



Diocese of Rochester
Catholic Schools

Faith. Academics. Community.

STUDENT PARENT/GUARDIAN HANDBOOK

2026-2027



St. Mary Our Mother School
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DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER – DEPARTMENT OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
ST. MARY OUR MOTHER SCHOOL – STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK

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Mission Statement

The Diocese of Rochester Catholic Schools offer families an authentic Catholic education rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

Our schools:

- ***Guide*** students to be disciples who know and live the Catholic faith;
- ***Inspire*** a learning community to foster academic excellence; and
- ***Empower*** young people to fulfill the two great commandments of Jesus Christ by loving God and being service-oriented, responsible, and self-disciplined neighbors to others.

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1.0 WELCOME

1.01 School Mission

Saint Mary Our Mother School is committed to providing an excellent Catholic elementary education, Pre-K through grade six. We provide small classes in a warm, nurturing environment with dedicated teachers who help guide students spiritually, academically and morally. Founded in 1959 as an educational ministry of the parish of Saint Mary Our Mother, our school warmly welcomes children of all faiths, throughout the Twin Tiers, to be part of our school family.

1.02 School Information

Welcome to St. Mary Our Mother School and the 2026-2027 school year! This online handbook has been prepared to provide St. Mary Our Mother School families with helpful information about our school.

Please refer to this handbook throughout the school year as reference. It should provide the answers to most questions, but feel free to telephone us at the School Office should you need more information.

St. Mary Our Mother School relies on a partnership between the school and families in educating the child. In any partnership, there are many cooperative components with a variety of responsibilities. Listed below are important responsibilities of the Students, the Parents/Guardians and the Teachers.

1.03 Parent/Guardian Expectations

The philosophy of the Diocese of Rochester Catholic School community is to proclaim the Gospel message of Jesus, educate the whole child, guide students in the love and service of God and others, and integrate Christian virtues (love, faith, hope, courage, reconciliation, and justice) into the curriculum.

By registering your child/ren at a Catholic school, parents/guardians become members of the school community of students, faculty, and staff that recognizes the mission of building Christ-like presence in our schools by instilling Christian values in our young men and women who will shape our future. By registering at a Catholic school, parents/guardians agree to uphold the policies, procedures, and decisions of the school as a partner in the education of each child. This partnership obligates all of us to share in the responsibilities for the education of children by agreeing to the following oath:

- I (We) fully understand the importance of guiding my (our) children's faith development, acting as a good Christian role model, actively participating in church membership, and attending weekly Mass or church services.
- I (We) fully understand the importance of attending Parent Teacher Conferences at the teacher's request, cooperating with school staff, and being present at other school events to support my child/ren.
- I (We) understand the importance of reviewing my child/ren's homework daily.
- I (We) support and work with the faculty and staff to ensure a nurturing learning environment.
- I (We) agree to volunteer for events and projects within the school year.
- I (We) will ensure that students are picked-up from school and from school events on time.
- I (We) will register dissatisfactions and complaints in a reasonable and fair way, will not gossip, and will give everyone the benefit of the doubt by assessing the

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facts before passing judgment. Solutions to specific classroom issues must be sought at the level of the teachers before approaching the administration. ***The school expects that students and parents/guardians are respectful of one another, the faculty, and staff, including verbal, written, and face-to-face communications. Inappropriate and slanderous comments and/or social media behavior will not be tolerated and addressed appropriately by the school principal.***

- I (We) will fulfill financial obligations to the school in a timely manner, including the payment of tuition, fees, and other expenses.

This promise is designed to implement the blessings of the Church-Family-School relationship. The Catholic school becomes a faithful atmosphere with the positive interaction of students, parents/guardians, teachers, administration, and support staff.

RESOLVING QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

The mark of a Christian society is the way in which conflicts are resolved. Virtue and respect for others demand that questions or concerns be addressed directly to those involved and not discussed with others, requires an understanding that sometimes people have to “agree to disagree”, and that they not be presented to higher levels of authority unless previous attempts at resolution have been unsuccessful.

All interaction with faculty, staff, and administration should be by appointment. Parents/Guardians should not expect availability on a “drop-in” basis. **For the safety and security of all students and staff, visitors must report to the main office and be escorted throughout the building and abide by all safety policies and procedures set forth by the school.**

- Questions regarding classroom order, expectations, grading, and other classroom related issues should be discussed directly with the teacher to address concerns.
- General questions regarding academics should be addressed to the teacher and then the Principal.
- Disciplinary issues should be addressed with the Principal.
- Financial questions should be addressed with the Business Office.

PARENT/GUARDIAN VOLUNTEERISM

We have an active group of volunteers – Volunteers are the main support system of every Catholic School. Please become involved in some capacity. The Principal expects every family will become involved in one of our celebrated events to support their child/ren and the school. As Jesus said, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through me” (John 14:6). In service to the children and the school, your gifts will be realized and valued.

All parent/guardian volunteers must complete the online Diocese of Rochester’s Creating a Safe Environment (CASE) for Volunteers Training (before volunteering at any event where students are present). Information is provided below:

Diocese of Rochester Volunteer Requirements

Catholic school system or in its parishes and related ministries fulfill the following criteria:

1. Participate in or complete online a Creating a Safe Environment Training course (<https://www.dor.training/home.aspx?pagename=volunteer-training>).
2. Complete and sign a Diocese of Rochester Volunteer Code of Conduct Form.
3. Complete the Criminal Record Check process.
4. If driving children, complete the Volunteer Driver Information Form and have driving record checked. This must be completed every year.

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This is required to work with children in any capacity in our school - room parent, assist in the classroom, chaperone/drive on fieldtrips, athletic coach, and/or assistant at any social event where students are participating. All volunteers must participate in a renewal of training as determined by the Diocese of Rochester.

2.00 SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

2.01 SCHOOL HOURS

The School Day begins at 8:00 AM (tardy bell is at 8:20 AM) and ends at 2:30 PM (PreK classes) and 2:45 PM (Kdg – gr. 6). Students can enter the school building no earlier than 7:30 AM and report to O'Brien Hall until 8:00 AM then report to their classrooms. Our after-school care program (Stay & Play) is available from dismissal time until 6:00 PM for K-6 and 5:00 PM for PreK 3 and PreK 4. For safety and security reasons, students are not allowed to enter the school building or be on school grounds before 7:30 AM or after 6:00 PM, unless attending an authorized school program or function. There is no school staff-provided supervision of students prior to 7:30am or after school hours.

2.02 PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Parent volunteers are most welcome and appreciated. Please come in the main door and sign your name in the book in the office and pick up a visitor pass. Please sign out when you leave. Parent volunteers must complete the Creating a Safe Environment training program and authorize a background check performed by a third party for the Diocese of Rochester.

2.03 VISITORS

Parents are welcome to visit St. Mary Our Mother School. During the school day, all outside doors will be locked. Please buzz at the front door and wait to be identified and admitted. Come directly to the school office to sign in whenever you come to school; please do not go directly to the classrooms. This helps prevent children and teachers from being distracted in the classroom as well as ensures the safety of all our children.

2.04 LUNCHES

Students are expected to bring a snack and lunch every day. Pizza lunch will be provided at a minimal charge through FACTS starting in October and ending in May.

2.05 CLASSROOM SNACKS/TREATS

Parents should refer to the class handbook for classroom treats and snacks. It is school policy that birthday treats remain small and peanut free (if classroom requested). Birthday treats should not be parties and include food or drinks.

2.06 GOING OUTSIDE

As a general guideline, when the wind chill and real feel temperature is below 27 degrees Fahrenheit, outdoor activity will be suspended. This follows the Horseheads School District guidelines approved by the Chemung County Public Health Department.

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Otherwise, please make sure your child is dressed appropriately for the possibility of outdoor recess/PE. If your child is too sick to go outside, they are too sick to send to school. Personnel are not available to provide the additional supervision required for a child to stay inside the building if their class goes outside at recess.

2.07 SCHOOL CLOSING

St. Mary Our Mother School is closed when the Horseheads School District is closed due to serious weather conditions. Please listen to local radio stations and check local television stations for school closing information. All St. Mary Our Mother School faculty, staff, and parents will be notified via our FACTS system if the school is closed. We will also post school closing information on our website that can be accessed by clicking on the closing and delays button on our home page. If the Horseheads School District is open and you do not receive any notification from us, please assume that St. Mary Our Mother School is open.

2.08 SCHOOL FACULTY & STAFF

The key to our successful climate for growth is the faculty and staff. Each teacher and support staff member is a highly committed and qualified professional – one who loves children and works to foster their growth. All of our core teachers are highly trained educators who provide our students with both academic excellence and spiritual growth.

Position	Name	Email
Principal	Heather Bill	heather.bill@dor.org
Administrative Assistance	Adriana Enright	adriana.enright@dor.org
Nurse	Michelle Procopio	mprocopio@gstbores.org
Maintenance/Custodial	Roger Williams	roger.williams@dor.org
PreK 3 yr. Old	Jill Knuth	jill.knuth@dor.org
Teaching Assistant	Robyn Stowell	robyn.stowell@dor.org
PreK 4 yr. Old	Sally Heffner	sally.heffner@dor.org
Teaching Assistant	Michelle Steed	michelle.steed@dor.org
Kindergarten	Sandy Hoyt	sandra.hoyt@dor.org
1 st Grade	Jamie Lewis	jamie.lewis@dor.org
2 nd Grade	Karissa Collins	karissa.collins@dor.org
3 rd Grade	Angela Langendorfer	angela.langendorfer@dor.org
4 th Grade	Stephanie Pelkey	stephanie.pelkey@dor.org
5 th Grade	Julie Lawson	julie.lawson@dor.org
6 th Grade	Colleen Meehan	colleen.meehan@dor.org
Academic Intervention Service	Lily Barr	lily.barr@dor.org
General Music	Katy Piet	katy.piet@dor.org
Art/Library/Stay & Play	Barb O'Brien	barbara.o'brien@dor.org
Physical Education/Health	Tom Ketchum	tom.ketchum@dor.org

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2.09 SCHOOL DRESS-CODE AND UNIFORMS

Dress Down Day Guidelines (also includes PreK 3 and PreK 4)

All dress down day attire must align with the school's general dress code policies.

- **Seasonal Guidelines:** Students may not wear shorts during the months when the uniform policy prohibits them (**November through April**).
- **Footwear:** Students must wear appropriate footwear at all times. Open-toed shoes, flip-flops, slides, or any footwear that is unsafe or not school-appropriate is not permitted.

This policy also applies to students in **PreK-3 and PreK-4**, who do not wear uniforms but are still expected to follow the same seasonal guidelines for shorts and appropriate footwear.

Dress down days are a privilege, and we ask that families help ensure students are dressed respectfully, comfortably, and in accordance with these guidelines.

Standard Uniform:

**must be worn November – April (winter season)

**may be worn September, October, May, and June (summer season)

**no brand name trademark or logo is permitted on clothing except shoes

BOYS Kdg – gr. 6

Pants: Navy Blue chino style (no cargo pants)

Shirt: White polo shirt with SMOMS monogram

Sweater: Navy blue cardigan-style (must have SMOMS monogram)

Socks: Navy blue or white knee- or ankle-height

Shoes: Dress shoes or sneakers

****sandals, flip flops, slip-ons, clogs and Crocs are not permitted**

****boots of any type are not acceptable during the school day**

GIRLS Kdg – gr. 6

Same uniform expectations as BOYS, but with a few additions...

Jumper/Skirt/Skort: Plaid, knee-length

- Lands' End code **900140641** or identical plaid

- Tommy Hilfiger code **Saint Mary Our Mother School**

Tights/Leggings/Jeggings: White or navy blue (should not be worn alone as pants)

** leggings/jeggings are not considered pants but are allowed under skirts and jumpers.*

Optional/Warmer-Weather Uniform:

**may be worn September, October, May and June (summer season)

BOYS and GIRLS Kdg – gr. 6

Shorts: navy blue dress

Phys. Ed./Gym Uniform – (both boys and girls...Kdg. – gr. 6)

**Phys. Ed. classes are conducted on Tuesdays and Thursdays

Shirt: Navy blue T-shirt or sweatshirt with SMOMS monogram

Shorts/Pants: Navy blue shorts or sweatpants with SMOMS monogram

Sneakers/socks

****ACCESSORIES:** Hair accessories and jewelry should be conservative, simple, and safe (please no costume-like headbands, oversized bows, dangling earrings, etc.)

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****MAKE-UP:** Natural beauty is recognized in all students and the use of make-up is discouraged.

****HAIR:** Hair color should be natural

****Monogrammed or printed uniform pieces may be purchased at Pastrick's Sports & Trophies, 201 E 14th St. Elmira Heights, NY 14903 (607)734-0021**

****Note:** Jumpers with SMOMS-specific plaid only available at...

- Lands' End (school code: 900140641)
- Tommy Hilfiger (school code: SAIN03)

2.10 DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT

St. Mary Our Mother School adheres to the New York State's Dignity for All Students Act ("The Dignity Act") which seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment, and bullying on school property, a school bus, and/or at a school function. Diocese of Rochester Schools have pledged to eliminate bullying and harassment as best as possible by not only posting and enforcing school wide rules against bullying and harassment, but by applying our key instrument: involving parents/guardians.

2.11 ATTENDANCE & ABSENCE

A. Regular Attendance

Regular attendance is a big step toward success in school and life. Children who are regularly tardy or absent have additional challenges. When excessive whole or partial absences are noted a School Attendance Notice will be sent home. If attendance continues to be an issue, parents will be notified, and a meeting arranged to address the situation and seek the best solutions. Regular absences and/or tardiness may result in a child not be promoted to the next grade level and/or referral to Child Protective Services. Parents/Guardians must notify the Main Office at (607)739-9157 to report student absences.

Approved excused absences are defined as:

- Sickness
- Serious family illness
- Death of a family member or close friend
- Religious
- Medical or Dental Appointment
- Court
- Approved school-related program

Arrival at school at the designated 7:30-8:20AM timeframe allows your child the opportunity to get settled and prepared for the school day. Timely arrival to school each day is highly encouraged.

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B. Tardiness

A student is considered tardy after 8:20AM. Students arriving late must report directly to the main office and be signed in by their parent/guardian. Parents/ guardians are responsible for ensuring their child arrives on time.

C. Excused and Unexcused Absences

Please call the school before 8:20AM and speak to someone in the school office/leave a voice mail if your child will be absent, arriving late, or leaving early. Please state the reason for the absence, late arrival or early dismissal. If you know in advance, send a written excuse/email for the absence. Otherwise, send in a written excuse/email explaining the absence, late arrival, or early dismissal upon your child's return to school. Excused absences include illness, doctor appointments, funerals, court, religious observance and approved school visits (shadowing). Please schedule routine doctor and dentist appointments during non-school hours. Vacations are considered unexcused absences. Students are responsible for completing any work missed due to absences.

If your child is absent due to contagions such as strep throat, pink eye, lice, or any symptoms related to COVID-19, please make the school nurse aware. If your child has a temperature of over 100 degrees Fahrenheit, please keep your child home and share this information with our school nurse. Medical information about a child may be shared with staff on a "Need to Know" basis to ensure the safety of your child. If there is information you do not want shared, please contact the school nurse to discuss the matter at (607)739-9157. If your child's doctor requests activity restrictions for any reason (illness, injury and the like) please provide a doctor's note stating specific restrictions. The homeroom teacher, PE teacher, and school nurse all need to be aware.

D. Attendance and After School Activities

If a student is absent for more than half the school day, he/she may not participate in any after school activities.

3.00 SCHOOL ADMISSION

3.01 ADMISSIONS POLICY

St. Mary Our Mother School accepts children of any race or religion – as long as they fully participate in religion classes and celebrations. At the time of registration and if there are openings, students meeting academic requirements are admitted in the following order:

- 1) The family has a child currently attending a Diocese of Rochester Catholic school
- 2) The number of years the family enrolled children in a Diocese of Rochester Catholic school
- 3) The family is a registered member of St. Mary Our Mother Parish.
- 4) The family is a registered member of any Diocese of Rochester Catholic parish

It is the policy of St. Mary Our Mother School Preschool that children entering preschool in September are fully and completely toilet trained. This includes both the three and four-year-old preschool classes. Completely toilet trained includes:

*Recognizing the need to use the toilet without frequent reminders.

*Being able to remove the necessary clothing to use the toilet.

*Cleaning private areas with toilet paper after using the toilet.

*Dressing self before exiting the bathroom.

*Washing hands after using the toilet. The use of a “Pull-Up” or similar brand of underwear is not a substitution for being toilet trained. Please let us know if there is any reason your child needs to wear a “Pull-Up” during the school day.

St. Mary Our Mother School is aware that at this young age, accidents sometimes happen. In the event of an accident the following procedures will occur: *The child will take his/her fresh clothes into the bathroom to change. Your child will be given a plastic bag to put his/her wet clothes in.

*If a change of clothes is not in the child’s back pack, the child will be taken to the nurse and a relative/guardian will be contacted to bring a change of clothes.

*In an accident involving feces, a relative/guardian will be called to change the child as we do not have the proper facilities to clean them thoroughly.

*If accidents are frequent, we would ask that you re-evaluate your child’s readiness to be enrolled in preschool. Your child’s teacher can help you in that decision making process.

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3.02 AGE REQUIREMENTS

New York State Law requires children entering Kindergarten must be five years of age on or before December 1 of the entering year. Similarly, children entering a pre-school program for four-year-olds must be four on or before December 1 of the entering year. The same rule applies for three-year-olds.

3.03 IMMUNIZATION

The Diocese of Rochester and its Affiliated Employers follow New York State Public Health Law requires every student entering school to be immune to diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, measles, mumps, rubella, poliomyelitis, hepatitis B, varicella and meningococcal in accordance with Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommendations, NYS Public Department of Health Immunization Laws and Regulations. All students entering preschool must also receive the pneumococcal and Hib vaccines. Exemptions may be granted for medical reasons only. Religious exemptions are no longer allowed per New York State Law.

3.04 NONDISCRIMINATION

Title IX – Nondiscrimination, Harassment, and Bullying: Diocese of Rochester and its Affiliated Employers personnel must follow regulations of Title IX and the guidelines of the nondiscriminatory policy of the Federal government. Diocese of Rochester and its Affiliated Employers will not discriminate in the administration of their educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and financial aid programs, athletic and other school-administration programs. It is the responsibility of the principal (Title IX Coordinator), teachers and staff, students and parents/guardians to create an environment free from harassment, bullying and discrimination.

All students have equal educational opportunities at St. Mary Our Mother School without regard to any legally-protected category under federal or state law. Moreover, harassment against students on the basis of a protected category will not be tolerated.

If you believe you or another person has been discriminated against, harassed or denied an opportunity on the basis of any protected category, please promptly contact Heather Bill, the Title IX Coordinator, at (607) 739-9157 to report your concerns. All concerns reported will be promptly and thoroughly investigated/ reviewed. Confidentiality will be maintained to the greatest extent possible under the circumstances. Retaliation against persons who raise concerns is strictly prohibited. If you believe you have suffered reprisal for raising concerns, please contact the Title IX Coordinator to report your concerns.

3.05 LEAD TESTING FOR PRE-SCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS

New York State Public Health Law requires proof of lead testing for admission to preschool and kindergarten in order to be compliant with the New York State Lead Poisoning Act.

3.06 TRANSFERS

Any family wishing to transfer a student from one Diocese of Rochester Catholic School to another Diocese of Rochester Catholic School must receive approval from the Superintendent of Schools in consultation with the CFO before that transfer can take place. Students with past

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due balances will not be accepted at any other Catholic school within the Diocese of Rochester until the past due amount is resolved.

3.07 Proper Placement of Students

The Administration and Faculty of St. Mary Our Mother School realize that the progress and growth of each child differs during their school career. Therefore, it is imperative that the proper placement is attained for each child. It would be unfair and improper for St. Mary Our Mother School to admit or retain any student for whom the school did not have an appropriate program. To determine the proper placement of all students entering St. Mary Our Mother School the following procedures are required:

1. academic screening
2. review of previous school records
3. consultation with parents/guardians

For continued proper placement of all students currently in St. Mary Our Mother School the following procedures are followed:

1. The faculty is required to monitor each child's progress in relationship to the class norm. (This process is done through performance assessment, standardized testing and quarterly reports.)
2. The Administration and parents/guardians are to be informed of any student who, in the teacher's judgment, is significantly below the class norm. (Further diagnostic evaluation may be recommended.)
3. Results of all evaluations will be shared with parents/guardians. The administrator in consultation with staff and parents/guardians, will make appropriate placement.

4.00 SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Our academic program is centered on the Catholic formation and education of our children. The primary focus in each class is the message of the Good News as spoken, realized and challenged in our world today. It is our goal to prepare students with strong souls, open hearts and enlivened minds. St. Mary Our Mother School students have an excellent record of high achievement. Our strong academic program is structured, challenging, creative, and attentive to individual needs. Shared Expectations for Excellence in Development guides curriculum and instruction in our schools. The document is available online at the Diocese of Rochester Department of Catholic Schools' website (www.dorschools.org)

4.01 Curriculum

Our curriculum adheres to the New York State Education requirements incorporating Catholic faith, principles, virtues and practices. Students are required to take the entire core and specials subjects. The core subjects are Religion, ELA, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science.

Religion is taught daily as a core subject in grades Kindergarten through 6th, as well as integrated into all subject areas and aspects of the school day. Prayer occurs multiple times daily and the integration of religious values within other subject areas is the constant responsibility of all faculty and staff.

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4.02 Field Trips

Each class has field trips as part of their curriculum. Students must have a permission slip signed by their parents to go on a field trip. Confirmation by phone is not permissible.

Transportation for local trips is provided by bus. All chaperones must complete Creating A Safe Environment and authorize a background check.

4.03 Academic Intervention Services (AIS) and Instructional Support Team (IST)

The St. Mary Our Mother School community is blessed to have several assisting teachers dedicated to helping fulfill the needs of our children for support in ELA and math. Academic Intervention Services (AIS) teachers will have open communication and involvement of parents in all stages of assistance. These teachers are also part of our Instructional Support Team (IST) which is made up of teachers and parents. This team works together and meets on a regular basis to address various academic, social, and emotional needs of students throughout the school year.

4.04 Homework

Homework is an important follow-up to daily learning. It reinforces and expands classroom instruction and helps promote independence and responsibility. Reading and study assignments are equally as important as written assignments. Satisfactory completion of homework assignments is an integral part of determining students' grades. A quiet, well-lit work area, away from distractions should be provided at home. Establishing a daily homework routine is helpful to students. It is very important that parents understand and support the school homework policy. Homework should not normally exceed ½ hour a day for grades 1-2 and ¾ hour a day for grades 3-5. A good guideline to follow is to add a "0" to your child's grade – for example: 30 minutes for a student in grade 3.

4.05 Performance Assessment – Daily Subjects

We adhere to the New York State testing requirements. At the school level, our teachers use a variety of methods to assess students' achievement. This includes I-Ready Benchmark Assessments, unit tests, quizzes, Mid-Terms, Finals, oral and written reports, special projects and homework, as well as other methods. All grades are entered into the online FACTS Grading Program. There are four grading quarters each school year. Report cards are made available electronically at the end of each quarter through FACTS. The fourth quarter report card is the only report card that is sent home as a hard copy. Math, ELA, Science, Social Studies, Religion, and Health are given report card grades each quarter. Physical Education, Technology, Art, and Music are given report card grades once per semester, at the end of the second and the fourth quarter.

Grades PK – 2

These grades will be un-weighted using the following marking codes:

E = Exceeds Grade Level Diocesan Standards

M = Meets Grade Level Diocesan Standards

W = Working Towards Grade Level Diocesan Standards

N = Not Yet Meeting Grade Level Diocesan Standards

X = Not Evaluated at This Time

Grades 3-5

These grades will be weighted using the following system:

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Projects, Tests, Quizzes (50%)

Classwork (35%)

Homework (15%)

Grades for 3rd – 5th grade students will be entered as percentages.

95-100 Excellent: Indicates superior performance, initiative and independence in academic study.

90-94 Very Good: Indicates commendable performance in academic study.

85-89 Good: Indicates above average performance in academic study.

80-84 Very Satisfactory: Indicates a tendency toward above average performance in academic study.

75-79 Satisfactory: Indicates average performance in academic study.

65-74 Unsatisfactory: Indicates weakness and difficulty in the understanding of content and the application of skills in academic study.

Below 65 Failure: Indicates a marked lack of understanding of content and ability to apply skills in a subject area.

All students receive the following grades for learner behavior skills:

N = Needs Improvement

I = Improving

S = Satisfactory

E = Exemplary

4.06 Parent Teacher Communications

If you would like to set up a meeting with a teacher, please email the teacher or contact the school office to set up a meeting. Please respect teachers' rights to privacy. Instead of contacting them at home or speaking with them at school events, please call the school office. By scheduling a convenient time for both of you, the teacher will be able to focus his or her full attention on your concerns. In the classroom, the teachers are responsible for the education and well-being of many children, and it is very important that they give all of their attention to the students.

4.07 Promotion

The Diocese has established specific criteria for grade advancement. Students must satisfactorily complete all academic areas of study according to grade level and attend school on a regular basis. While parents are consulted throughout this serious decision-making process, the final decision to promote or retain a child rests with the school.

4.08 Spiritual Activities

Many spiritual opportunities are given to students so what is learned in class can be put into action.

A. Prayer Together

Every morning, we gather as a school community to pray together as part of our morning program. We celebrate mass once a month and during all holy days of obligation. Students say grace before snack and lunch and pray together in the classroom at the end of the day immediately before dismissal.

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B. School Liturgies

Our celebrations to worship God are just that - celebrations! Students are active in both the planning and the execution of these masses and times of prayer. Family and friends are encouraged to join us. All students are to participate fully and reverently.

C. Outreach

Caring for others is put into practice through a variety of outreach activities. We participate in many service projects throughout the school year to help and give back to our community. Offerings of gifts, groceries, and prayers for families in need are collected throughout the season.

4.09 Student Activities

A. After School Clubs

St. Mary Our Mother School has many after school clubs and activities. Some of these include Lego League, Tutoring, Art Club, and Intramurals.

4.10 Parent Activities

St. Mary Our Mother School is a great place to grow because of the involvement and commitment of its parents. There are several standing parent committees. If you are interested in volunteering for any of them, please call the school office.

5.00 STUDENT HEALTH AND SAFETY

5.01 ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATIONS AT SCHOOL

Prescribed medications will only be dispensed by the school nurse, doctor, or other health professional when the “Parental Authorization for Administration of Medications in School” is completed and returned to the school. In the absence of the health care professional, there will be a designated staff member who has been properly trained to administer medication, in most cases the administrative assistant or the principal. Additional documents include a written order from a health care professional stating the drug to be given and the time and dosage. In keeping with New York State law, medications must be transported directly by the parent/guardian to the school (medications CANNOT be transported on the school bus).

5.02 EMERGENCY TREATMENT

If a student becomes ill during school hours, the parent/guardian will be notified. Each year an “Emergency Treatment of Students” form must be completed and returned to the school. This form summarizes emergency contacts, medical conditions, medications, and allergies.

5.03 STUDENT PREGNANCY

The Diocese of Rochester maintains a pastoral approach to ministering to the needs of female and male students involved in a pregnancy as well as to their families. Each such case will be treated individually by the Principal and Pastor/Pastoral Administrator in consultation with the family.

5.04 CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES ACT

Under the New York State Child Protective Services Act, school personnel who “suspect” that a child coming before them in their “professional capacity” is being abused, maltreated, and/or neglected are mandated to report this suspicion to the New York State Central Register for Abuse and Maltreatment. All school faculty and administration are mandated reporters. All Diocese of Rochester Schools are legally and morally bound to make such reports and will contact the local Department of Social Services when necessary.

5.05 DRUG, ALCOHOL, AND TOBACCO

Student use, possession, sale, conveyance, distribution or manufacture of controlled substances (as defined by New York Penal Law and Title 21 of the Code of Federal Regulations) and/or illegal drugs is expressly prohibited on parish, school, or diocesan (including vehicles) property. Underage possession or use of alcohol and tobacco on parish, school, or diocesan (including vehicles) property is strictly prohibited. Students shall not be under the influence of alcohol or other prohibited substances on parish, school or diocesan grounds or at parish, school or diocesan-sponsored events.

School authorities (minimum of two adults) may conduct a search of a student's book bag, locker, and/or a personal search of a student when there is sufficient cause to believe that drugs, alcohol, tobacco, weapons or other materials are hidden

Local police must be called to investigate suspicion of a violation of this policy. Anyone on school premises who is taking drugs prescribed by a physician, dentist, or other licensed

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practitioner which may affect their ability to function in the school environment, should bring this information to the attention of the principal. Prior to the ingestion of any such prescribed medication, every student must provide to the principal a written statement from the prescribing practitioner that identifies any restrictions that the medication may necessitate.

New York State Law prohibits smoking in all parish and diocesan buildings as well as anywhere on school grounds. Students may not smoke on school grounds at any time. For purposes of this policy, smoking includes the use of any tobacco products, such as lighted or unlighted cigarettes, cigar, cigarillo, pipe, bidi, clove cigarette, spit/spitless tobacco and any other smoking or tobacco product. The use of e-cigarettes and any other products containing nicotine is also prohibited.

Compliance with this policy is a condition of enrollment, and any student who engages in any such behavior may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion.

5.06 WEAPONS ON SCHOOL PREMISES

No implement that can be construed as a weapon (e.g., firearms, knives, large sticks, matches, lighters, or the like) will be allowed on school or parish grounds. Appropriate disciplinary action should be taken if a weapon is found including contacting the police, if the student possessing the weapon is considered to be jeopardizing the safety of themselves and/or others. In the event of contacting the police, the Diocese (Department of Catholic Schools and the Chancellor's office) must be notified immediately.

School officials must cooperate with law enforcement officers who come to the school for the purpose of questioning pupils. Cooperation with police will be done in such a way as to protect the legal rights of each individual student.

5.07 Code of Conduct

St. Mary Our Mother School and the Diocese of Rochester Department of Catholic Schools take the safety, well-being, as well as character building of our students very seriously. The Code of Conduct addresses and aligns with the guidelines in accordance with the Dignity for All Students Act in terms of issues of discrimination, harassment, and bullying. The guidelines in this law reinforce our commitment to building a strong, Christian character in all our students as well as employees. Our goal is to encourage a Christian community where all students and staff respect the uniqueness of each person, develop an increased sense of respect for oneself and others, and create an atmosphere that enables students to grow in self-discipline. Provisions are in place that prohibit discrimination, bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment against any student by employees or students on school property, school bus, or at a school function, that creates a hostile environment by conduct with or without physical contact and/or by verbal threats, intimidation or abuse, of such a severe nature that:

1. has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits, or mental, emotional and/or physical well-being or:
2. reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for his or her physical safety.

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Provisions for responding to acts of discrimination, harassment and/or bullying against students by employees or students on school property or at a school function are described in the contents of this handbook

5.08 Rights and Responsibilities

St. Mary Our Mother School Community is committed to safeguarding the rights accorded to all those in the St. Mary Our Mother School community under local, state, and federal law. The mission of St. Mary Our Mother School is to serve God by providing a challenging academic education integrated with Catholic values and morals. We develop the whole child spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, physically, and socially. In order to promote a safe, healthy, disciplined, and respectful school environment; students, parents, teachers/staff, and volunteers have rights as well as responsibilities.

A. St. Mary Our Mother School Community's Rights:

All St. Mary Our Mother School Community members have the right to:

1. Take part in all school activities on an equal basis regardless of age, race, religion, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or socio-economic status.
2. A school that is free of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs.
3. A clear, fair, and consistently administered discipline code.
4. Courtesy and respect from one another (including students, parent/guardians, teachers/staff, and volunteers).
5. Share his/her side of the situation in regard to important events, at an appropriate time, to school personnel (principal, teachers, and staff).
6. Access to the school rules and the code of conduct, and when necessary, receive an explanation/reminder of those rules from school personnel (principal, teachers, and staff).

B. Student Responsibilities:

All St. Mary Our Mother School students have the responsibility to:

1. Contribute to maintaining a school environment conducive to learning and to show respect to other persons and to property.
2. Follow all St. Mary Our Mother School handbook policies, school rules, and this Code of Conduct.
3. Refrain from negative and harmful verbal or physical acts towards others.
4. Attend school every day unless they are legally excused, and be in class on time, and prepared to learn.

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5. Work to the best of their individual ability in all academic and extra-curricular activities and strive toward their highest possible level of achievement.
6. Complete all assignments as directed.
7. Keep parents informed of school-related matters including class and homework assignments as well as school events and ensure that parents receive communications that are sent home by teachers and school staff members.
8. Help maintain a school environment free of tobacco, weapons, illegal drugs, and alcohol.
9. React positively, proactively, and responsibly to directions given by principal, teachers, staff, and volunteers.
10. Avoid using cell phones, smart watches, and other personal electronic devices during the school day.
11. Display their emotions in an appropriate manner and communicate using respectful, appropriate language both verbally and in written form.
12. Ask questions when they do not understand.
13. Seek help in solving problems that might lead to discipline.
14. Dress according to the St. Mary Our Mother School uniform policy for school and school functions.
15. Accept responsibility for their actions.
16. Conduct themselves as representatives of St. Mary Our Mother School when participating in or attending school-sponsored extra-curricular events (such as but not limited to fieldtrips and enrichment activities), while on a school bus, or on school grounds and to hold themselves to high standards of conduct, character, and sportsmanship.

C. Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

All parents/guardians are expected to:

1. Recognize that the education of their child(ren) is a joint responsibility of the parents, the students, and the school community.
2. Send their child(ren) to school prepared to participate and learn.
3. Ensure their child(ren) attend school regularly and on time.
4. Ensure absences are excused and properly documented.
5. Insist their child(ren) be dressed and groomed in a manner consistent with the St. Mary Our Mother School uniform policy.

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6. Help their child(ren) understand that in a democratic society, appropriate rules are required to maintain a safe and orderly environment.
7. Know St. Mary Our Mother School rules and help their child(ren) understand them.
8. Convey to their child(ren) a supportive attitude toward education and the mission of St. Mary Our Mother School.
9. Build relationships of mutual respect and dignity with the principal, teachers, staff, other parents, and their child(ren)'s friends.
10. Help their child(ren) deal effectively with peer pressure and communicate any problems being faced by your child to the teacher and principal.
11. Inform the St. Mary Our Mother School office staff of changes in the home situation that may affect student conduct or performance.
12. Provide a place for study, necessary tools, and ensure assignments are completed.
13. With your child(ren), check daily the school website including teacher pages, planners, and take home folders for updates and information.

5.09 Prohibited Student Conduct

Rules concerning student conduct and sanctions for major infractions are clearly discussed with the students and parents at the beginning of each school year. Administration of disciplinary action is the primary responsibility of the classroom teacher. Every effort is made to ensure that the consequences are fair and proportionate to the infraction. Parents will be informed if students persist in misbehaving. Exceptional cases are referred to the principal. The St. Mary Our Mother School Administration reserves the right to discipline students for conduct on or off school property that is detrimental to St. Mary Our Mother School. Students may be subject to disciplinary action if they engage in any conduct that is disorderly, insubordinate, disruptive, or violent; endangers the safety, morals, health, welfare, or educational rights of themselves or others; or goes against the student responsibilities listed in this Code of Conduct.

5.10 Disciplinary Procedures and Consequences

As Catholic school educators, we hold Jesus Christ as our model for our words and actions. Discipline is most effective when it deals directly with the problem at the time and place it occurs, and in a way that is reasonable and impartial. School personnel who interact with students are expected to use disciplinary action only when necessary and to place emphasis on the students' ability to grow in self-discipline, responsibility, and awareness of other people. This discipline policy is intended to encourage and cultivate a caring and respectful Christian community. Disciplinary action, when necessary, will be firm, fair, and consistent so as to be the most effective in changing student behavior. In determining the appropriate disciplinary action, school personnel authorized to carry out disciplinary consequences will consider the following:

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1. The student's age.
2. The nature of the offense and the circumstances which led to the offense.
3. The student's prior disciplinary record.
4. The effectiveness of other forms of discipline.
5. Information from parents, teachers and/or others, as appropriate.
6. Other circumstances.

As a general rule, discipline will be progressive. This means that a student's first infraction will usually merit a lighter penalty than later infractions. [Examples of lighter consequences: verbal warning for first offense, and written warning for second offense.]

A. Ordinary Situations of Misbehavior

Individual situations of an ordinary nature are handled by the classroom teacher or staff member. If any incident seems of a more serious nature, the teacher/staff member will notify the principal so that a plan is developed to address and correct the misbehavior.

B. Repeated Instances of Serious Misbehavior

School and Family Partnership:

The family and school are partners in education and must work together to address repeated instances of misbehavior. The principal will monitor when and if family counseling should be initiated for both the support of the family and the school. If family counseling is seen as necessary, the principal may determine this as an expectation for continued enrollment at the school.

C. Disciplinary Procedures for Serious Misbehavior

If a student is unable or unwilling to move from externally imposed discipline to self-discipline, the principal, in partnership with the teacher/staff member, will determine what is best for all concerned: school, student, and family. The parent/guardian will be notified when any form of serious discipline is used. Certain forms of discipline may be used with appreciation for the student's individual needs and age. They may include detention, exclusion from school activities or events, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, counseling, and expulsion. Special disciplinary situations such as weapons possession, substance abuse, bullying, or harassment are regarded as serious offenses and require immediate forms of serious consequences.

D. Truancy

Students are required to attend school on a regular basis. In repeated instances of truancy, the principal is obligated to initiate a procedure in which every means available will be used to discover the cause of the problem. If a parent is unable to or unwilling to ensure school attendance, the principal will initiate legal proceedings. Repeated instances of irresponsibly arriving late at school will be communicated to the home. Tardiness due to bus schedules or

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inclement weather is not defined as a disciplinary matter. Tardiness is recorded on the student's permanent record card.

E. REMEDIAL CONSEQUENCES:

The focus of discipline is on discerning and correcting the reasons why the misbehavior occurred. The progressive remedial consequences are designed to be balanced and age appropriate. The remedial consequences are also designed to correct the behavior, prevent another occurrence of the behavior, and protect the target of the act. Appropriate remedial consequences include:

1. **Engagement of student in a reflective activity**, such as completing a sheet or writing an essay about the misbehavior and its impact on others and how the student might handle the situation differently in the future and/or make amends to those who have been harmed.
2. **Behavioral assessment and designing of a plan and/or contract**, with benchmarks that are closely monitored. The contract will be signed and dated by the student, parent/guardian, and the principal.
3. **Student counseling** when deemed necessary.
4. **Parent Conferences** that focus on involving parents in discipline issues.
5. **Detention:** Teachers and the principal may use lunch, recess, or after-school detention as a penalty for student misconduct in situations where removal from the classroom or suspension would be inappropriate. Parents would be notified in the case of an after-school detention.
6. **Suspension from Transportation:** If a student does not conduct himself/herself properly on a bus, the bus driver is expected to bring such misconduct to the principal's attention. Students who become a serious disciplinary problem may have their riding privileges suspended by the school district that provides child(ren)'s transportation. In such cases, the student's parent will be notified by the district and the parent will become responsible for the safe and timely transportation of his or her child to and from school.
7. **In-School Suspension:** When suspension is recommended, in-school suspension is the ordinary method to be used, in a supervised location within the school. The student reports to school and is responsible for all schoolwork but will not be allowed to access the classroom or classmates. The student will complete the day in isolation under the supervision of a staff member designated by the principal.
8. **Out-of-School Suspension:** Out-of-school suspension is a major disciplinary step invoked in a matter that indicates a serious infraction(s) of school discipline and policies. Parents are notified immediately and must come to school to pick up their child. In order for the student to return to school, they must be accompanied by their parents and confer with the principal, so that the terms for returning to school are clear to all. Suspension becomes a permanent part of a student's record.
9. **Student Expulsion:** Expulsion of a student is a very serious matter and is used in extreme cases. The Pastor, Principal, Diocesan School Superintendent, and the student's parents/guardians must review the infraction(s) of the student, which will be presented in writing by the principal before expulsion can take place.

5.11 Discipline Communication

We strive to ensure that all disciplinary matters are communicated with parents in a timely manner so that we continue to work as a unit on teaching students about behavior, choices, and consequences, in a Catholic and Christ-centered manner.

Teachers and principals will document all infractions with a description of the infraction, the disciplinary response, and the communication made to parents, whether written or verbal.

5.12 Home to School Chain

The Catholic Schools Office encourages parents to discuss their interests regarding their children's education as early and as directly as possible. The following steps should be followed:

1. Discussion with the Teacher
2. Discussion with the Principal
3. Submission of the concern in writing to the Superintendent of Schools.

Most concerns can be dealt with at the source, and this is the best place to seek solutions.

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5.13 Matrix of Behavioral Expectations

Behaviors listed in this Code of Conduct are examples and are not an all-inclusive list.

All Settings	Classroom	Hallway Stairway	Lunch	Playground	Bus	Bathrooms
Be Safe - Follow the safety procedures of the school - Move safely at all times	-Walk/move safely -Use materials and supplies safely -Follow classroom expectations	-Walk safely	-Follow instructions of monitor -Follow schedule -Walk in appropriate areas	-Stay on school grounds -Play safely	-Be on time -Allow others their space -Follow bus rules	-Flush after use -Report problems to the office
Be Responsible - Care for school & personal property - Be truthful and honest - Recognize and appreciate individual qualities	-Be ready & on time -Be on task and attentive -Work for success -Listen to, and follow, instructions	-Carry your own supplies -Keep the area clean	-Clean up after you eat -Follow the schedule -Use appropriate voice and language	-Follow instructions of monitors -Take care of your things -Be responsible with equipment	-Listen to and follow driver's instructions	-Respect people's privacy -Clean up after yourself
Be Respectful & Kind - Use appropriate voice & language - Follow adult directions - Assist others in need of help	-Respect other's property and space -Respect other's right to learn -Use polite and quiet voice -Work cooperatively with others	-Use quiet voice -Listen carefully to instructions -Walk single file in hall -Do not disturb other classes	-Use good manners -Be and act kind to all -Respect other's space -Be sensitive to other people's feelings	-Keep playground clean -Share equipment -Keep hands and feet to self -Include others. -Show good sportsmanship	-Stay in assigned seat -Wait in designated area	-Wash hands -Respect people's privacy

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5.14 Progressive Discipline

The school's Code of Conduct has been communicated to students and parents. Discipline actions arising as a result of students not adhering to the Code of Conduct will be based on the notion of progressive discipline with the last possible erosion of instructional time depending on the severity of the infraction. When investigating behavior issues, we must adhere to the facts as they are presented to us.

5.15 Progressive Step System

This system is a whole-school approach that utilizes interventions, supports, and consequences to address inappropriate student behavior and to build upon strategies that promote positive behaviors. When inappropriate behavior occurs, disciplinary measures will be applied within a framework that shifts the focus from one that is solely punitive to one that is both corrective and supportive. These interventions, supports, and consequences include learning opportunities for reinforcing positive behavior while helping students to change their behavior and make good choices.

Step 1

After a minimum of 3 minor infractions in a short period of time a student completes a Reflection Sheet. Teacher sends the form home to be signed and returned.

Step 2

If behavior continues, the teacher calls parent to discuss behavior and ways to support student at home and at school.

Step 3

If behavior continues, parent/teacher/student conference requested. Parent, teacher, and student develop a plan. School Services may become involved to support change in student behavior.

Step 4

If behavior continues, the teacher, student, parent, and principal meet to discuss behavior and review plan.

Step 5

If behavior continues, the principal may consider serious consequences such as suspension and/or expulsion.

*A student can progress quickly through the steps for more serious infractions such as fighting, defiance, bullying, consistent use of disrespectful language, etc.

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5.16 Minor and Severe Infractions

All infractions and interventions result in communication with parents/families.

<u>Tier 1 Infractions</u>	<u>Tier 2 (Serious) Infractions</u>	<u>Tier 3 (Severe) Infractions</u>
Teacher Intervention	Teacher + Principal Intervention May result in suspension or expulsion	Teacher + Principal +Pastor Intervention May result in expulsion
Disrespect to Adults (defiance)	Disrespect to Adults (repeated defiance, intentional refusal)	Bullying
Dress Code Violation	Verbal Aggression (including threats of violence and harm that endanger the safety of others)	Verbal Aggression (including threats of violence and harm that endanger the safety of others)
Inappropriate language	Fighting	Inappropriate physical contact
Property damage/misuse	Technology violation	Weapons
Cell phone use	Inappropriate physical contact depending on severity	Tobacco/Alcohol
Lying/Cheating	Tier 1 Infractions that are repeated after Intervention become Tier 2 Infractions	

In some circumstances, short-term suspension may be needed. In the case of a serious incident, expulsion may be the response that is required. If two students are disciplined for the same infraction but one of the students has had a previous Reflection Sheet(s), the consequence(s) may look different for that student.

In considering the most appropriate response to address inappropriate behavior, the following will be taken into consideration:

- The particular student and circumstances (e.g., mitigating or other factors) such as; student's age, maturity and special needs (if any-such as intellectual, physical, sensory, emotional and behavior disability)
- The nature, severity and frequency of actions of the behavior
- The impact on the school and classroom climate
- In all matters the principal will make the final determination regarding consequences up to and including continued enrollment.

5.17 Consequences

When inappropriate behavior occurs, the school will utilize a range of interventions, supports, and consequences that are developmentally appropriate and should include opportunities for students to focus on improving behavior. Consequences may include, but are not limited to, meeting with the parent(s), student, teacher, and principal; focus on repairing relationships (restorative justice), loss of recess time, detentions, in-school

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suspension time, or loss of privileges including school and class trips or special celebrations.

The range of consequences increases with each visit to the office and may result in out of school suspension time or expulsion.

5.18 Bullying and Harassment

Bullying and harassment are prohibited, including as explained elsewhere in Section 5.21 (Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy) and in DORAE's School Student Bullying and Harassment Policy. Bullying and harassment can be physical, verbal, or emotional. Bullying and harassment happens everywhere in all different forms. There are six primary types of bullying and harassment:

- Physical bullying and harassment – using strength and size to overtake a victim
- Verbal bullying and harassment – using harmful words, cursing or name calling to intimidate a victim
- Sexual bullying and harassment
- Relational bullying and harassment – working to destroy someone's reputation and make their friends turn against them
- Reactive bullying and harassment – convincing others to take part in bullying, completely overpowering and outnumbering the victim
- Cyberbullying and harassment

In considering the most appropriate response to address bullying and harassment, the following will be taken into consideration:

- The particular student and circumstances
- The nature and severity of the bullying and harassment incident, as well as how long the bullying and harassment has been going on
- The impact on the school and classroom climate
- The school will take all reasonable steps to prevent retaliation against a student who has made a complaint about behavior that is a breach of the code of conduct.

5.19 What Bullying and Harassment Is Not

The incidents on this list are NOT considered bullying or harassment:

- Not liking someone – It is natural that people do not like everyone around them and, as unpleasant as it may be to know someone does not like you, verbal and non-verbal messages of "I don't like you" are not acts of bullying or harassment. However, in a Christian environment, our teachers will do everything they can to build relationships between students, teaching tolerance, patience, and understanding for those different from ourselves.
- Accidentally bumping into someone – When people bump into others, the reaction sometimes depends on the bumped person's mood. If they are having a bad day, they may think it is an act of aggressive behavior. If they are having a good day, they smile back and attract an apology. This is also relevant for playing sports on the playground. It is important to understand that some accidents happen without bad intention and should not turn into a big conflict.
- Making other kids play a certain way – This is natural behavior in terms of development and is not an act of bullying or harassment. Teaching students to

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use their voice, make some compromises, and learn to set boundaries for themselves during play and sharing is part of the educational process.

- Arguments – These disagreements between two (or more) people are also a natural part of development, especially when students are together all day, every day. It is appropriate for people to have different interests and disagree occasionally.

All of the above behaviors are unpleasant and need to be addressed, but they are not to be treated as bullying or harassment. Sometimes students will fight, name call or argue, but will talk the next day after they've made their apologies or have moved on from the incident.

Teachers will use various strategies to teach students life skills needed to work cooperatively with others, develop self-advocacy, and, most importantly, keep Christ at the center of their dealings with each other. All classrooms are currently using Caring School Community, along with their religious curriculum and strong Catholic Identity, to continue to teach, model and practice values that support the development of a responsible, self-sufficient, and productive graduate who has empathy and compassion for others, with Christ as the guiding force in his/her life.

5.20 Cyberbullying and Internet Safety

The Acceptable Student Use of the Computer Network and Internet Policy was outlined for parent approval and signature in the Technology (7.0) section of the Student Handbook. This section pertains to bullying and threats using social media and the internet.

Many incidents involving inappropriate student behavior while online occur outside of school. However, these problems often spill into the school in the form of bad feelings, arguments, and disruption. What we see most frequently includes cyberbullying or cyber threats via instant messaging or in chat rooms, the posting of hurtful messages, the sharing of hurtful text messages, embarrassing comments, and inappropriate photos and videos being uploaded to social networking sites such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, and more.

Most of these incidents occur without the knowledge or consent of parents, who aren't aware of their children are doing when they go online either in their own home or at a friend's house.

Cyberbullying will be treated in a serious manner and students who partake in hurtful images or messages will be dealt with accordingly.

We encourage parents and families to support, learn and monitor what your child is doing online.

- Communicate with your child about what they are doing online.
- View your child's instant messaging and social media sites
- Check your child's files and photos to see what images are being sent
- Learn how to adjust/increase privacy settings

5.21 Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy

In keeping with our Catholic mission to uphold the dignity of every child, St. Mary Our Mother School strictly prohibits all forms of discrimination, harassment, and bullying, including cyberbullying, of any student by another student on school property or at a

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school function. This policy is adopted in accordance with the *Jack Reid Law: Protect All Students Act* and applies to all diocesan Catholic schools.

Definitions

- School Property: In or within any building, structure, athletic playing field, playground, parking lot, or land contained within the real property boundary line of school grounds, as well as in or on school buses.
- School Function: Any school-sponsored extracurricular event or activity.
- Harassment and Bullying: The creation of a hostile environment through conduct, threats, intimidation, or abuse (including verbal, non-verbal, and cyberbullying through electronic actions) that:
 - Has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits, or mental, emotional, or physical well-being;
 - Reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for physical safety;
 - Reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause physical injury or emotional harm to a student; or
 - Occurs off school property and creates or would foreseeably create a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment where it is foreseeable that the conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse might reach school property.
- Cyberbullying: Harassment or bullying as defined above, that occurs through any form of electronic communication.

Prohibition

No student shall be subjected to harassment, bullying, or cyberbullying by other students on school property or at any school function. Harassment, bullying, and cyberbullying as defined by law and this Policy are strictly prohibited.

Policy Adoption and Publication

This policy, prohibiting harassment and bullying, shall be adopted by the School and shall be shared annually with employees, parents, and students through the student parent/guardian handbook at the start of the school year.

Bullying and Harassment Reporting Requirements

- School Employees: Any school employee who witnesses or receives an oral or written report of harassment, bullying, or cyberbullying must:
 - Orally notify the principal/head of the School (or designee) promptly, no later than **one school day** after the incident is witnessed or reported, and
 - File a written report with the principal/head of the School (or designee) promptly, no later than **two school days** after the initial oral report.
- Students and Parents: Are strongly encouraged to report concerns of bullying and harassment to school leadership orally or in writing. Upon receipt of concerns, school leadership will direct the student(s) and/or parent(s) to the proper reporting form.

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Investigation and Response

- Upon receipt of a complaint, the principal/head of the School or designee shall acknowledge receipt of such complaint to both the complainant and the accused and inform them that an investigation will be conducted.
- The principal/head of the School or designee must promptly investigate all reports from students, parents, and staff, no later than three (3) school days after receipt of a complaint.
- Written findings of the School's investigation will be communicated to the victim and the accused.
- As necessary, the School will take immediate steps and appropriate follow-up action to ensure that any harassing or bullying conduct has stopped and ensure the safety of the student(s). Both the accused and the complainant will be informed that retaliation against any individual who, in good faith, reports an incident or assists in an investigation is strictly prohibited.

Accountability and Remedies

Disciplinary and restorative measures will be applied as necessary and as appropriate, consistent with Catholic values of justice, mercy, and reconciliation and the Catholic mission.

Training

The School shall provide training on this Policy and the proper procedure and expectations for School staff when bullying or harassment is suspected, witnesses, and/or reported to them.

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6.00 FINANCIAL

6.01 TUITION

Registration Fee: \$200 per family **this fee is non-refundable.*

Registration Fee covers some field trips expenses, student planners/folders, some classroom supplies, assists with technology costs.

Grades K – 6

	Parishioner Rate/Year	Non-Parishioner Rate/Year
1 Child	\$6,400	\$7,450
<i>*Each additional child</i>	\$5,100	\$6,400

Pre-Kindergarten (3 & 4 year old)

1 Child (all day/5 days per week)	\$8,000
1 Child (all day/M,W,F)	\$6,400
1 Child (half day/5 days per week)	\$6,400
<i>**PK4 is 5 day/week only, PK3 has 3 options (see above)</i>	
<i>**multiple children (PK + PK-6) -10%</i>	

6.02 PARISHIONER STATUS

Families are granted parishioner status by Pastor/Pastoral Administrator authorization. Neither St. Mary Our Mother School nor the school principal has the authority to grant parishioner status.

Should a discrepancy arise regarding a family's parishioner status, it must be resolved through their home parish. It is the responsibility of the family to resolve the discrepancy with the Pastor/Pastoral Administrator, not St. Mary Our Mother School or the school principal.

6.03 DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS

Families that are one payment in financial delinquency will be notified by FACTS as being past due. The Pastor/Pastoral Administrator, Business Manager/Finance Director and Principal will be notified of the past due status.

Families with balances greater than 60 days past due will not be permitted to return to school until the outstanding balance is resolved.

St. Mary Our Mother School will pursue every avenue to obtain tuition and extended care payment, including collection agencies and legal options. Academic records and transcripts will not be released until the outstanding balance is paid in full, as well as any collection fees incurred.

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6.04 DONATIONS

Donations to St. Mary Our Mother School are tax deductible and can be sent directly to the school and will be used directly for our school. The generous donations of our school parents, grandparents, parishioners and area businesses make it possible for us to support our families with tuition assistance as needed, as in the Fair Share Program. Donations are also used to buy new equipment for our classrooms and make improvements in our school. We are a Christian family helping each other.

7.00 TECHNOLOGY

7.01 ACCEPTABLE USE OF THE COMPUTER NETWORK AND INTERNET POLICY

It is the policy of St. Mary Our Mother School to require the ethical use of the Internet and related technologies by all employees, volunteers, and students as set forth below in the “St. Mary Our Mother School Acceptable Use of the Computer Network and Internet Policy.” Access privileges may be revoked, administrative disciplinary action may be taken, and/or appropriate legal action taken for any violations that are unethical and may constitute a criminal offense.

Internet Terms, Conditions, and Regulations

Acceptable Use

Use of the Internet and related technologies must be in support of education and research and consistent with the educational objectives of St. Mary Our Mother School. Use of other organizational networks or computing resources must comply with the rules appropriate for these networks.

Unacceptable Use

Transmission of any material in violation of any national, state or Diocesan policy or law is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, copyright materials, threatening, violent, or obscene material or material protected by trade secret. Use for commercial activities is not acceptable. Use for product advertisement, unauthorized chat or chain letter communication or political lobbying is also prohibited. Other examples of unacceptable information are pornography, information on bombs, inappropriate language and communications, flame letters, or like material.

Acts of vandalism are prohibited. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user, or to damage hardware or software. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses. Unauthorized use of another's computer, access sign-on and/or password and/or accounts, and/or files is prohibited.

Privileges

The use of the Internet and related technologies is a privilege, not a right. Inappropriate use may result in cancellation of those privileges. Each user, who is provided access to Internet and related technologies, will participate in a discussion with assigned staff person(s) concerning the proper use of the network. The faculty, staff, or parent/guardian may request the administrator or designee to deny, revoke, or suspend a specific user access to the Internet and related technologies due to unacceptable use.

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Warranties

The educational programs governed by St. Mary Our Mother School make no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service it is providing and will not be responsible for any damage's users may suffer. This includes loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, mis-deliveries, or service interruptions. Use of any information obtained via the Internet and related technologies is at the user's own risk. The educational program governed by St. Mary Our Mother School specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services. The computer user will be responsible for any financial obligation incurred through the use of Internet and related technologies that are not previously approved as part of the school budget.

Acceptable Student Use of the Computer Network and Internet Policy

Rules and Responsibilities:

Access to the Internet will enable students to explore thousands of school-related libraries, databases, and research media. While St. Mary Our Mother School's intent is to make Internet access available to further educational goals and objectives, students may find ways to access objectionable material as well. St. Mary Our Mother School believes that educational benefits to students from accessing the Internet, in the form of information, resources, and opportunities for collaboration, exceed any disadvantages.

To that end, St. Mary Our Mother School has set the following standards for acceptable student use of on-line information sources via the Internet.

1. Students are responsible for good behavior on school computer networks, just as they are in the classroom. Communications on the network are often public in nature. The Internet network is provided for students to conduct research and communicate with others as a regular part of the curriculum. Access to Internet network services is given to students who agree to act in a responsible manner. Parental permission is required, and access is a privilege - not a right.
2. Network administrators and teachers may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and ensure that users are employing the system responsibly. Network storage areas will be monitored regularly. Users should not expect that files used or stored on school computers or servers would always be private.
3. Access to information will be honored within reason. During school hours, teachers will guide students toward appropriate materials. Outside of school, families bear the same responsibility as they would when guiding their children with information sources such as books, periodicals, television, telephones, movies, radio, and other potentially offensive media.
4. The following list describes behaviors and/or actions that are not permitted. The principal, as school administrator, has final authority to determine what behaviors and/or actions are unacceptable:
 - Sending, displaying, or downloading offensive messages or pictures;
 - Using obscene language;
 - Harassing, insulting, or threatening others;
 - Damaging of 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;

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- Intentionally wasting limited resources;
 - Using the network for commercial purposes;
 - Revealing a personal phone number, name or address of one's self or another;
 - Any other form of cyber bullying.
5. Violations will result in loss of access as well as other disciplinary action as determined by the school principal.

7.02 USE OF ELECTRONICS – CELL PHONE AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Neither the Diocese of Rochester nor the school is responsible for any electronic items brought to school; including cell phones, tablets, or any digital equipment. All electronic communications devices are subject to the Acceptable Use of the Computer Network and Internet policy.

7.03 RESPONSIBLE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly present in the technology students encounter every day, including educational software, search tools, and other digital resources used at St. Mary Our Mother School. Used thoughtfully and under the guidance of a teacher or parent/guardian, AI can be a helpful tool that supports learning; however, AI must never replace the relationships, guidance, and judgment that are central to a child's growth and formation. As a Catholic school community, our use of technology, including AI, must always respect the dignity of the individual student and support – not substitute for – the work of teachers and the responsibility of parents/guardians as the primary educators of their children.

Use of AI at School

Students may only use AI tools that have been selected and approved by St. Mary Our Mother School for instructional purposes. Students may not independently access, download, or create personal accounts with AI chatbots, generative AI applications, or similar tools on school devices or the school network. Any AI tool introduced in the classroom will be reviewed for age-appropriateness, safety, and data privacy before it is used with students.

Personal Information and Online Safety

Students may never share their name, address, phone number, photograph, or any other personal or family information of themselves, other students, teachers, staff, or others with an AI chatbot or similar application. AI companion or “chat” applications designed to simulate a friend, conversation partner, or emotional relationship are not permitted on school devices or as part of any school assignment. A student who encounters AI-generated content that is confusing, upsetting, inappropriate, or that requests personal information must tell a teacher, parent/guardian, or other trusted adult immediately.

Student Responsibilities

Use only AI tools introduced or approved by a teacher

Never enter personal, family, or identifying information of oneself or others into an AI tool
Rely on one's own thinking, reading, writing, and understanding, using AI only to support learning and never as a substitute for it

Remember that AI-generated information may be inaccurate and should never be assumed to be true

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A Note to Parents/Guardians

Many everyday tools, such as spelling and grammar checks or predictive text, already use AI in the background and are not the focus of this handbook. Please note that most publicly available AI chatbots require users to be at least 13 years old and are not intended for use by elementary-age children without direct parental involvement.

Violations

Use of AI in a manner inconsistent with this policy – including submitting AI-generated work as a student's own or disregarding the safety expectations above – will be addressed under the Acceptable Use of the Computer Network and Internet Policy (7.01) and may result in loss of technology privileges and/or other disciplinary action as determined by the school principal.

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8.00 PARENT INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION

8.01 COMMUNICATION FLOWCHART

As a Catholic school community, we recognize the role of parents/guardians as the primary educators of their children. Therefore, we value communication as a key to the success of all children entrusted to our care. This communication flow chart serves as a guideline and should assist parents/guardians and school community members in contacting the appropriate school staff members with questions or concerns. We encourage you to contact the staff member most immediately involved with your question or concern as the first contact. If the issue is not resolved, please progress through the flow chart below.

Questions/ Concerns	First Contact	Second Contact	Third Contact
Academics	Teacher	Principal	
Behavior	Teacher	Principal	
Extra-Curricular Activities	Club Advisor	Teacher	Principal
Financial Aid	Business Office	Principal	Pastor/ Pastoral Administrator
Medical	School Nurse	Teacher	Principal
Religion	Teacher	Principal	Coordinator of Curriculum and Instruction
Safety	Teacher	Principal	
Special Education	Teacher	AIS Teacher & Principal	K-8 th : District of School Location; Pre-K: District of Residence
Transportation/ Bus Behavior	Driver	Principal	Transportation Department of District of Residence
Technology	Teacher	School Technology Coordinator	Principal
Tuition Payment	Tuition Management Company, <i>if applicable</i>	Business Office	Principal
Use of Facilities	Parish Office	Principal	Pastor/ Pastoral Administrator

***Additionally, the Superintendent of Schools is the Fourth Contact.

Principal	Heather Bill	(607) 739-9157
Pastor	Fr. Christopher Linsler	(607) 739-3817
Superintendent	Frank Arvizzigno	(585) 328-3210 X1246
Tuition Management	FACTS	1-866-411-4637

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8.02 MEDIA RELEASE STATEMENT

St. Mary Our Mother School subscribes to the following photo release policy:

Minors:

St. Mary Our Mother School often takes photographs of its students engaging in classroom activities and participating in school events. These photographs may be used for general marketing purposes in publications, public relations, promotions, advertising – both in print and online. They are also posted on Facebook and could be used on teacher's classroom pages as a way to share the students' school day with St. Mary Our Mother School families.

To protect our students' identity, we will NOT use student full names and biographical information in conjunction with photographs designated for promotional purposes to the general public. However, internally distributed materials, such as the school yearbook and newsletters, will include our students' full names. In the event a third party wishes to publish a news-related story about our school, we will only provide students' first name and last initial.

On a yearly basis, parents are asked to notify the school if they do not wish photographs of their child(ren) to be published or used for any marketing purposes (see Photography Policy handout provided to parents on the first day of school).

If parent/guardian permission to utilize their child's photograph is refused, photos and images of their child(ren) will only be included in print and/or web publications and video productions when the minor's faces are indistinguishable (i.e., turned away from the camera or otherwise unidentifiable.)

Adults:

St. Mary Our Mother School does not require signed release form to publish images of adults.

8.03 METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

A. Take-Home Envelopes – Communication from the main office will occur on Thursday. The communication will be sent via email and White Envelope. Please be sure to check your email often and return the white envelope ASAP.

B. Parent Teacher Conferences – Conferences will be held in the Fall with classroom teachers. If parents/guardians request an additional conference, they should schedule one with the classroom teacher.

C. Family School Directory – A school directory will be sent home at the beginning of the school year. Only information approved by each family will be shared in the directory.

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Dear Parents/Guardians:

At St. Mary Our Mother School, we take pride in our students, their behavior and the relationships that we build each year. I am asking every student/family at St. Mary Our Mother School to go to our school website stmaryourmotherschool.org to view our Student Parent Handbook. Our handbook will provide you with information about nearly all aspects of our school. As you review the Handbook, I ask that you point out to your child the section that discusses "student expectations." Please have a dialogue with your child about ways that they can reflect the expectations of our school. We rely on everyone taking an active role in ensuring St. Mary Our Mother School is the best place for each of our students. Parents are the primary educators of their children. By working together, we can promote a positive and nurturing environment for every child.

Once you have read the handbook and reviewed it with your child, please sign, date (both parents AND students) and return this page to the School Office acknowledging that you have read the school policies/procedures and are committed to following each of them.

If you are unable to access the handbook online, please let the School Office know and one will be printed for you. Please note that only 1 page needs to be filled out per family, but each student and parent needs to sign the Acknowledgement.

Thank you for your continued support.

Heather Bill

Principal

Student Parent Handbook Acknowledgment Form

We have read the Student Parent Handbook for St. Mary Our Mother School and agree to support the policies therein and will be governed by this handbook.

Family (last) name: _____ date: _____

Student Signature(s):

student #1 signature

student #2 signature

student #3 signature

student #4 signature

Parent/Guardian Signature(s):

parent/guardian #1 signature

parent/guardian #2 signature

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Acceptable Student Use of the Computer Network and Internet Policy

Parent/Guardian Agreement Form

Parents/guardians are asked to complete this form after reading and discussing the “*St. Mary Our Mother School Acceptable Student Use of the Computer Network and Internet Policy*” with their child(ren). This document will be kept at the school for the duration of the student’s attendance.

Parent/Guardian Support for Acceptable Computer Network Guidelines:

As the parent and/or guardian of _____, I have read and will support terms described in the “*St. Mary Our Mother School Acceptable Student Use of the Computer Network and Internet Policy*.” I have instructed my son/daughter to cooperate with and support the rules and guidelines set forth in the “*St. Mary Our Mother School Acceptable Student Use of the Computer Network and Internet Policy*.” I understand my son/daughter will be held responsible for any non-compliance with the stated policy’s rules and responsibilities.”

Signature of Parent / Guardian

Date

Student Support for Acceptable Computer Network Guidelines:

As a student, I have read/discussed and will follow the guidelines of the “*St. Mary Our Mother School Acceptable Use of the Computer Network and Internet Policy*.” I understand I will be held responsible for any non-cooperation with the stated rules and responsibilities.”

Student Signature

Date