

# 24-25

# St. Mary Catholic Schools

# Elementary Handbook

## St. Gabriel Elementary

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Phone: (920) 725-4161

Mrs. Jennifer Giombetti, Principal

## St. Margaret Mary Elementary

610 Division St, Neenah, WI 54956

Phone: (920) 729-4565

Mrs. Jackie Lutz, Principal

## St. Mary Elementary

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Phone: (920) 725-5351

Mrs. Crystal Blahnik, Principal

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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/Accreditation**

Preparing and inspiring students to lead meaningful lives, rooted in the teachings of Christ in our Catholic tradition. Cognia has accredited St. Mary Catholic Schools. In addition, the schools are in good standing with the National Catholic Educational Association.

### **Absences and Attendance**

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 8:15 a.m. as to the reason for the absence.

If the office does not receive notification by 8:15 a.m., the school administrative assistant will contact the parent/guardian to determine the reason for the absence. If the office is not able to reach a parent or emergency contact by 10:00 a.m., the police department may be called to do a welfare check on your child. This is a safeguard for your child and helps to prevent truancy.

### ***Illness***

If your child exhibits symptoms of illness, please keep your child at home. Children must be fever-free, without vomiting for 24 hours without medication 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 the school administrative assistant if your child has a contagious disease or condition, e.g. strep throat, Covid, influenza, chicken pox, lice, etc. Children who develop a fever of 100.3 degrees or higher during the school day will need to be picked up. Screen at home for the following symptoms prior to reporting to school:

- fever greater than 100.3 or chills
- sore throat
- Headache
- body aches
- fatigue
- runny nose
- nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
- a change to your ability to taste or smell
- cough and shortness of breath
- chest pain, bluish lips or face, or new-onset mental confusion

### ***Appointments***

Please try to schedule appointments outside of the school day. 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. If a child arrives late to school due to an appointment or returns to school after an appointment, parents must sign their child in at the school office.

### ***Vacations***

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. All assignments provided by the teacher must be completed. The teacher and parents will work out a reasonable timeline for completion of assignments.

### ***Attendance at School for Concerts and Other After-school Events***

To participate in concerts and other after-school events or performances, students must be in school the entire school day. Students who are too ill to attend classes are too ill to perform in after school events. Exceptions to this rule include serious illness or death in the immediate family, medical or dental appointments that cannot otherwise be avoided; and special situations for which prior approval has been obtained from the administration.

### ***Tardiness***

Students who arrive at school after 8:00 a.m. will be marked tardy.

### ***Arrival/Departure During the Day***

Any time a student leaves the school building during school hours, the parent/guardian must come into the office and sign the child out of the building and sign them back in upon their return. 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. Any student who arrives after 9:30 a.m. will be marked absent for the morning session. Any student who leaves school between 12:00 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. will be considered absent for the entire afternoon session.

### ***After School Care***

After School Care is available at each elementary campus on the days when school is in session. This program is available to families who would like additional childcare when the elementary school is dismissed until 5:30 p.m. This program is available to preschoolers at the discretion of the building administrator. Families enrolled in After School Care will receive a separate handout explaining program fees, expectations and other pertinent information.

### ***Animals in School***

Prior approval must be received from the principal before any animals are brought into the school. Animals in schools shall be planned and approved in accordance with established procedures.

SMCS recognizes that animals have educational value in the school setting, but only under conditions that insure the safety and well-being of the students, staff, and the animal. Live animals in the classroom provide opportunities to learn about diversity, habitat, humane care, animal growth and development, and behavior. A teacher must have a clear understanding of, and a strong commitment to, the responsible care of living animals before making any decision to use live animals for educational study.

When Comfort Animals or Guide Animals are in use, families will be notified ahead of time and students will be able to participate based on parent approval and student comfortability.

### **Arrival and Dismissal of Students**

#### ***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. Parking is available on the south side of the lot. Buses will line up on Geiger Street in front of the parish offices. Students may enter the school building after 7:15 a.m. where they will be supervised in the hallway near the office. After 7:30, students go to the gym where supervision is provided until the bell rings.

#### ***St. Margaret Mary Campus***

Arrival: St. Margaret Mary School will begin supervising the arrival of students at 7:15 a.m. in the gym. We have two arrival and dismissal spots. Families whose youngest child is in preschool, 4K or kindergarten will drop off and pick up all family members at the back-lot playground doors on Washington St. If your youngest student is in 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade you will drop off and pick up all family members at the gym doors on Division St. Do not drop your children on the south side of Division Street. If parents/guardians are going into school, they should use the school parking lot or park on Washington Street.

*Example:* If you have a kindergartener, 3<sup>rd</sup> grader and 5<sup>th</sup> grader they will all be dropped off and picked up at the back-lot. If you have a 1<sup>st</sup> grader, 3<sup>rd</sup> grader and 4<sup>th</sup> grader they will all be dropped off and picked up at the gym doors.

Dismissal: Families will be provided with a name card on orientation day. Please place it in the front window of your car to identify the family or car pool being picked up. Additional name cards will be available if you have multiple people picking up children. Make sure the school is on the passenger side of your car and have your children exit the car from the passenger side only.

#### **3K and 1/2 day 4K - 11:00 a.m. Dismissal:**

Dismissal will be 11:00 a.m. for 3K and half-day 4K students. Families will pull up to the gym doors on Division Street and teachers will direct students to their cars. Four cars will load at a time. Please pull all the way forward once all four cars have pulled away so the next group of students can load. Please stay in your cars and staff will walk your child to your car.

#### ***St. Mary Campus***

St. Mary Elementary School will begin supervising the arrival of students at 7:15 a.m. These students need to report to the hallway outside the main office. Students that arrive after 7:30 a.m. 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 Mary statue.

### **Athletics, Activities and Programs**

#### ***Band***

Students in grades 4 and 5 may participate. A fee of \$150 is charged for band beyond tuition fees along with instrument rental. Band members are from all SMCS elementary schools.

#### ***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. Students in grades 3-5 have the opportunity to join Zephyrs Basketball Club for tournament play.

#### ***Girl Scouts***

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

#### ***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 grade 6 students from St. Mary Catholic Middle School to compete with local teams through the Neenah Soccer Club’s fall program.

### **Behavior Expectations**

SMCS schools are nurturing communities focused on building a foundation of faith and care for others. We are committed to making our schools safe and caring places for all. We will treat each other with respect and we expect respect in return. It is the responsibility of all students, parents and school staff to work together to maintain a positive, safe, orderly and faith-filled atmosphere where learning is maximized.

The following four phrases are the keys to educate students on appropriate behavior in school and will guide conversations with students regarding school behavior and character development:

- Be respectful (includes being mindful of others, quiet in hallways, etc.)
- Be responsible (clean up your area, get ready for the day, stay organized, stay on task, etc.)
- Be kind (be compassionate, helpful, generous, etc.)
- Believe (in yourself, in each other, in your faith)

School staff will support students by having restorative conversations when students are struggling to meet behavioral expectations. More serious behaviors will be addressed with teachers, school administrators, and parents. School administrators will determine the appropriate consequence based on the age of the student and nature of the student’s actions, out-of-school suspension, and/or expulsion in accordance with SMCS policies and Green Bay Diocesan policies.

## **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, it is recommended to provide prepackaged or store-bought items. 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 large 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 instances where bussing is available to St. Gabriel, and 4K students are eligible for busing. The Neenah Joint School District will contact families who are eligible for busing.

## **Change of Address**

It is imperative that parents/guardians keep SMCS informed of any changes in address, phone numbers, email PowerSchool app, under the forms option.

## Dress Code

### Bottoms (Girls & Boys):

*Shorts, pants, skirts, dresses/jumpers must be ONLY solid Navy or Khaki in color.*

*Leggings should ONLY be solid white, khaki or navy.*

- Students may wear navy blue or khaki dress pants in solid color. Cargo pants are allowed. Dress pants may not be extremely baggy, loose or long. No sweatpants, athletic pants, or yoga pants are allowed.
- Solid Navy, khaki, or white leggings are allowed only if worn under skirts, skorts, or jumpers.
- Navy, khaki or white leggings are to be worn under skirts, skorts or jumpers in the months of October through April.
- Modesty/bicycle/cartwheel shorts must be worn under skirts or jumpers in August, September, May and June.
- Navy blue or khaki shorts and capris in solid color may be worn in August & September and May & June.
- Dress code shorts must be no shorter than 3” above the knee.
- Navy blue or khaki skorts, skirts, or jumpers must be no shorter than 3” above the knee.
- Navy blue and light blue solid-colored polo dresses must be no shorter than 3” above the knee.
- Solid navy and khaki dresses/jumpers must be worn with a collar (attached or on the shirt underneath the jumper/dress)
- Skorts should look like a skirt, with attached shorts underneath.
- Overalls (regardless of the fabric or color) are not part of the dress code.

Dress code items must adhere to the colors outlined above.

### Tops (Girls & Boys)

*Tops should only be solid navy blue, light blue or white.*

- Tops must be navy blue, white or light blue in solid colors only. No logo (except SMCS) is allowed. Sleeves may be long or short, sleeveless tops are not allowed. Collars must be of polo, oxford, or turtleneck style.
- Sweaters, vests, sweatshirts must be navy blue, white or light blue, in solid colors only. No logo (except SMCS) is allowed.
- Pullover sweater (crew-neck or v-neck are allowed).
- Cardigan sweater (buttoned, zipper-front, hooded sweaters are allowed).
- Dress shirt, turtleneck or blouse must be worn under a sweater, vest, or sweatshirt.
- Only solid navy, white or light blue crew-neck sweatshirts, plain or school sweatshirts with SMCS logo are allowed.



- All students may wear any SMCS & Zephyrs-approved hooded sweatshirt, crewneck sweatshirt, ¼ zip or full zip over their collared shirt. Apparel must be purchased directly from SMCS or an SMCS approved vendor.
- SMCS t-shirts may only be worn on Zephyr Spirit Days and Out of Uniform Days.

The first Friday of each month will be a Zephyr Spirit Day in the 24-25 school year. On these days students may wear Zephyr spirit items or school colors with comfortable bottoms (athletic bottoms, jeans, etc.). **SMCS sweatshirts and t-shirts should NOT be worn on Mass days.**

### **Footwear (Girls & Boys)**

- Shoes must be of tennis shoe or dress shoe style.
- Socks or tights must be navy blue, khaki, light blue or white in solid colors only with no logo.
- Socks or tights must be worn when wearing shoes (not sandals).
- Indoor boots without a heel are allowed during the school day.
- Sandals may be worn in May & June and August & September. Sandals must have a strap across the ankle. Flip-flops of any kind are not allowed. “Crocs” or similar style shoes are not allowed.
- An additional pair of tied or Velcro tennis shoes that are non-marking or light-bottomed need to be left at school at all times for physical education.

### **Miscellaneous (Girls & Boys)**

- No Make-up
- Extremes in jewelry, or accessories (hair decorations, belts, etc.) are not allowed.
- Only natural-grown nails are allowed (no artificial nails)
- Hair must be clean, neatly combed, out of the eyes, and of reasonable style and a natural shade.
- Clothing should fit well, with nothing being too tight or too loose.
- Hats and/or headgear (including hoods) are not to be worn in the school building during the school day.

### **Mass Day Dress Code (Girls & Boys)**

- Mass Days at SMCS should be treated as a special occasion.
- Students should wear their regular dress code.
- Hooded sweatshirts of any type may not be worn to Mass.
- Shirts must be tucked in.
- Out of Dress Code passes may NOT be used on Mass days.
- All jewelry must be modest and appropriate for the church setting.
- Because students may have a free dress day on their birthday, if the birthday falls on a mass day the student may change after Mass.

### **Spirit Days & Out-of-dress Code Days (Girls & Boys)**

The first Friday of each month will be a Zephyr Spirit Day in the 24-25 school year.

On these days students may wear Zephyr spirit items or school colors with comfortable bottoms (athletic bottoms, leggings, jeans, etc.).

On a student's birthday or half-birthday he/she may be out of dress code. If the birthday falls on a weekend, the student may choose the Friday before or Monday after. If the birthday falls on a Mass day, they may change after Mass.

When a student is out of uniform for an approved reason, he/she must dress modestly for a Catholic School setting. Messages on t-shirts and sweatshirts must be in alignment with our Catholic values. School administrator has the right to determine what is appropriate.

### **Extended Care**

Extended care is available at each elementary campus for preschool and 4K children on the days when school is in session (per the school calendar). Supervision will be provided when preschool and morning 4K are dismissed until 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Families enrolled in extended learning will receive a separate handout explaining program fees, expectations, and other pertinent information.

### **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 be safe environment compliant (Virtus trained, background check, and signed pastoral code of conduct) in order to volunteer. Please visit the [Volunteer Hub](#) on our website for details.

### **Food Service**

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 posted in the school office and on the SMCS website ([www.sm Catholicschools.org](http://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.

SMCS Food Service used PowerSchool to allow families check their balance and make a payment. All families participating in the school meal program need to set up a family account in PowerSchool. If you need help, please contact the SMCS Food Service department.

Whether you are purchasing a meal or bringing one from home, SMCS asks that you not bring "fast food" (McDonalds, 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.

### ***Breakfast***

Breakfast is provided each morning from 7:30-7:45 a.m.

### ***Lunch***

For lunch students may select from a variety of healthy meal options.

Super Lunch -A super is an extra main entrée. Any student regardless if they are a paid, free or reduced lunch will be charged the additional \$1.50 for a super if chosen. Parents please discuss this option with your students so you don't accumulate unwanted charges. If a student has a negative balance this option will not be available to them.

### ***Head Lice***

It is not uncommon for elementary school children to contract head lice. Please contact the school office immediately if your child has head lice. Your identity will remain confidential. Notification allows us to take the necessary precautions to prevent the further spread of the lice.

While we understand that having lice in one's home is a concerning thing, we also need to follow the CDC's recent recommendation that lice not be considered to be on the same level as a serious illness. They state that students should not be unnecessarily excluded from class for a condition that does not cause illness or physical harm. So while we will continue to monitor situations concerning lice as they occur in our school, our main goal and objective will be to return students to the classroom as quickly as possible after being identified as having lice.

### ***Recommendations by the CDC and the State of Wisconsin***

It is no longer recommended that students be excluded from school unnecessarily because of head lice. The likelihood of transmittal in a school setting is actually quite low. For this reason, we will generally follow the guidelines as described by the CDC and the Wisconsin DPI, with one exception. We will inform parents whose children have live head lice about the situation and ask that they take their child home early to be treated for the condition. Students with no evident live lice or with nits further than 1/4 inch from the scalp need not be sent home from school. Parents will, however, be notified by phone call or note of this finding so that they can discuss this situation with their caregiver or treat as they see fit. We will work with the family to monitor the situation.

### ***Returning to School***

Children who have been diagnosed with live head lice will be allowed to return to school on the day following proper treatment of the condition. Children who have not been treated, or who receive insufficient treatment may not return to the classroom until it can be shown to office personnel that there are no live lice or nits close to the scalp. As a general rule, and following the advice of the CDC and State of Wisconsin, entire classes will no longer be screened for head lice because a child in the classroom has been identified as having lice. Notification letters may be sent home to alert parents so that they may check their own children, if desired.

## **Homework & Assessment**

### ***Homework***

Students may 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.

If your child is absent, he or she will need to complete missing assignments. The teacher and parents will work out a reasonable timeline for completion of 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.

### ***Assessment***

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. Parents/guardians are to review their child/ren's progress report and sign and return the envelope to the school.

## **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 through the Winnebago County Health and Menasha City Health Department. 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.

### ***Early Education***

Children entering preschool and 4K are required to be three years old and four years old, respectively, on or before September 1 of the school year in which they are enrolling. Children must be fully potty trained prior to participating in preschool and 4K programs.

### ***Kindergarten***

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 medication. 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, the school will not 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 news update.

St. Gabriel Campus: Mass is on Wednesday mornings.

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

St. Mary Campus: Mass is on Tuesday mornings.

### **Lost and Found**

Lost and found articles are kept near the school office. Please encourage your child/children to be responsible for their belongings. **Please make sure all items are labeled**, especially inside jackets, gloves, etc. Any unclaimed items that are usable are given to a worthy cause.

### **Parent and School Communication and Phone Calls**

Communication with the building administrator 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 @smcatholicsschools.org.

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

### **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled twice a 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.

### **Personal Electronic Device (PED) and Smartphones**

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. *PEDs may NOT be carried during the day.* If a student needs to bring one to school, it must be turned off and kept in their backpacks during school hours. During school hours, parent(s) wishing to contact students must call the school office.

If a student fails to follow the guidelines for PEDs, the PED will be confiscated and kept in the school office until the end of the day and parents will be notified.

No expectation of confidentiality will exist in the use of PEDs on school premises/property. Administration reserves the right to check the content of confiscated PEDs. If the PED is password protected, the student must enter the password for administration and unlock it.

Students are personally and solely responsible for the care and security of their PEDs. 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 we are notified in writing. Find form at <https://smcatholicschools.org/resources/forms/>.

### **Registration, Admission and Withdrawal of Students**

#### ***Registration***

Registrations for the current school year are welcome at any time. Early registration begins in the fall of each school year. Check the SMCS website 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. In addition, SMCS reserves the administrator's right to accept an individual child based on social or academic needs.

#### ***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

### **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 and on Facebook. SMCS will be shown as a separate listing and if SMCS is listed, all five schools are included in the closing or delay. If Neenah or Menasha public schools are closed or delayed, SMCS will also be closed or delayed.

Whenever there is a delayed beginning of school, all afternoon programs are held at the regular times. If school is canceled at any point during the day, all after school events that are in any way connected to school are automatically canceled.

SMCS employs a notification system called Simple Texting. To receive notifications of unexpected events such as school closings or early dismissal due to weather, etc., please:

Enroll your smartphone/phone number by texting SMCS to (844) 947-5948. You will receive a confirmation text and a text indicating that when you want to opt out of this service you simply need to reply STOP. You may enroll multiple cell phone numbers using that same process (text SMCS to (844) 947-5948.)

The local television stations will also provide school closing information. Radio stations that are part of Midwest Communications Group will also broadcast school closing information: WIXX (101.1FM), WNCY (100.3) WTAQ (1360 AM and 97.5 FM). If severe weather forces schools to close after children have arrived, the media outlets listed above will announce that information.

## **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 and a school yearbook. 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 required 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. All volunteers must have a background check and complete Virtus training prior to volunteering.

### **Snacks**

Mid-morning and/or mid-afternoon snacks may be allowed, as directed by the child's teacher. Snacks should be healthy. Severe food allergies may require limitations on snack choices. Students are encouraged to bring a water bottle labeled with their name. Water bottles must only contain water.

### **Supervision**

SMCS 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**

For the 2024-25 school year, the Green Bay Diocese will use the Renaissance Star 360 as the assessment tool. More information will be shared as it becomes available. Data from standardized tests is used to assist teachers identifying student strengths and areas of need for individualizing instruction.

Elementary students in grades 3-5 will also take the Wisconsin Forward Exam each spring. This assessment measures academic growth from year to year in the areas of math, reading, science (grade 4 only), and social studies (grade 4 only).

## **Tuition, Tuition Assistance and Fundraising**

### ***Tuition Payment Policies***

Tuition plans are managed through Blackbaud Tuition Management Software at [school.smarttuition.com/Account/Login](http://school.smarttuition.com/Account/Login). For more information or questions, please contact Shelley Wautlet at 920-967-0021 ext. 851 or via email at [swautlet@smcatholicsschools.org](mailto:swautlet@smcatholicsschools.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. SMCS also participates in Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP), which is a state program that offers financially eligible students the possibility of attending SMCS at no charge. Applications for both tuition assistance and WPCP are strictly confidential. For more information or questions, please contact Shelley Wautlet at 920-967-0021 ext. 851 or via email at [swautlet@smcatholicsschools.org](mailto:swautlet@smcatholicsschools.org).

### ***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.

### ***Scrip***

SMCS offers this fundraising benefit, Scrip, to all SMCS families, allowing each family to earn tuition credit with no limit to the amount they can earn.

How it Works: You would purchase gift cards at face value to be used at your favorite retailers in place of cash/check. The retailers give a rebate to SMCS and 80% of those rebates go directly to our families as tuition credit. For example, when you buy a \$100 Kwik Trip card at 5%, the rebate to SMCS is \$5.00. SMCS gives you the \$100 Kwik Trip gift card and you will earn \$4 tuition credit. It's that easy! These credits can add up fast. Many families earn \$500+ each year.

### ***Special Projects Fundraisers***

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

## **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.

## **Volunteering**

We welcome parent, family, and community volunteers in our schools. All volunteers must be safe environment compliant (Virtus trained, background check, and signed pastoral code of conduct). Please visit the [Volunteer Hub](#) on our website for details.

### **Winter Clothing**

Children in all grades go outdoors for recess as weather permits. Students will go outside for recess if the temperature is above 0 degrees Fahrenheit with windchill. Children should dress appropriately for the weather. Students must have hats, gloves, boots, and snowpants to play in the snow. It will be up to the recess teacher's discretion, when students may take off their coats at recess.