standardized academic screening instruments, and formally evaluated for growth in reading and math using the MAP Growth standardized test three times each year. Parents will typically receive periodic and/or end of year reports.

The data derived from these assessments will allow administrators and teachers to measure student growth and proficiency, categorize strengths and weaknesses at the school, identify class and individual student levels, target instruction, and personalize learning. Data driven instruction provides school leaders and teachers with the information needed to make strategic and intentional decisions in real time about teaching and learning so that all children can succeed.

Structured Alternate Learning (SAL)

In an effort to minimize learning disruption caused by the cancellation of school days typically related to prolonged unpredictable/inclement weather, or under declared local or national emergencies such as the COVID-19 health crisis experienced in SY 2020 and 2021.

SMSS as directed by the school principal in consultation with the diocese, may utilize the Structured Alternative Learning (SAL) program to provide students with a continuum of structured alternate learning on designated prolonged inclement weather days and/or in response to the ongoing health pandemic as announced and approved by the principal.

Details related to the SAL program will be published in a separate document prepared and posted on the SMSS school's website, when necessary, by school administration.

Student Service Project/Program Opportunities

Saint Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School (SMSS) is a Christ-centered academic community instilling Catholic beliefs and gospel values; nurturing students' gifts of faith and intellect by surrounding them with a family of faculty, staff, and volunteers whose vocation it is to serve.

Service is an important part of our Catholic faith. In our mission to educate our students, we encourage a life-long commitment of service from our students. Grades Junior Kindergarten through 5 participate in service projects as a class, while a Service Program is designed for grades 6 – 8. The Service Program requirements for middle school students in Grade 6 – 8 is a minimum of 8 service hours per year

An online logbook exists within the FACTS/SIS system for students to record their service hours. Additionally, students in Grades 6- 8 will complete a written reflection activity each semester. Information on this writing activity will be shared with each middle school student through their theology class teacher.

Hours can be fulfilled by volunteering in parish, school, and community activities; 3 hours should be completed outside the school to encourage a middle school student's service in the community.

Service hours completed during the summer months will be applied for the upcoming school year. A student is encouraged to complete more than their minimum required hours, as service to others beyond the expected minimum is the desired outcome.

The hours completed in a specific community project may be documented and signed by the person in charge of the program and recorded accordingly in FACTS/SIS. All service hours must be completed and recorded/documented before May 1st.

Take Home Thursday Envelopes

All student work samples and/or paper correspondence will be consolidated into a Weekly Take Home Thursday Envelope. Any correspondence requiring your review and/or signature will be enclosed. All Take Home Thursday items needing to be returned should be done so the next morning (typically on Friday).

Please make a habit of checking with your child and looking in the backpack, so that you will be correctly informed of current activities, happenings, or work completed in the classroom.

Telephone Use (School Main Office)

The telephone is to be used to transact school business only. No student or teacher will be called to the telephone in the school's main office except in case of an emergency. If calling a teacher for a routine matter, the school main office will take the phone message/number and relay the message/number to the teacher. Students are not permitted to use the phone except in an emergency. Forgotten books, homework, lunch, and gym clothes are not considered emergencies; however students will be permitted to call for forgotten homework or PE clothes so long as it is not recurring daily/frequently.

If a student forgets lunch, it can be dropped off at the school main office and it will be delivered to the student. Classes will not be interrupted to deliver forgotten homework, PE clothes, or projects. Students are responsible for having all items needed for the day.

Textbooks

Students are responsible for the textbooks that are issued to them at the beginning of the school year. Hardback books are to be kept covered at all times. Students may not tape covers to books as this results in damage to the textbook, for which they are responsible. All damaged or lost books must be paid for by the families of the students involved. Final report cards will not be issued until all books are returned in acceptable condition or fines paid for damaged books.

Transfer and Withdrawal

Transfer is the voluntary termination of a student's enrollment by the parents/guardian or guardian with provision for the student to be enrolled in another school. A parent or guardian may decide to transfer a student at any time and for any reason, but transfers for frivolous reasons should be discouraged. The Principal will report each transfer to the Superintendent according to the established child accounting procedure and should forward the student's records to the new school as soon as possible.

Parents/guardian(s) who wish to transfer a child to another school are required to sign a release form in the office for records to be released. All financial commitments are to be in order before records are released.

Withdrawal is the voluntary termination of a student's enrollment by the parents/guardian without provision for enrollment in another school. This action may be taken only in cases where the student is exempt by reason of age or other cause from the compulsory education law. A parent or guardian may withdraw a student at any time but will be reminded that the student should be enrolled in a program to complete their education.

When a student is withdrawn permanently from school, the appropriate local education agencies are notified of the student withdrawing and not transferring to another school. A notation is made in the school's student information system with the reason for withdrawal.

It should be noted that Withdrawal and Transfer are voluntary on the part of the parents/guardian or guardian. If the student's enrollment is terminated involuntarily, this may also be considered as a result of an expulsion or other under circumstances where the situation is irreconcilable.

The education of a student is a partnership between the parents/guardian and the school. School administration reserves the right to require the withdrawal of a student if the administration determines the partnership is "irretrievably broken."

Uniforms and Personal Appearance

The following outlines the uniform items and personal appearance expectations for all students.

General Guidelines

- Please note that the uniform dress code applies regardless of the season.
- Shirts are to be neatly tucked in for BOTH regular and dress uniform.
- Skinny-cut pants or shorts, jeggings, leggings, or yoga style pants are not acceptable.
- Athletic shoes/Sneakers are required for PE days.
- Shoes must be closed toe for safety reasons, with no wheels or lights.
- Shorts skort length must be no more than 2" above the knee.
- Rolled-up sleeves of white oxford shirts (part of dress uniform) are not permitted.
- Sneakers may be worn with the regular uniform.
- Dress shoes must be worn with the dress uniform, typically on Wednesdays.
- No boots or ankle boots allowed.
- Uniform socks are required as defined below.
- Parents will be notified same day if a student is out of uniform and needs a change of clothing to be brought to school.
- All clothing must be neat and clean, unwrinkled, hemmed, and in good condition.

Uniforms by grade level and events

Pre-Kindergarten (3 and 4-year-old program)

Uniforms are required and all general regulations above apply.

Pants: Navy elastic waist pants or shorts. Girls may also wear navy elastic waist skorts.

Shirts: Light blue polo shirt (short or long sleeves with Saint Mary Star of the Sea logo or plain).

Shoes: Athletic shoes only – no slip-ons, no wheels/lights, no character.

Socks: Solid Navy or white socks must be worn with shoes

Kindergarten through 8th Grade

Boys

Pants: Navy blue dress slacks (plain) with a solid navy, black, or brown leather belt.

Shirts: Tucked in neatly at all times.

Kindergarten-Grade 4: Light blue polo shirt (short or long sleeves with Saint Mary Star of the Sea logo or plain).

Grades 5-8: Light blue oxford shirt button-down (short or long sleeves with Saint Mary Star of the Sea logo or plain). Navy tie should be just above the length of belt.

Girls

Grades Kindergarten – 4: jumper, Flynn O’Hara; white rounded-collar plain blouse (short or long sleeves).

Grades 5 through 8: plaid skirt, Flynn O’Hara; light blue button-down oxford blouse (short or long sleeves with Saint Mary Star of the Sea logo or plain).

All Girls: Wear skirts/jumpers on Mass days. Skirt length no shorter than 2" above the middle of the knee in front and back. Navy bicycle shorts must be worn under skirts/jumpers every day (NOT “leggings”).

Pants: Navy dress pants are optional from November 1 through March 1 and must be worn with solid navy, black, or brown belts and regular blouse or light blue polo shirt.

All Students: Kindergarten-8thGrade

Shoes: Grades K-8: light brown, suede “dirty buck” style shoe or all grades have the option of wearing tan Sperry’s.

Socks: no sports socks or anklets

Girls: plain white or navy knee socks or crew socks; white or navy tights, cable-knit tights

Boys: plain white or navy crew socks.

V-Neck Sweater: Logo only.

Navy Button-down Cardigan: Plain or with Saint Mary logo (no hoods or zippers).

Navy Crewneck Sweatshirt/Fleece/SMSS logo athletic wear: Navy blue with Saint Mary logo is optional to be worn over blouses/shirts.

Clothing Not Permitted in the Classroom:

Hats, hoodie sweatshirts, coats, or jackets.

Physical Education Days

Athletic shoes are required for weekly P.E. classes. Students in grades Kindergarten- 4th may wear athletic shoes to school on P.E. scheduled days including Mass days.

Students in grades 5-8 are required to wear their gym uniform and athletic shoes on P.E. scheduled days; this may require changing into P. E. uniform after Mass for some students. Only uniforms purchased from Flynn O'Hara are permitted, including the optional sweatshirts and sweatpants (with SMSS logo) for cooler days. Other jackets and sweatshirts are not permitted. Wearing the P.E. uniform with gym shoes is part of the P.E. grade.

No Uniform (Dress Down) Days

On no uniform days (Dress Down Days), students are expected to be dressed neatly and appropriately in scholarly attire. Consistent with uniform policy, skirts/skorts/shorts must be no more than 2" above the knee. Shirts must have sleeves and may not have any inappropriate logos, pictures, or symbols. Blouses must cover the mid-section of the torso; no tank tops, tops showing/revealing bustline, spaghetti straps, bare midriff, or bare shoulder tops may be worn. Pants must be appropriately fitting and worn at the waist at all times, short skirts, torn jeans, short shorts, tank tops, and shirts with unacceptable pictures or vulgar writing are not acceptable. Leggings are not acceptable unless covered by an appropriate length skirt, dress, or shorts. For safety reasons socks and appropriate footwear (**no flip flops, jelly shoes, ballet type, platform, or sandals**) must be worn.

Parents will be notified to bring a change of clothes if a student comes to school dressed inappropriately. These guidelines also apply to after school-sponsored functions, such as middle school dances.

Personal Appearance

Girls

- Faded or worn uniform items need to be replaced.
- If girls choose to wear the plaid jumper or skirt, the full-dress uniform code applies.
- Make-up is not allowed including lipstick, blush, and eye make-up.
- Tattoos are strictly forbidden.
- Modest post-type earrings only may be worn, one earring per ear. One ring, one bracelet may be worn. Religious medals or crucifixes on a small chain may be worn. For safety reasons dangling earrings are not permitted, and no jewelry may be worn on PE days.
- Fingernails are to be neatly trimmed; clear/neutral nail polish only is acceptable. No gel or acrylic nails.
- Conservative hairstyle is expected; dyed, colored, or dipped hair is not permitted; the student's natural hair color only is expected. Clear of the face and eyes, Hairstyles must be neat and clean (hair should be combed daily)
- Appropriateness of hairstyle or color will be determined by the Administration. Students will

be given a warning within one week to make needed changes.

- Hair scarves are not acceptable.
- Conservative hair accessories are permitted in school colors including solid navy, white or uniform plaid headbands/bows.
- Headbands with attached accessories are not allowed (cat ears, bunny ears, etc.).

Boys

- Faded or worn uniform items need to be replaced.
- Boys' hair and fingernails should be neatly trimmed.
- Hair must not touch the collar, or be below eyebrows in front, and must be trimmed around the ears. Hairstyles must be neat and clean (hair should be combed daily)
- Conservative hairstyles are expected. No "tails" or eccentric hairstyles such as mohawks, faux hawks, buns, or braided hairstyles. Dyed or colored hair is not permitted; the student's natural hair color is expected. Appropriateness of hair will be determined by the Administration. Students will be given a warning within one week to make necessary changes.
- Boys who need to shave should be cleanly shaven at all times.
- Earrings or any sort of tattoo is strictly forbidden. Religious medals or crucifixes on a small chain may be worn. Bracelets are not permitted.
- For safety and security, no jewelry may be worn on PE days.
- Hair scarves/do-rags are not acceptable.

Visitors

Visitors are welcome at Saint Mary the Star of the Sea. However, to ensure the safety of all students and continuity of the instructional day, adherence to the following procedures is required:

- All visitors report to the Main Office with a photo identification card to sign in and receive a Visitor's Badge.
- All visitors including parents will be screened/verified through an approved sex offender registry database.
- Drop off of all items or messages must occur at the school main office.
- Visits to classroom teachers must be by appointment only.

No unscheduled conferences, however brief, are allowed during school hours.

If a conference is needed, parents/guardians are asked to schedule in advance since teachers may not visit with adults if students are in the classroom. School-age children not enrolled in school are not normally permitted to visit classrooms. Exceptions must be cleared with the principal.

Volunteering/Parent Stewardship Opportunities

SMSS is a community of learners, parents/guardian, teachers, staff, and resource personnel who strive to make our Catholic Community not simply a concept to be taught, but a reality to be lived and experienced daily. We believe we are called to create an atmosphere where each child is encouraged to grow and develop to his/her greatest potential, empowered to go forth and meet the challenges and needs of an ever-changing world.

Parents/guardians are an integral part of the school community and are encouraged to volunteer through several opportunities scheduled within the school year in support of our school. Currently, these opportunities are available and are viewed as an opportunity to provide stewardship for the school through volunteering 20 hours per year (this is a per family requirement).

Parents may serve the school in various ways by helping with the maintenance and upkeep of the school, volunteering in the school health clinic, library, field trips, or cafeteria. Some parents volunteer as room parents to organize class events and special projects. Ordinarily, younger children **cannot** accompany parents who volunteer in a classroom.

It is recognized that volunteering/stewardship is a personal choice and how that is accomplished is an individual family decision to make. Parents/Guardians are asked to log all volunteer/stewardship hours using the FACTS/SIS system by May 15 each year.

Volunteers Screening and Expectations

The Diocese of Richmond requires any individual working or volunteering (including parents) in a Catholic school to submit the Virginia Department of Social Services Child Protective Services Central Registry Form and the Diocese of Richmond Volunteer Select Application Form. Anyone volunteering, coaching, or working in the school or parish must also participate in the Diocesan VIRTUS program, *Protecting God's Children*. This is a three-hour training session designed for awareness and prevention of child sexual abuse. Dates, times, and training sites throughout the year may be found at www.virtus.org. Registration for training is also done online. Certificates earned at other parishes are accepted. Copies of certificates of completion must be provided to the school main office.

Screening and Application Process

All volunteers should contact the school's main office to get started with the process. The Volunteer Safe Environment Coordinator will provide information on VIRTUS, and other background screening information needed before a volunteer can begin working at SMSS.

Confidentiality

A volunteer operates in a position of trust. Personal information pertaining to students must be kept confidential. Children's actions, responses, progress, or problems at school are not for sharing in the community. Conversations a volunteer may encounter between parents, teachers, and/or students in the school are confidential. Volunteers must not discuss these

conversations outside of school. All concerns should be referred to the principal. Any volunteer may be required to sign the Volunteer Confidentiality pledge as determined by the school principal.

Screening Volunteers

All volunteers must be screened before the first day of volunteer service. All volunteers shall be screened every five years using the approved diocesan volunteer national search protocols and procedures.

Sign-In Procedure

All school visitors (volunteers, parents, etc.) must sign in at the main office. For safety and security reasons, each person is required to sign in at the main office when he/she enters the building for any reason. All visitors and/or volunteers are required to wear a designated badge or sticker that may be picked up in the office. Visitors and/or volunteers are to return the badge and sign out at the time of departure.

Technology- Photographs/Social Media

Volunteers are encouraged to refrain from using technology, taking/posting pictures, and/or posting items to social media as this may be inappropriate should such use expose students who may have a no photograph agreement in place with the school. Additionally, photographs or statements made on a volunteer's social media/networking site may be cause for dismissal of services and separation of the volunteer's family from the school. Comments which are unfounded, defamatory, and/or otherwise create an atmosphere which detracts from safe school operations and positive community relations is discouraged.

Volunteers are encouraged to speak with school administration whenever a situation or concern exists rather than making/posting comments, dissatisfaction, grievance, and/or rumors about the school to include school faculty, staff, students, or the parish.

Volunteer Dress

Saint Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School has expectations for staff and student dress. Although volunteers do not have a formal dress code requirement, it is expected that volunteers reflect an image appropriate for the school house environment.

Volunteers should consider wearing modest clothing of moderate length/conservative while working in the school or during school activities. Please consider wearing apparel that is appropriate for the school setting. Workout/gym apparel, revealing tops, jeans with designer rips and tears, leggings/jeggings, and/or flannel pajama pants should be avoided.

Water Bottles

Students are allowed to bring a small refillable, capped sports water bottle for personal use throughout the school day. Please label your child's water bottle with his or her first and last name is strongly encouraged. Water bottle filling stations are available on campus for student use. The use of disposal plastic bottles is not permitted.

Wellness Program

In keeping with the overall wellness and health for students as outlined in the Consensus Curriculum, SMSS students are taught about the importance of physical fitness and good nutrition. Each classroom teacher encourages student activities which are geared to helping our students to adopt a healthy lifestyle which leads to a health-enhancing level of physical activity, wellness, and fitness.

In conjunction with our wellness policy, soda is not permitted as a lunch beverage. Please consider alternative choices such as fruit, pretzels, other healthy snacks, or non-food treats such as pencils and stickers for school celebrations.

**SAINT MARY STAR OF THE SEA CATHOLIC SCHOOL DISCIPLINE POLICY
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM FOR SY 2024-2025**

As a school staff, we are concerned about the safety and learning of all students who attend our school. It is our belief that each student has the right to attend school in a safe, orderly, educationally sound environment, where consideration and respect are shown to all within the school setting. We realize that this goal can only be met if all of us (students, parents/guardian, and staff alike) cooperate and work together. We, at school, will do our best to be consistent, fair, and honest when dealing with students.

We strive to help our students develop self-discipline and we will give recognition to the students for their positive behavior. At times, students will have difficulty with self-discipline skills and may need some assistance in acquiring these skills. Consequences for inappropriate behavior may include but not limited to a verbal reminder, a written reminder, issuing of merits/demerits, removal to another instructional room for a period of time, silent lunch, assignment of a behavior essay, attendance in the detention room, or suspension in school or out of school depending on the severity of the infraction. Notifications of discipline infractions will be made using the FACTS/SIS system.

In those rare instances when a significant infraction exists (e.g. weapons or drugs/alcohol on campus, credible threat of harm) the school principal/designee in consultation with diocesan officials may determine that the infraction warrants expulsion in the best interest of the school, its students and/or to maintain safe school operations, including reporting to local law enforcement as necessary.

Please review this policy statement and the specific discipline guidelines established in this handbook with your child. Explain it in terms your child can understand. Both you and your child should sign this form indicating your awareness of this policy and your support in this endeavor. If you have any questions regarding this policy or your child's behavior, please contact the school for clarification.

I have read, discussed with my child, and understand the SMSS discipline policy for the school year 2024-2025.

Please sign and return this form to your child's classroom teacher by August 30, 2024.

Student Name _____ Grade _____

Classroom Teacher Name _____

Signature of Student _____

Signature of Parent _____ Date _____

(A signed acknowledgement form is needed for each child in the family)

**SAINT MARY STAR OF THE SEA CATHOLIC SCHOOL STUDENT PARENT HANDBOOK
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM FOR SY 2024-2025**

The school student parent handbook has been compiled to acquaint both students and parents/guardian of the expectations, procedures, policies, and rules while attending Saint Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School (SMSS) during the school year 2024-2025.

This handbook is intended as a guide to school policy and procedure for the benefit of the school and its students. However, this handbook is not a contract, nor is it intended to vest any particular rights. The school reserves the right to deviate from literal compliance with the terms hereof, where the school deems it necessary in the interest of the school and its students to change or modify the application of the matter discussed herein.

After reading the Handbook, please sign below to indicate that you understand and are willing to comply with the expectations, procedures, policies, and rules included herein including the SMSS Dress Code, Volunteer Screening and Expectations, and in any SMSS publication referred to in this document. The Principal reserves the right to make changes to this handbook when necessary.

I have read, discussed with my child, and understand the SMSS Student Parent handbook for the school year 2024-2025.

Please sign and return this form to your child's classroom teacher by August 30, 2024.

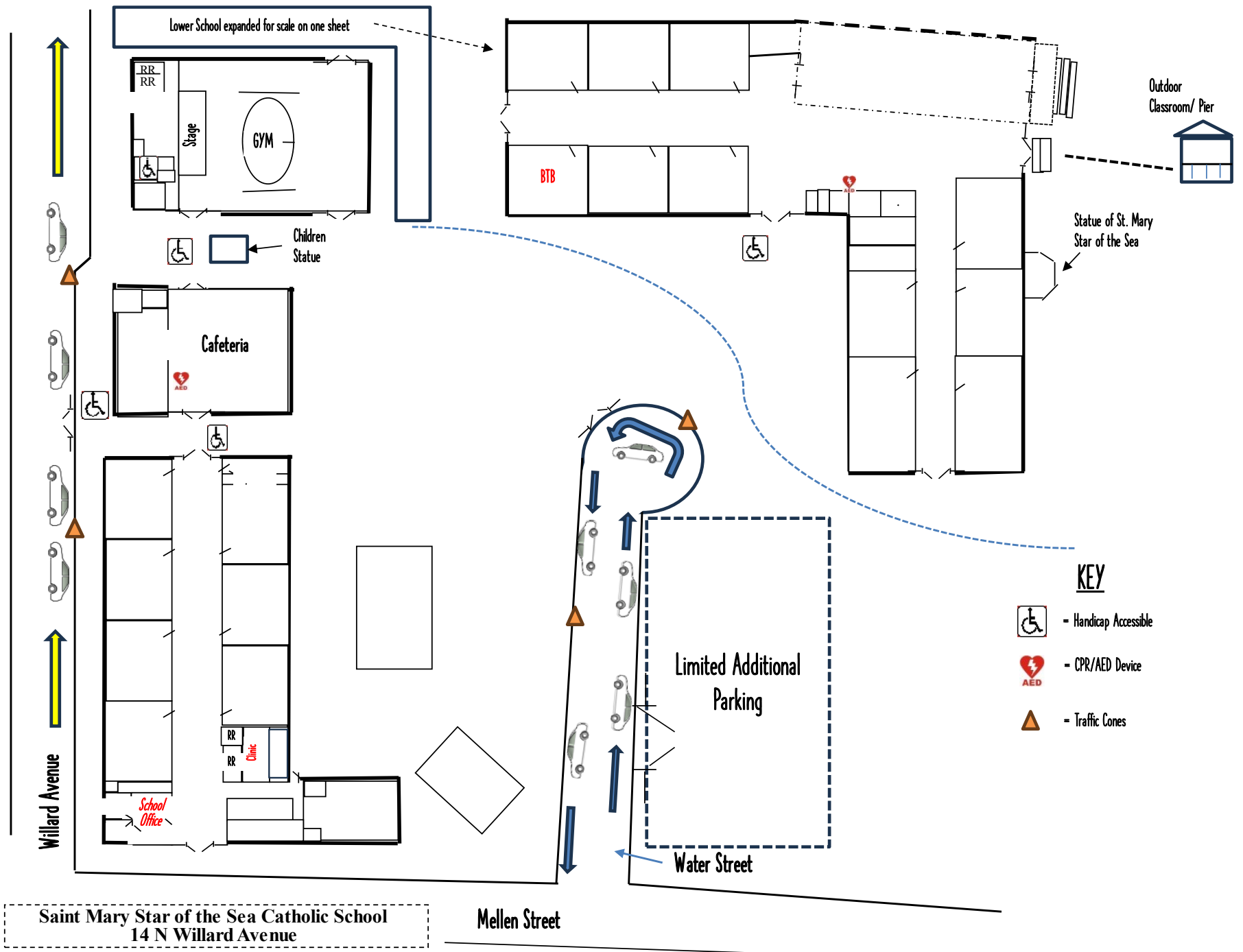
Student Name _____ Grade _____

Classroom Teacher Name _____

Signature of Student _____

Signature of Parent _____ Date _____

(A signed acknowledgement form is needed for each child in the family)



Appendix A- Carline Arrival & Dismissal Map