

St. Mary Catholic Elementary Schools Handbook

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In addition to the policies described in this handbook, SMCS abides by the policies and regulations of the Board of Education defined by the Catholic Diocese of Green Bay. Not all diocesan policies are duplicated in this handbook. A copy of all policies is available upon request in the school office.

SMCS retains the right to amend the handbook for just cause. SMCS families will be given prompt notification if changes are made.



Mission Statement

St. Mary Catholic Schools, in partnership with family, Church and community, provides a quality Catholic education that is focused on faith, academics, service and personal development from preschool through high school to influence a rapidly changing world.

Accreditation Information

The Wisconsin Religious and Independent Schools Accreditation (WRISA) has accredited St. Mary Catholic Schools. In addition, the schools are in good standing of the National Catholic Educational Association.

Absences and Attendance Issues

Children are required by state law to attend school, and the law that defines excused absences is very specific. According to state statutes, a child who is “absent part or all of one or more days from school during which the school has not been notified of the legal cause of the absence” is considered truant (Wisconsin State Statute 118.15). If a child is sick, we ask that he/she does not come to school. This is for the welfare of your child, as well as the other children. The school office needs to be notified by 8:30 a.m. as to the reason for the absence. If the office does not receive notification by 8:30 a.m., the school administrative assistant will contact the parent/guardian to determine the reason for the absence. This is a safeguard for your child and helps to prevent truancy. If your child exhibits symptoms of illness, please keep your child at home. Children must be fever free and healthy before returning to school. A child who has a communicable or contagious disease is to be kept home until the child is no longer contagious. Please inform school administrative assistant if your child has a contagious disease or condition, e.g. strep throat, chicken pox, lice. Vacations are discouraged during school time. Grades may suffer due to missed daily participation, as classroom involvement cannot be made up. Personal contact with the classroom teacher is encouraged before a planned absence to see if alternate assignments can be arranged. The teacher will provide material after the child returns to school to help the parent cover the missed material.

Tardiness

Children must be in their classroom when the bell rings or they will be marked tardy. If it is necessary to schedule appointments during the school day, please make every effort to vary the time. This reduces the possibility of a child frequently missing the same subject. Students must be signed out by a parent/guardian from the school office if they leave during the school day. Absence from school for one or more hours at any time will be recorded as a 1/2 day absent.

Arrival/Departure During the Day

Any time that a student leaves the school building during school hours, the parent/guardian must come in to the office and sign the child out of the building in the student sign-out book. Students must report to the office to check in when they arrive late or return to school after leaving. Notification of early dismissals or late arrivals for medical or other reasons should be made to the school office by a written note or email. A student who enters school after the morning bell and before 9:30 a.m. will be tardy. A student who enters school after 9:30 a.m. will be considered absent for the entire morning; a student who leaves school between 12:00 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. will be considered absent for the entire afternoon session.



Extended Learning

Extended learning is available at each elementary campus on the days when school is in session (as per the school calendar). Supervision will be provided from 3:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Families enrolled in extended learning will receive a separate handout explaining program fees, expectations and other pertinent information.

Arrival and Dismissal of Students

All campuses:

Parents/guardians of preschool and pre-kindergarten students should enter and exit the school with their child. Preschoolers and pre-kindergarteners should be accompanied to their classrooms. Preschool teachers will dismiss the students to their parents/guardians. The teacher needs written notification if another person will be picking up the child after school.

St. Gabriel Campus:

Parents who drop off and pick up students by car should follow the cones in the parking lot. Traffic should flow by entering the “in” driveway off of Geiger Street and proceed around the “U” shaped markings and exit the “out” driveway. There is NO PARKING by the school building. Buses will line up on Geiger St. in front of the parish offices. Students may enter the school building after 7:30 a.m. They should go to the gym where supervision is provided until the bell rings.

St. Margaret Mary Campus:

Parents/guardians drop students in grades K – 5 at the gym entrance on Division Street. (DROP OFF ONLY - NO PARKING ON DIVISION ST.) Students are supervised in the gym beginning at 7:30 am. Make sure the school is on the passenger side of your car and have your children exit the car from the passenger side only. Do not drop your children on the south side of Division Street. If parents/guardians are going into school for more than a few minutes (or to accompany early childhood students) they should use the school parking lot or park on Washington Street.

St. Mary Campus

St. Mary Elementary School will begin supervising the arrival of students at 7:30 a.m. They should go to the gym where supervision is provided until the bell rings. **Parents dropping off their children by car should NOT park in the “school bus zone” during this time.** This area in front of the school is reserved for the school buses. Violators will be ticketed by the Menasha Police Department. At dismissal, students’ homeroom teachers will lead them out of the building. Parents may pick up their children in front of the school building by the statue.

Athletics, Activities and Programs

Basketball

Students in grade 5 play competitive basketball games with other schools in the area and may participate in tournament games beyond the regular season. All students on the team participate in each game. Good sportsmanship and skill development, rather than winning, is emphasized.

Soccer

Students in grades 3, 4 and 5 may participate in the SMCS soccer program in the fall. Students in grades 3 and 4 are placed on SMCS soccer teams to compete with local teams. Students in grade 5 join the 6th grade students from St. Mary Catholic Middle School to compete with local teams through the Neenah Soccer Club’s fall program.



Forensics

Students in grade 5 participate through school and system programs.

Band

Students in grades 4 and 5 may participate. A fee is charged for band beyond tuition fees. Band members are from all SMCS elementary schools.

Mass Servers

Available for students in grades 4 or 5

Scouting

Students in grades K – 5 may participate. This activity is dependent on parent volunteers.

Bicycles

Every family should keep a record of the serial number of their bikes. Students are asked to wear helmets whenever they ride their bikes. Students are encouraged to lock their bicycles while they are at school. The school assumes no responsibility for bicycles. Any student who ignores the safety and courtesy rules while riding a bike to and from school will have this privilege taken away. Students must walk bikes on school grounds.

St. Gabriel Campus: Bicycles are to be parked in the rack on the west parking lot.

St. Margaret Mary Campus: Bicycles are to be parked in the racks located on the side of the gym.

St. Mary Campus: Bicycles are to be parked in the rack located on the east side of the '52 building (kindergarten/preschool wing).

Birthday Treats

Students may bring a treat for their birthdays. The schools encourage nonedible treats (e.g. stickers, pencils, etc.). However, if bringing an edible treat, please consider the nutritional value of the snack and food allergies of other children in the classroom. All families are asked not to distribute birthday party invitations at school unless the entire class of all boys/all girls is included.

Book Care

The school furnishes all books. Children are expected to take good care of the books they use. A book bag/backpack is required for taking books home. Children are responsible for any damage done through carelessness or neglect.

Bus Service and Rider Conduct

Menasha:

Menasha Public School District has contracted with Lamers Bus Company to provide transportation service. The driver of the bus is responsible for the orderly conduct of his/her passengers. When on the bus, the student is under the authority of and directly responsible to the driver. If a student behaves inappropriately on the bus, the driver will notify the school and parent/guardian of the problem. Continued disorderly conduct may lead to a student being denied transportation by bus. All parents and children who will use the bus service are required to sign a transportation agreement. This agreement states the policies and regulations that the school district and Lamers expect of all individuals using this service. Violations of the rules/agreement may result in the loss of busing services for the student. Questions regarding busing should be directed to the school office or Lamers (832-8800).



Neenah:

Any student living within the City of Neenah and attending a school located within the City of Neenah will not be eligible for transportation. However, there are some instances where bussing is available. The Neenah Joint School District will contact families who are eligible for busing.

Change of Address

It is imperative that the parent/guardian keep the school office informed of any changes in address, phone numbers, email address or emergency information. To update your family profile online, visit the website at smcatholicschools.org and click on the “update my contact info” icon at the bottom of the screen on the left.

Field Trips

At various times throughout the year, teachers may choose to take students on a field trip to expand the curriculum beyond the school walls. The parent/guardian must sign a permission form and return it to the campus office. Information describing the field trip will be provided with the permission form. At times, parents are asked to chaperone. All chaperones must have completed VIRTUS-Protecting God’s Children training and be approved in all diocesan requirements for volunteers.

Legal Information

Alcohol/Drug/Smoking

The possession, sale or use of alcohol, drugs or any other controlled substance on the school campus is strictly forbidden. There is no smoking on school premises at any time during school hours or any school-related activity. Violations will be reported to appropriate law enforcement agencies.

Harassment/Sexual Harassment

It is the policy of the educational programs governed by the diocesan board of education to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from any form of harassment. No employee, volunteer or student associated with these programs shall be subject to harassment or sexual harassment. Any form of harassment on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age or disability constitutes discrimination and, as such, violates civil law and the policies of SMCS.

Immunizations

Immunization schedules are available at school and through the Neenah and Menasha Departments of Health. When children’s immunizations are current, they are better protected from childhood diseases and help prevent the spread of those diseases to others. Current information must be provided for each child.

Kindergarten Age

Children entering kindergarten are required to be five years old on or before September 1 of the school year in which they are enrolling.

Lockers/Desks

Desks and lockers are the property of the schools. The school reserves the right to search them. School authorities cannot be responsible for missing money, clothes, food or personal belongings. All belongings should be labeled.

Medications

Teachers are not permitted to administer any medicine. Children must report to the office to receive their medication. In order for the campus to dispense prescription medication to a student, the



parent/guardian must provide the school office with a Medication Consent Form. Medication must be brought to school in a bottle/container labeled by the pharmacist that indicates the proper dosage. Parents may send non-prescription medicine (i.e. aspirin, cough drops) for office personnel to disburse as long as a signed permission slip that contains dosage directions and timing of the medication is included with the medication. The medication must be in the original container. Until these steps are completed, it is illegal for the school to dispense any medication.

Non-custodial Parent

The school will release a child to either parent in absence of a court order. If there are any court orders related to a child custody or placement, the parents are responsible for supplying the school with the most current orders.

School Records

A student's official file is kept in the campus office. This file contains the student's reports cards, standardized testing results, attendance records and immunization. A parent/guardian wishing to review this file must provide a written request to see the file 24 hours before the desired time to review the file. In the absence of a court order, the school will provide the information to either parent. Each parent has the right to challenge the accuracy of his or her child's records and to deny release of these records.

Weapons/Firearms

The possession or use of firearms, weapons or other dangerous objects by employees, volunteers or students is not permitted in the school building or on parish/school grounds. A weapon is any device that may inflict harm on a person or animal. Any object that is used or used to threaten another in a manner that may inflict harm on a person or animal is considered a dangerous object. Weapon replications are not allowed. Police shall be notified if an employee, volunteer or student possesses or uses or threatens to use a firearm, weapon or other dangerous object in school or on parish property. Parents of students who bring firearms, weapons or dangerous objects to school or who use or threaten to use objects in a dangerous manner will be notified immediately.

Liturgy

All campuses: Students in grades K to 5 will attend Mass on a weekly basis. Parents are always welcome and encouraged to join the students at Mass. Changes to the Mass schedule will be announced in the weekly newsletter.

St. Gabriel Campus: Mass is on Thursday mornings.

St. Margaret Mary Campus: Mass is on Friday mornings.

St. Mary Campus: Mass is on Friday mornings.

Lost and Found

Lost and found articles are kept in a container in the school office. Students should check the container for lost articles. Please encourage your child/children to be responsible for their belongings. Make sure all items are labeled. Any unclaimed items that are usable are given to a worthy cause.

National School Lunch Program

SMCS Food Service participates in the national school lunch program. Healthy school meals provide the energy and nutrients children need for sound minds and bodies. Studies confirm what parents and teachers have said for years – children who are not well nourished have difficulty learning. The variety of healthy foods offered in school meal programs allows children to learn to enjoy many different foods and develop healthy eating patterns.



SMCS Food Service has a computerized debit system that allows families to pay in advance for meals. Each student has his/her own specific PIN number. The PIN number will stay the same throughout the remaining years your child is enrolled in SMCS. Specific details regarding payment coupons, milk money and payment options are available in your school office.

Parents are invited and encouraged to join their children for lunch at any time. If you wish to do so, please notify your school office in advance of the day you plan to have lunch at school. Whether you are purchasing a lunch or bringing a sack lunch from home, SMCS strongly discourages bringing “fast food” (McDonalds, Subway etc.) or soda into the cafeteria. SMCS Food Service also offers a sack lunch for field trip days. Check the appropriate box on the field trip permission slip to purchase a sack lunch.

All menus meet nutrition standards established by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, conform to good menu planning principles and feature a variety of healthy choices that are tasty, attractive, of excellent quality and are served at the proper temperature. A monthly menu is sent home as an attachment to your school newsletter, is posted in the school office and on the SMCS website (www.sm Catholicschools.org). Please keep in mind that the menus may be subject to change. Every effort will be made to notify you of any change in advance.

What makes a meal? The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2012 led the way for much needed changes in school meals. Through Offer vs. Serve United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) guidelines, school meals offer students the opportunity to create a meal from a variety of food groups.

The Food Groups include: Grains Meat Fruits Vegetables Milk

For lunch students may select three, four, or all five of the food groups to complete their meal. At least one of these choices must be from the fruit or vegetable group.

Application forms for free lunches are available to all families at any time during the school year. Parents are encouraged to take advantage of this offer if you feel you may be eligible.

Student Lunch - \$2.50

Adult Lunch - \$3.35

Super Lunch – additional \$1.00 A super is an extra main entrée. Families that receive free or reduced lunch will be charged the additional \$1.00 for a super if chosen.

Parent and School Communication and Phone Calls

Communication with the principal and teachers is encouraged. If it is necessary to contact a teacher during school hours, a message may be left in the office or through SMCS email. SMCS email addresses are the first name initial and last name @sm Catholicschools.org.

Only extremely important phone messages will be delivered to a student during school hours. Arrangements for picking up your child after school or after school activities should be made before they leave home. Cell phones are not allowed in classes.



Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled at various times throughout the school year. However, parents/guardians are encouraged to confer with the teacher at any time during the school year, and the child's teacher should be contacted directly to schedule an appointment when desired. Preschool parent/teacher conferences will not be held at the same time as other parent/teacher conferences. Each campus will provide this schedule.

Personal Electronic Devices (PEDs)

A personal electronic device (PED) is a device that emits an audible signal, vibrates, displays a message, or otherwise summons or delivers a communication to the possessor. The following devices are examples of PEDs: cellular and wireless telephones, pagers/beepers, smart-watches, personal digital assistants (PDAs), Smartphones, WiFi-enabled or broadband access devices, two-way radios or video broadcasting devices, tablets, laptops, and other devices that allow a person to record and/or transmit (on either a real-time or delayed basis) sound, video or still images, text, or other information.

Specific to elementary school students: Students may not bring PEDs to school without permission from a teacher, with the consent of an administrator, for an educational purpose. If a student brings a PED to school, it is to be left in the office during the day when not in use, and taken home at dismissal. During school hours, parent(s) wishing to contact students must call the school office. If a student fails to follow the guidelines for PEDs, it will result in confiscation of the PED, which can be picked up from administration after school by a parent/guardian. SMCS assumes no responsibility for theft, loss, damage or vandalism to PEDs brought onto its property, or the unauthorized use of such devices.

Publicity & Photo Permission

Registration in SMCS grants permission for photos, publicity & inclusion in a participant list unless the SMCS Advancement Office is notified in writing prior to September 1st of each school year. The Advancement Office can be contacted at 920-722-7796.

Registration, Admission and Withdrawal of Students

Registration

Registrations for the current school year are welcome at any time. Priority registration for the upcoming school year begins in January of the preceding year. Check the SMCS web site for online registration procedures.

Admission

SMCS does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race or natural origin in the enrollment and participation of students or the employment of personnel. Any child transferring from another school must present official certification of grade level. This is usually a transfer slip and a progress report from the former school. A record of immunizations is required before a child can be admitted.

Transferring to Another School

The parent/guardian of a child transferring to another school must:

- Notify the principal in advance



- Settle fees and other business

In addition, SMCS reserves the administrator's right to accept an individual child based on social or academic needs.

Religious Formation

To assist parents in their lifelong duty as the primary faith instructors of their children, the school provides instruction in the doctrine and beliefs of the Catholic faith at all grade levels. Students plan and participate in liturgies. Sacramental preparation is a parish responsibility and is coordinated with the parish religious education departments.

School Closings

If St. Mary Catholic Schools (SMCS) are closed or delayed, there will be a posting with local media stations. SMCS will be shown as a separate listing and if SMCS is listed, all five schools are included in the closing or delay.

Whenever there is a delayed beginning of school, all half-day morning kindergarten and morning preschool programs are automatically cancelled. All afternoon programs are held at the regular times. If school is cancelled at any point during the day, all after school events that are in any way connected to school are automatically cancelled.

The local television stations will provide school closing information. The following radio stations will also broadcast school closing information: WAPL (105.7 FM), WIXX (101.1FM), WROE (94.3 FM), WNAM (1280 AM), WOSH (1490 AM). If severe weather forces schools to close after children have arrived, the media outlets listed above will announce that information.

Parents are encouraged to enroll in a free text messaging system through Celly to receive SMCS notifications via text message. Check the SMCS website to learn how to subscribe to this service. School closings will also be posted through social media.

School Library

The library provides material to enrich and encourage interest in a variety of areas and monitors books to reflect Catholic philosophy. Reference materials are available. Books may be checked out if prior checked books have been returned. A fine may be charged for overdue books, and the child must pay for a lost or damaged book.

School Pictures

School pictures are taken. Parents/guardians have the option to purchase their child/ren's pictures. Please check the SMCS calendar for these dates.

School Policies

Complaint/Grievance Procedure

Any person who has a concern with a staff member must first discuss the issue with the person involved. If a resolution cannot be reached, the next step is to communicate with the principal/supervisor regarding the issue. If a resolution is not reached at this point, contact the SMCS president within five days of communicating with the supervisor. Each grievance to the SMCS president must be in writing. A copy of the grievance will be given to the party against whom the grievance is filed. The SMCS president will take action on the grievance within 10 days



of receipt of the written notice if possible. If the decision of the SMCS president is not satisfactory, the complaint should be forwarded in writing to the diocesan superintendent of schools for a final decision.

Illness/Injury

In case of illness or injury while at school, school personnel will render minimal first aid treatment only. In case of minor illness/injury, if a parent/guardian cannot be contacted, the school will contact the alternate emergency contact as indicated on the emergency information card completed at the beginning of the school year. If emergency medical treatment is necessary, the school will call 911 and contact the parent/guardian or emergency contact. For this reason, it is very important that the school have up-to-date emergency contact information. Expenses incurred from emergency treatment will be borne by the parent/guardian.

School Security

In an effort to maintain a safe environment, all entrances to the schools are locked during the day. All persons including volunteers coming into the school building are expected to check in at the office and sign the register. A badge should be worn while in the school and returned to the office when leaving. Visitors are to sign out when they have finished their business at school.

A parent/guardian bringing items such as forgotten books, lunches or picking up a child for early dismissal is to come to the office and drop off the items rather than disrupt the child's classroom. The items will be forwarded to the child.

Parents/guardians/visitors who would like to visit a classroom should make arrangements with the principal prior to the visit.

Snacks

Mid-morning and/or mid-afternoon snacks may be allowed, as directed by the child's teacher. Snacks should be healthy.

Student Assessment and Homework

The evaluation and communication of pupil progress is an essential element of the teaching/learning process. Parents, as the primary educators of the children, need to know the educational expectations of the school and how effectively their child is meeting those academic, behavioral and affective expectations.

Progress reports are distributed quarterly for core subjects. Progress reports are distributed at semester for specialists. Parents/guardians are to review their child/ren's progress report and sign and return the envelope to the school.

Grade level specific information will be shared during Parent Night, or parents/guardians may discuss specific questions with their child/ren's teachers.

Homework

Students can expect to receive homework assignments. Individual teacher's expectations will be communicated to parents/guardians.



The purpose of schoolwork is to reinforce the understanding of the class study. Any work that is not completed during provided study times in school must be taken home to be completed. Parents should encourage good study habits in their child at home. However, it is not the parent's responsibility to do or correct the work for them. Parents are asked to take an interest and look over the completed work to make sure students have accomplished the necessary assignments.

Students in grades 3 through 5 will be provided with an assignment notebook at the start of the school year. It will be used to communicate homework assignments. At times, parents are asked to sign these books.

Supervision

St. Mary Catholic Schools accepts the responsibility to supervise students from the first bell until dismissal bell, except for students who are involved in a school-sponsored activity or after school care program. Students need to leave school grounds as soon as they are dismissed.

Testing Program

Measurement of Academic Progress (MAP) is administered to elementary students in grades 1-5. Students in grades 2-5 complete tests in Reading, Language Usage, and Mathematics. First grade students participate in Primary MAP which includes Reading and Math. This assessment is tailored to an individual's current academic performance and shows growth over time. Data is used to assist teachers in individualizing their instruction, identify student strengths and areas of need and uses a Lexile number that identifies a student reading level.

The NCEA Information for Growth: Assessment of Children/Youth Religious Education (NCEA IFG: ACRE) will be administered to children in grade 5. This assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the religion curriculum in the schools.

Tuition, Tuition Assistance and Fundraising

Tuition Payment Policies

Tuition payments can be sent directly to the SMCS Business Office. Those who prefer to make monthly payments should call Shelley Wautlet in the SMCS Business Office to enroll in the monthly payment program. For families paying monthly, tuition is due in full by June 30. For more information, please call 967-0021 ext. 851 or email swautlet@smcatholicschools.org.

Tuition Assistance

Tuition assistance applications for the following school year will be available with registration in early January. Families must complete a tuition assistance application each year and return the completed application with a copy of their most recent tax forms and W-2s to the SMCS Business Office. All applications are strictly confidential.

Fundraising and Third Source Funding

SMCS provides opportunities for families to earn tuition credit, as well as fundraisers that benefit the individual schools and events that help SMCS meet its operational budget each year.

Tuition Credit Fundraising

A percentage of profits generated from Scrip, Market Day and the spring plant sale are allocated to family accounts for tuition credit



Jumbo Gumbo

This system-wide event is held in November at Waverly Beach. The funds generated will be applied to the SMCS operational budget.

Special Projects Fundraisers

The profit from these fundraisers will be used to complete special projects at the individual campuses.

Third Source Funding

SMCS currently participate in these third source funding opportunities:

Campbell Soup Labels for Education
Funding Factory (ink cartridges)
General Mills Box Tops for Education
Kids Caps & Cash (Golden Guernsey)
Kimberly-Clark Community Partners Program
Menasha Corp. Dollars for Doers
Target – Take Charge of Education
Theda Care Program

Uniform and Dress Code

It is always expected that one's clothing and personal appearance will be respectable and appropriate. Extremes in hairstyles, dress, jewelry, and accessories will not be permitted. Please refer to the St. Mary Catholic Schools Dress Code available online and at each campus.

Winter Clothing

Children in all grades go outdoors for morning and noon recess as weather permits. Children should dress appropriately for the weather.