



St. Mary Catholic Schools  
*Grades P3-12*

# **St. Mary Catholic Schools**

## **Middle School Handbook**

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**SMCS Mission**

Preparing and inspiring students to lead meaningful lives, rooted in the teachings of Christ in our Catholic tradition.

**Advisory**

The Advisor/Advisee Program at our middle school is a valuable guidance-based initiative that takes place several times a week. In this program, each teacher is assigned a small group of 13-17 students. The weekly schedule is structured to incorporate a range of activities and discussions centered around social and emotional lessons, which are provided by the Character Strong curriculum. The primary objective of this program is to cultivate positive relationships among students, fostering a sense of belonging and well-being. By engaging in these activities and discussions, students are encouraged to develop meaningful friendships and lead fulfilling lives within our school community. Through the Advisor/Advisee Program, we aim to empower our students with the necessary skills and support to navigate their middle school years successfully.

**After School Care**

The middle school does offer after school care from 3:15-5:15. Contact the school office for detailed information.

**Arrival and Dismissal**

Student supervision at our middle school is provided from 7:15 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. daily. School hours are from 7:50 a.m. to 3:15 p.m., with the official start time being marked at 7:50 a.m. It is important for students to arrive on time to avoid being marked tardy.



For the safety and well-being of our students, it is essential that they are never in the school building before or after the designated supervision hours, unless they are accompanied by a staff member or a coach. This policy ensures that students are properly supervised at all times and helps maintain a secure and organized learning environment.

### **Athletics/Extracurriculars**

A separate [Extracurricular Handbook](#) can be found on the SMCMS website.

### **Attendance**

It is the responsibility of the parents to make sure students attend school on time every day it is in session. *Wisconsin Statute 239 requires that parents/guardians provide a written excuse prior to a planned absence for personal or non-health-related reasons (such as a vacation). Every day or part of a day a student is absent for a planned absence counts as one (1) absence. The state law limits these parent written excuses to ten (10) per school year.*

Parents play a crucial role in ensuring regular attendance for their child at our middle school. We kindly request that parents provide a written excuse in advance for any planned absences, excluding those resulting from health issues or family emergencies.

To report a student's absence, parents should contact the school office by calling (920) 727-0279 or emailing [smcmsattendance@smcatholicsschools.org](mailto:smcmsattendance@smcatholicsschools.org) no later than 8:30 a.m. on the day of the absence. If the office does not receive a call or email by this time, a follow-up call will be made to verify the absence.

It is important to note that under Wisconsin State Statute 118.15, a student is considered habitually truant when they are absent for all or part of five days within a semester. In such cases, the school is required to refer habitually truant students to law enforcement.

Regular attendance is critical for academic success, and we appreciate your cooperation in promptly reporting your child's absences. By working together, we can ensure that our students receive the education and support they need to thrive.

### **Planned Vacations**

We strongly encourage parents to avoid planning vacations during school time to ensure consistent attendance and uninterrupted learning for their child. However, we understand that there may be exceptional circumstances where this is unavoidable. In such cases, the school office must be notified in writing at least 48 hours in advance of the planned absence.

To initiate the process, the student must pick up a pre-planned absence form from the office. These forms are readily available at the front desk. The student is responsible for obtaining the necessary signatures from all their teachers. Once all signatures are obtained, a copy of the form will be retained in the office for record-keeping purposes.



If the teachers provide homework ahead of time, we kindly request that parents make every effort to ensure that their child completes the assigned work during the vacation. Upon the student's return to school, they will be given adequate time to complete any missed assignments or coursework.

### **Early Dismissal and Tardiness:**

To minimize disruptions to the learning environment, we strongly encourage parents to schedule dental, medical, and other appointments outside of school hours whenever possible. However, if it becomes necessary for a student to check out during the day, the following procedures must be followed:

- 1) The student should bring a note to the school office or email [smcmsattendance@smcatholicsschools.org](mailto:smcmsattendance@smcatholicsschools.org) before the start of the first period, indicating the reason for the early dismissal.
- 2) Upon receiving the note or email, a SmartPass will be issued to the student, which will serve as their permission slip to leave class.
- 3) The student must present the SmartPass to the teacher at the designated time to leave the classroom.
- 4) Before leaving the school premises, the student must sign out at the office, ensuring that their departure is recorded.
- 5) Upon returning to school on the same day, the student must sign in at the office and receive a new SmartPass to present to their teacher upon returning to class.

### **Bicycles**

While the school assumes no responsibility for bicycles, we have made provisions to support students who choose to ride their bikes to school. We provide a designated rack where bicycles can be securely parked and locked.

To ensure the safety of our students, we strongly recommend that they wear helmets while riding their bicycles. Wearing a helmet is an important precautionary measure that significantly reduces the risk of head injuries in case of an accident.

Please note that it is the responsibility of the student and their parents/guardians to properly secure and maintain their bicycle while on school grounds. The school cannot be held liable for any damages or loss that may occur to bicycles left on the premises.

### **Birthday Celebrations**

Celebrating birthdays is important to us at middle school. We want to make every child feel special on their birthday. However, we do not bring in birthday treats due to the number of



students and the various food allergies that some students have. Instead, students will receive an out-of-dress-code pass to use at their discretion for their birthday.

### **Bus Routes and Operating Policies**

Lamers and Kobussen bus companies plan bus routes and stops.

Private school students who live within the Neenah district boundaries and reside 2 or more miles from the nearest school they are designated to attend are eligible for a bus ride

Please contact your school directly to obtain a transportation form. This form will be submitted by your school to Kobussen for review of eligibility

Private school bus forms must be submitted by July 1st to have a ride on the first day of school

### **Bus Conduct**

The bus companies have established the following rules in order to ensure the safety of all that ride buses:

- Use only the assigned bus and bus stop.
- Orderly behavior is required at the bus stop.
- Remain seated, facing front, when the bus is in motion.
- Talk quietly, make no unnecessary noise.
- Obey the driver's directions.
- Keep head, arms, and all objects inside the bus.
- Do not litter the inside of the bus or throw anything out the window.
- Those waiting for buses after school may not leave the designated waiting area.
- Students are not allowed to bring friends home on the bus without a note from the parent and signed by administrative staff.

Those who do not abide by these rules may be denied the privilege of riding the bus.

### **Change of Address / Telephone**

It is very important that an up-to-date address and telephone number are kept at the school office. Parents are responsible for updating their contact information through PowerSchool.

### **Cheating**

SMCMS upholds the core values of honesty and trust, and students should be honest in all interactions. This includes honesty with their schoolwork, writing projects as well as assessments. Cheating will not be tolerated and will result in a zero for all work, tests, etc. connected with the occurrence. A student who knowingly allows another to cheat will receive the



same consequences. Parent's will be notified when a student receives a zero for cheating. This includes plagiarism; a student hands in class work that is not his/her own, that student has plagiarized. At SMCMS, the penalty for plagiarism is a zero on the test, quiz, assignment, worksheet or research project.

**Artificial intelligence:** The use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) programs for class is not allowed.

- Embedded artificial intelligence elements in other educational technologies are allowed with prior parent permission and with system approval for the safety of student information.
- Verbal review:
  - Any assignment created with (or supposedly without) the use of AI programs is subject to a verbal review with the teacher. Be prepared to explain and discuss the content of your work, without the contributions or assistance of AI. If you cannot adequately represent your work, it will be assumed AI was utilized as a replacement for your learning, and the consequences will be subject to the teacher's discretion.
- Academic Integrity/Responsible:
  - Using artificial intelligence without permission will result in but not limited to a chance to redo the full assignment in the presence of a teacher or administrator with the result being a reduced grade no higher than a C.

## Communication

To ensure effective communication between the school, students, and parents, we provide a variety of resources accessible through our website, [www.sm catholic schools.org](http://www.sm catholic schools.org). Important information such as newsletters, forms, and other relevant updates can be found on the website.

A bi-weekly update, containing items of interest to both students and parents, is posted on the SMCMS website.

We kindly request that parents make every effort to communicate with their students before school, minimizing the need for phone calls during the school day. To maintain a focused learning environment, texting students during school hours is not permitted. **Students are required to keep their phones turned off and stored in their lockers throughout the day.** However, we understand the need for urgent messages, and we can deliver them to students before 3:10 p.m. Students are allowed to check their phones at the end of the day, at 3:15 p.m., for messages regarding the end of the day.

By utilizing our website resources and adhering to these communication guidelines, we can foster effective and efficient communication between the school, students, and parents while ensuring an uninterrupted learning environment for all students.

## Emergency Closings and Delays

Living in Wisconsin, it is inevitable that we sometimes experience delays or cancellations due to weather. Sometimes weather conditions change quickly, and our decisions are made accordingly. If either the Neenah or Menasha public school district is delayed or closed due to weather, SMCS follows suit.

### **Text Message Notifications**

As soon as a delay or cancellation is determined, the information is posted on the [SMCS Facebook page](#) or on the homepage of the SMCS website, and local TV and radio stations are alerted. It is also sent directly to the phones of people who have signed up for our emergency notification system as a text message.

### **How to Sign Up for the SMCS Emergency Alert System**

You may subscribe, at no cost, to the SMCS emergency alert system. To enroll your phone number, please text 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).

We do our best to immediately notify SMCS families and staff members when cancellations or delays are determined, but please understand that we do not have control over how quickly a TV or radio station gets the information worked into their own notification systems.

You can prevent being unpleasantly surprised by a change in schedule by doing the following:

- Be aware of potential weather conditions that may impact the next day's SMCS schedule, such as an expected sustained wind chill factor of approximately -35 degrees, icy conditions, or significant snowfall.
- Sign up for the SMCS emergency notification system.
- Check the [SMCS Facebook page](#).
- Check with another SMCS parent or employee.
- Check on multiple radio or TV stations if you don't see/hear it on the first one; if we are not listed, check to see if anything is listed for Neenah or Menasha schools.

### **SMCS contacts the following television & radio stations to help share notifications:**

- Television: WBAY, WFRV, WLUK, WGBA
- Radio: WIXX (101.1 FM), WNCY (100.3 FM), all other area Midwest Communications affiliates

If you cannot find anything posted for SMCS, Neenah or Menasha schools, SMCS is operating on a normal schedule.

### **Important Notes**



While inconvenient for all of us, being unprepared for a delay or cancellation can be of great concern for families with younger children. If you have a child in elementary school, please be extra vigilant about keeping yourself informed, and be aware of the following:

- A school delay or cancellation is a delay or cancellation for everyone, not just students. Please do not assume that the school building will be open or that there will be an employee present at the school building to supervise your child before the designated start time.
- A delay is a delay in the start of the school day. Even if a school normally provides before-school care, it will not be available on days with an unplanned late start. All students should arrive at the designated time.
- If your child rides a bus to school, please be especially mindful of potential delays on days when either Neenah or Menasha has a late start, and the other does not. Although we do contact the bus companies that serve SMCS families in the event of delay or cancellation, the message that SMCS students should not be picked up does not always make it through to the drivers.

### **Computer Program/Internet Security**

St. Mary Catholic Middle School has implemented a one-to-one computer program. A student must sign a copy of the school's Student/parent Handbook Acknowledgement & Acceptable Use Policy. Through the one-to-one computer program, every SMCMS student is issued a digital device. These computers are property of SMCS, and a nominal user fee is charged to each student for this service. Each SMCMS student is assigned a computer that he or she uses every day for class work, group projects, and homework. Be sure your child understands that their computer is school property. All school computers must be in the provided case and all school labels remain on computers and chargers.

**Internet security** is an area of strong concern for parents and school administrators alike. The technology in the middle school is regulated by a strong filtering program and teacher-controlled monitoring features. Strict expectations are enforced, and teachers can see, on their own screens, what individual students are viewing, as well as the capability to turn off anything inappropriate. This ability to simply "click out" a student from a site unrelated to the class allows an instructor to carry on without taking the time to reprimand or single anyone out. It is the responsibility of all parents to monitor their child's computer activity after 3:30 pm.

### **Conferences**

At our middle school, student/parent/teacher conferences are held once each semester, offering a valuable opportunity to proactively address each student's academic performance. These conferences are scheduled twice a year, allowing parents, students, and teachers to come together and discuss the student's progress.

The primary purpose of these conferences is to foster open communication and collaboration among all stakeholders involved in a student's education. They provide a platform to discuss

academic achievements, areas for improvement, and set goals for the future. By engaging in these conferences, we aim to ensure that students receive the support and guidance they need to succeed academically.

We understand that there may be instances when a student, parent, or teacher feels the need for additional conferences throughout the year to address specific concerns or progress updates. In such cases, individual conferences can be arranged as needed. These additional conferences enable us to maintain a proactive approach to each student's academic journey.

We highly value the involvement of parents in their child's education, and we encourage open communication and active participation in student/parent/teacher conferences. By working together, we can provide the necessary support and resources to help every student reach their full potential.

### **Counseling Program**

A certified counselor oversees the counseling program at St. Mary Catholic Middle School. The counselor serves as director of the Advisor/Advisee Program and is available to all students and parents on an individual and/or small group basis. Parents are encouraged to contact the counselor with student concerns.

### **Calendar for the School Year**

A [SMCS calendar for the school year](#) can be found on the website. You can also find a specific middle school calendar on the website.

### **Classroom Student Behavior**

St. Mary Catholic strives to build a community of learning excellence. To build a community of learning excellence, SMCMS has expectations for student behavior, which are as follows:

- Respecting others as they are made in the image and likeness of God and created with the fundamental rights that flow from the dignity intrinsic of the person. (CCC 1944) This means respecting the dignity of each person and their right to learn and to feel safe in our school.
- Understanding the role of students in the classroom and allowing those trusted with their care to teach and direct students toward their common good. This includes promoting human dignity, developing intellectually, spiritually, and emotionally, and maintaining peace within the school. (CCC 1925)
- Applying the virtues of temperance and justice, as well as the practice of solidarity towards the property of SMCS and others. (CCC 2407) This means respecting the rights of the school property, resources, tradition, and good reputation, as well as the property of others.

As active and engaged members of the St. Mary Catholic Middle School community, we are all expected to act in conjunction with the core Catholic teaching taken from Genesis that we are made in the "image and likeness of God." Actions, both inside and outside the classroom,



should reflect that truth and should support the Catechism of the Catholic Church's teaching that we are all born with a certain dignity. The dignity of the human person will guide our actions in order to move all those we come into contact with towards the common good. Our actions should be a result of the voice of God which urges us to do what is good and avoid what is evil. (CCC 1706) Acting in this way is morally good, which requires that both the intention and the way the action is carried out are good. (CCC 1760)

### **Classroom Misbehavior/Violations**

Teachers and students have a right and a responsibility to create and maintain a classroom environment that supports and enhances student learning and the dignity of the human person. At the beginning of each year, classroom expectations will be communicated clearly by the teacher and will be shared with all students.

### **Hazing/Harassment**

Hazing and harassment at any age can be extremely harmful and are particularly troubling at the middle school level because the developmental stages of adolescence create a situation in which students are more vulnerable to peer pressure. St. Mary Catholic takes these issues very seriously.

### **Serious Disciplinary Action**

The administration deals decisively with violations that seriously affect the safety and/or good order of SMCMS. Actions that warrant consequences such as in-school or out-of-school suspension or expulsion\* may include, but are not limited to:

- Possessing a dangerous weapon on campus or at a school-sponsored activity.
- Talking about weapons and making threats with words or actions. This includes social media posts about threats against school or staff and students.
- Belonging to a gang or engaging in criminal, gang-like activity.
- Having serious criminal charges reported to the school by authorities, engaging in any act that is grounds for arrest or citation in the criminal or juvenile court system.
- Engaging in serious insubordination, or verbal or physical abuse of a faculty/staff member or any adult on the school premises.
- Using, selling, or possessing chemicals, drugs, tobacco, alcohol, steroids, or chemical paraphernalia on campus or at a school-sponsored activity.
- Physically assaulting another student.
- Excessively inappropriate or offensive conduct such as assaulting staff or students, or gross insubordination (talking back or refusing to cooperate with authorities).
- Stealing or vandalism of school or others' property.
- Serious hazing or harassment, including sexual harassment, of anyone (this includes group conduct and internet bullying or sexting).
- Representing oneself or others unlawfully or inappropriately on the internet (on blog sites, instant messaging, on-line profiles and/or social networking sites, etc.).
- Igniting fused or incendiary devices (fireworks, stink bombs, etc.).
- Engaging in misconduct (during or outside the school day) that is seriously detrimental to the reputation of SMCS.



- Engaging in any situation or problem not specifically covered herein that may be viewed by the administration as seriously threatening.

**In all cases where expulsion is being considered, the SMCS/SMCMS policies and the Green Bay Diocesan policies must be followed before expulsion is finalized. In very serious situations this process may jump right to number three.**

**The process is as follows:**

#### *First Violation*

The administration meets with the student. After investigation, the parent(s) will be asked to attend a conference with the student and administration at which consequences and plans to prevent a repeat violation will be determined. If the violation is serious enough, a suspension or expulsion may occur at this level. \*

#### *Second Violation*

The administration meets with the student. After investigation, the parent(s) will be asked to attend a conference with the student and administration, at which a consequence of a one- to three-day suspension (in-school or out-of-school) may be imposed. The student will be required to submit a written plan as to how behaviors will be rectified in the future. If the violation is serious enough, expulsion may occur at this level. \*

#### *Third Violation*

The administration meets with the student. After investigation, the parent(s) will be asked to attend a conference with the student and administration, at which extended suspension of no more than five days, expulsion or dismissal may be imposed. \* \*Parent(s) are involved in this process.

### **Social Media**

As representatives of St. Mary Catholic Middle School, it is essential for our students to exercise responsible behavior when participating on social networking websites. Please keep the following recommendations in mind:

1. Awareness of Online Presence: Students must understand that anything posted online is accessible to anyone worldwide. Once something is posted, it becomes the property of the site(s) and is beyond your control, even if you limit access to your page.
2. Mindful Posting: Students should refrain from sharing information, photos, or any content that could embarrass themselves, their families, or St. Mary Catholic Middle School. This also includes being cautious about content posted by others on their page.
3. Personal Information Protection: Students must never disclose personal details such as home addresses, phone numbers, birth dates, or other sensitive information online. Sharing such information can make them targets for online predators.



4. Parental Monitoring: The school administration expects that each student's online activity is monitored by a parent or guardian. The administration will not actively seek out social media violations, but if brought to their attention, they will investigate accordingly.
  5. Consequences for Inappropriate Behavior: Inappropriate or tasteless content will be addressed by involving the parents of the parties involved, with the expectation that the issue will be resolved promptly.
  6. Serious Offenses: Engaging in malicious activities on social networks, such as making threats, sharing incriminating photos or statements related to hazing, sexual harassment, vandalism, stalking, underage drinking, illegal drug use, or other prohibited behaviors, will result in disciplinary action by the administration. In severe cases, a report may be made to law enforcement.
  7. School-Related Content: Inappropriate photos or comments directly linked to SMCMS will be treated as school issues and subjected to appropriate consequences, as if the behavior occurred on school grounds.
  8. Legal Matters: Any actions that appear to involve illegal activities will be reported to the appropriate legal authorities.
- By adhering to these guidelines, our students can maintain a positive online presence and uphold the values and reputation of St. Mary Catholic Middle School.

**Dress Code: Posted on the website**

**Middle School Dress Code 2024-25**

St. Mary Catholic Middle School reserves the right to determine a norm of appearance for students. Preparing for school in an intentional way can lead to a frame of mind that is different from casual life. Appropriate dress reflects the virtues of modesty and self-respect and is essential to maintaining a positive atmosphere for learning.

**Academic Dress Code**

**Dress Code Bottoms**

- Solid colored or patterned dress pants with a finished/hemmed bottom. Athletic pants with elastic bottoms (athletic jogger) are not allowed.
- Pants must be cotton or cotton/poly non-denim fabric. Colored jeans, including black, are not allowed.
- Pants may not be torn or tattered and must fit appropriately — not be too baggy or too tight. Spandex / elastic /tight fitting leggings, jeggings, exercise pants, etc. are not allowed.
- Dress/cargo/khaki shorts of appropriate length (no shorter than fingertips when the arms are fully extended down the leg) or cropped may be worn during August, September, May, and June.
- Skirts and dresses of appropriate length (no shorter than the fingertips when the arms are fully extended down the leg) are allowed on liturgy days as well as during August, September, May, and June.



### **Dress Code Shirts**

- SMCS/Zephyrs approved hooded sweatshirt, crewneck sweatshirt, ¼ zip or full zip, and T-Shirts from the Spirit Stop may be worn.
- Non SMCS/Zephyrs approved collared shirts must be polo shirts or Oxford-style button down shirts with long or short sleeves.
- Shirts and sweaters with a modest neckline must be full length with no skin showing at the waist when arms are raised above the head.
- Shirts with buttons must be buttoned.

### **Footwear**

- Footwear must be always worn.
- During the months of September, May, and June students may wear sandals.
- Crocs may not be worn on liturgy days.
- For safety reasons, heels must be modest in height (approx. < 2 in.).
- Flip flops, moccasins, athletic slides, and slippers are not allowed.
- Separate non-marking athletic shoes worn ONLY INDOORS are required for physical education class.

### **Jewelry/Makeup**

- One non-gauged earlobe stud per ear is allowed.
- Extremes in jewelry and makeup are not allowed.
- Clear fingernail polish only

### **Hair/ Facial hair**

- Hair must be clean, neatly combed, out of the eyes, and of reasonable style and a natural shade.
- Mohawks, intricate cut lines, or undercuts are not allowed.
- Extremes in hair styles and accessories are not allowed.
- Boys must be clean shaven.

### **Liturgy Days**

Preparing for liturgy both internally and externally in an intentional way can lead to a frame of mind that is different from normal academic life.

### **Females**

- Skirts or dresses of an appropriate length and modest style. Skirts and dresses must be longer than the student's fingertips when arms are fully extended down the leg.
- Dress pants, navy, black, khaki, or gray. (Black jeans are not dress pants)
- Collared blouses, button down dress shirt, or sweaters with a neckline that is modest and appropriate for the school / church environment, are required.
- Crocs are not allowed on liturgy days

### **Males**



- Dress pants, navy, black, khaki, or gray, with belt loops, zipper, and button closure. (Black jeans are not dress pants)
- Button-down dress shirt with a collar and an appropriate tie. The tie must be tied and worn at the traditional collar level, and shirttails must be tucked in.
- Sweaters or solid colored, non-logo fleece may be worn over the dress shirt and tie.
- Crocs are not allowed on liturgy days.

### **Relaxed Dress Days**

- Jeans, sweatpants, leggings, and shorts may be worn. Shorts of any type must be no shorter than the student's fingertips when arms are fully extended down the leg.
- Shirts and any outerwear must be modest and appropriate with inappropriate language or advertising, including clothing that promotes musicians, music groups, alcohol, video games, social media influencers or apps, drugs, inappropriate messages, or sexual references are not allowed at any time.

### **Clothing Never Allowed**

- Visible tattoos, body art/writing never allowed.
- Hoods/ hats inside the building.
- Clothing that is not in agreement with Catholic teachings are not permitted at school or any school-sponsored event.
- Clothing displaying alcohol, drugs, inappropriate messages, or sexual references.
- Tattered, torn or frayed clothing.
- Tank tops or shirts without sleeves.
- Any other non-SMCS school (K-12) logo wear.
- Winter jackets.
- Visible undergarments.
- Pants below the waistline.
- Crop tops.

All students' attire must comply with the dress code. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure students are dressed according to this dress code before leaving for school. Parents will be notified regarding non-compliance to the dress code and asked to bring a change of clothes to school or they can request their student to wear clothing provided by SMCMS. Individual restrictions may be placed on students who do not comply with the dress code. SMCMS Administration reserves the right to make final interpretations or changes in the dress code above.

The administrator will make the final interpretation on all dress code questions.

### **Emergency**

At St. Mary Catholic Middle School (SMCMS), the safety and well-being of our students and faculty are of utmost importance. We take all threats to their safety, including fire, tornadoes, bomb threats, hazardous spills, and other emergencies, very seriously. To ensure preparedness, the following procedures are in place:



1. **Monthly Drills:** Regular drills are conducted to familiarize students and faculty with emergency protocols. These drills include fire drills, tornado drills, and other relevant emergency scenarios.
2. **Fire Drill Procedures:** Inside each classroom, escape plans are posted near the door, indicating the safest route for evacuation. During fire drills, students are expected to follow these escape plans and move to designated areas in a safe, silent, and orderly manner. Maintaining silence throughout the emergency or drill is essential for effective communication and swift action.
3. **Tornado Drill Procedures:** In the event of a tornado warning, each classroom has a designated area within the building where students should seek shelter. Students must proceed to these designated areas calmly and quietly, following the instructions of their teachers or designated staff members.
4. **Safety and Order:** It is crucial that students adhere to the directions provided by staff members during emergency drills. Following these instructions ensures the safety and well-being of everyone involved. Students should maintain silence throughout the drill to enable clear communication and facilitate an organized response.

At SMCMS, we prioritize proactive measures to ensure the safety of our students and faculty. To achieve this, we have implemented the "I Love You Guys" Standard Response Protocol (SRP). By conducting regular drills and instilling proper emergency procedures, we aim to create a secure learning environment.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips provide valuable educational experiences for our students. To ensure the safety and organization of these trips, we have the following guidelines in place:

1. **Permission Slips:** Parents are required to sign a permission slip for each scheduled field trip. All permission slips can be found in the forms of your PowerSchool account. Only the official permission slip issued by the school will be accepted for participation. This helps us keep accurate records and ensure that students have parental consent to participate in off-campus activities.
2. **Transportation:** Students are expected to ride to and from school field trips using the transportation provided by SMCMS. This allows for proper supervision and ensures that all students are accounted for during transit.
3. **Conduct Expectations:** Students are representatives of themselves, their class, school, family, and community during field trips. Therefore, they are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects positively on these entities. Respect for others, following instructions from chaperones, and demonstrating good behavior are important during these outings.
4. **Participation Requirements:** Students may be ineligible to participate in field trips for reasons such as class suspension, chronic misbehavior, or lack of academic progress (e.g., missing assignments or permission slips). In such cases, these students are expected to attend school as usual and will be supervised by staff members.

### **Food Service**

All menus meet nutrition standards established by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Conform 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 uses PowerSchool to allow families to 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.

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.

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, and milk.

## Fundraising

St. Mary Catholic Schools relies on the generosity of supporting parishes, alumni, benefactors, and the community to offer excellence in Catholic education. These events build lasting relationships while helping St. Mary Catholic Schools achieve its mission.

**RaiseRight** gift cards (Formerly known as Scrip) – This easy and convenient program puts tuition credit directly in the pockets of SMCS families. Participants can buy full value gift cards for a wide variety of merchants through the RaiseRight app or in person. A percentage discount (from 2%-20%) of the value is applied to the tuition bill of the family.

**Annual Fund** – this annual campaign invites benefactors, alumni, and members of the community to contribute directly toward the operating budget for St. Mary Catholic Schools

**All Aboard** – this all-system fundraiser takes place in the Fall and benefits the operating budget and special projects for our schools.

**ZephyrFest** is the premier fundraising gala in Northeast Wisconsin, and the single largest fundraiser for St. Mary Catholic Schools.

**Zephyrs Connect** – all Extracurricular programs, including athletics, Fine Arts, and STEM. Each of these areas has their own specific fundraising events as well:

- **Greater Zephyrs Open** – supports Athletics
- **Z-Cabaret** – supports Fine Arts programming
- **STEM Saturday** – supports STEM offerings

**Zephyrs Gold Raffle:** Tickets are available to sell in February and March. Eight tickets (at \$25 each) are designated to each family, with the corresponding \$200 total placed on the tuition bill. Families have the option to sell the tickets to offset the \$200 charge, or they may complete them with their own names to be entered into the Zephyrs Gold Raffle drawing.

### Grading Scale

A+	98 - 100		
A	94 - 97	C	74 - 77
A-	91 - 93	C-	71 - 73
B+	88 - 90	D+	69 - 70
B	84 - 87	D	67 - 68
B-	81 - 83	D-	65 - 66
C+	78 - 80	F	Below 65
		I	Incomplete

### Homework

Homework is an extension of the learning that takes place in school. It provides practice and drills that reinforce classroom learning and provides opportunities for independent study, research, and creative thinking. The suggested maximum time for schoolwork at home is between 30 and 90 minutes. Students are expected to complete and return homework on time.

### Honor Roll

The SMCMS Honor Roll is a prestigious recognition for academic achievement. It serves as a reflection of a student's hard work, dedication, and commitment to excellence. Here are the details regarding the Honor Roll:

1. Criteria for Honor Roll: The Honor Roll is determined based on the total grade point average (GPA) of all assignments and tests throughout the preceding quarter. It is calculated by considering the cumulative performance of the student.
2. Recognition Levels: The Honor Roll is posted four times a year. Students are recognized at three levels based on their GPA:
  - Highest Honors: Students with a GPA ranging from 3.75 to 4.0
  - High Honors: Students with a GPA ranging from 3.5 to 3.74
  - Honors: Students with a GPA ranging from 3.0 to 3.49
3. Disqualification: It is important to note that receiving an "F" grade in any subject disqualifies a student from being on an Honor Roll for that quarter.

We commend and celebrate the academic achievements of our students who consistently demonstrate excellence. The SMCMS Honor Roll not only recognizes their hard work but also encourages a culture of academic excellence among our student body.

### Illness or Injury



A student who becomes ill at school should inform the teacher and receive permission to report to the office. The student's condition will be assessed, and proper action taken. In case of an injury, school personnel will render first aid treatment only. If other treatment is deemed necessary, a parent will be contacted. If parents or other contacts are not available in an emergency, the student will be transported to the emergency room at Theda Clark Hospital (by ambulance, if deemed necessary, or by car).

### **Immunizations**

State law requires that students have evidence on file of an up-to-date vaccination program.

### **Library**

The library is open on a regularly scheduled basis and is supervised by the librarian, volunteer, or teacher. Students may check out up to three books for a period of two weeks each. Books are always due on a Friday. Fines will be assessed for overdue books. Full payment must be made for lost or damaged books.

### **Lice Protocol**

It is not uncommon for elementary/middle 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 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  $\frac{1}{4}$  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.

### **Liturgy/Prayer Services**

As liturgy and prayer are central to our faith, our students and faculty participate in liturgies and/or prayer services. Family members are invited and encouraged to participate in the scheduled liturgy/prayer service with the students. **Liturgy days are dress-up days for all.** Dress code passes may not be used. SMCS or any other sweatshirts are not allowed on these days. Please see the dress code for specifics.

### **Lockers**

A locker is issued to each student at the beginning of the school year. Students may not change lockers. Locks are available in the office. Only school-issued locks may be used. The locker is not a student's private property and may be opened by school authorities if there is reason to believe that the locker contains prohibited items. The school is NOT responsible for valuables left in lockers. Under limited circumstances and with special permission, leaving cash or valuables in the office may be possible. Students will be charged for lost or damaged locks and/or damaged lockers.

### **Personal Electronic Device (PED) and Smartphones/ Smart watches**

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.

Students may bring PEDs to school, however **PEDs may NOT be carried during the day** and must **be turned off** and kept in their lockers 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 consequences are as follows:

1<sup>st</sup> offense – confiscation of the PED, which can be picked up from administration after school.

2<sup>nd</sup> offense – confiscation of the PED, which can be picked up from administration after school; parents will be notified. Students will then need to keep their PED in the school office daily.



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. If the PED was used to cheat or if inappropriate material is found on it, consequences may be imposed.

PEDs, including but not limited to those with cameras, may not be possessed, activated, or utilized at any time in any school situation where a reasonable expectation of personal privacy exists. These locations and circumstances include but are not limited to locker rooms, shower facilities, restrooms, or any other areas where students or others may change clothes or be in any stage or degree of disrobing or changing clothes. The principal has authority to make determinations as to other specific locations and situations where possession of a PED is absolutely prohibited. Violation of this rule may involve the police.

Students are prohibited from using PEDs to capture, record, or transmit the words (i.e. audio) and/or images (i.e. pictures/video) of any student, staff member, or other person during the school day, without express prior notice and explicit consent for the capture, recording, or transmission of such words or images. Using a PED to take or transmit audio and/or pictures/video of an individual without his/her consent is considered an invasion of privacy and is not permitted, unless authorized by administration.

Students are prohibited from using a PED in any way that might reasonably create in the mind of another person an impression of being threatened, humiliated, harassed, embarrassed, or intimidated.

Students are prohibited from using a PED to capture and/or transmit test information or any other information in a manner constituting fraud, theft, cheating, or academic dishonesty. Likewise, students are prohibited from using their PEDs to receive such information.

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.

### **Lost and Found**

Clothing, money, jewelry, or other articles that are found are to be given to the office staff.

### **Make-up Work**

Assignments will be posted online. Parents may pick up a student's books from his/her locker when that student is absent from school for more than one day.

### **Media Opt Out**

Registration in an SMCS school grants permission for photos, publicity, and inclusion in a participant list unless the SMCS Advancement Office is notified in writing prior to September 1<sup>st</sup>

of each school year. The Advancement Office can be contacted at [Advancement\\_Office@smcatholicschools.org](mailto:Advancement_Office@smcatholicschools.org) or 920-722-7796 to request a Media Opt-Out Form.

## Medications

To ensure the safety and well-being of our students, the following requirements must be met if a student needs medication during the school day:

1. School Medication Form: A parent or guardian must complete a school medication form before the school office can dispense medication. This form provides important information regarding the student's medication needs, dosage instructions, and any potential allergies or side effects.
2. Prescription Medication: Prescription medication must have the original label intact, which includes the student's name, drug identification, dosage instructions, doctor's name, and a current date. This helps verify the authenticity and appropriateness of the medication.
3. Non-Prescription Medication: Non-prescription medications such as aspirin, Tylenol, Advil, etc., must be provided in their original bottle and kept in the school office. These medications can only be given to a student if a signed medical form is on file in the school office.
4. Medication Administration: Office personnel will administer and document the administration of medication. This ensures proper supervision and accurate record-keeping for each student's medication needs.
5. Cough Drops and Inhalers: With written permission from a parent or guardian, students may carry and use cough drops and inhalers. Both the parent and a member of the office staff must sign a permission note to authorize this.
6. Self-Medication and Sharing Medication: Students are strictly prohibited from self-medicating or giving medications to others. Engaging in such actions can result in disciplinary measures, including suspension or expulsion, as it poses serious risks to the health and safety of individuals.

## Physical Education Classes

If an illness or injury prevents a student from participating in a physical education class, parental notification is necessary. A doctor's excuse is required for non-participation for any length of time over two class days.

**Dress Code for Physical Education Classes:** We adhere to the school dress code for physical education classes, which includes the following guidelines:

- Shorts must be an appropriate length (no shorter than fingertips when the arms are fully extended down the leg).
- Clothing must not display bands, drugs, or references to other schools.
- All tops must have sleeves.

- Students must wear shoes that are designated exclusively for use in our physical education class.

### **Pictures**

Individual student pictures are taken each fall. Class pictures are taken in the fall. Parents may purchase these after viewing the pictures.

### **PowerSchool/Google Classroom**

PowerSchool is an easy way for parents and students to keep up to date online. Once an account is activated, and SMCMS has posted information, parents can use PowerSchool to check their children's latest grades, receive email alerts when new grades are posted, receive emails with school or class information, verify assignments, see what assignments are missing, and read notes from their children's teachers.

Google Classroom is an electronic tool for teachers to use to communicate with students in their class. Teachers can post assignments, rubrics, quizzes, educational videos, lesson plans, etc. This is primarily for electronic communication between the students and teacher. Students are able to communicate to the entire class or send a private message to the teacher. All school expectations/rules apply while students use Google Classroom. Parents may create a parent account to view their child's information or ask their children for the Google Classroom username and password.

PowerSchool is where students' assignments & grades are posted, Google Classroom is how the teacher communicates with the class and may post assignments or rubrics, quizzes, etc.

PowerSchool	Google Classroom
Parent and student logins	Student log in (Parents use students log in)
Student graded work	Teacher communication with students and class
Missing or late assignments	Upcoming assignments
Lunch balances	Rubrics
Email alerts when grades are updated	Study guides, quizlets
Updated weekly	Assignment directions
	Uploading assignments
	Gain access to textbook pages or copies of teacher notes
	Ask questions, of teachers or classmates, for clarification on assignments



	Project updates
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### **Probation - Academic and Athletic**

Academic eligibility for all students will be determined by multiple grade checks during the nine-week grading period, as well as appropriate school and classroom behavior. Students must maintain a minimum of a C- average with no failing grades to be considered a student in good standing. Possible social and/or athletic restrictions may be imposed. (Also refer to the [SMCMS Extracurricular Handbook](#))

### **Progress Reports**

Report cards are sent home at the end of each semester. Students' weekly progress can be checked on PowerSchool. Students and parents should carefully review the student's progress and contact the teacher/school if there are questions regarding grades. Grades are updated on PowerSchool weekly. Parents and students have individual accounts on PowerSchool.

### **Release of Record**

1. The school will maintain records on all students. A parent/guardian wishing to review his/her student's file must give a 24-hour notice by way of a written request and set an appointed time with the administrator to review the file.
2. The school abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order, the school will provide the non-custodial parent access to the academic records and to other school-related information regarding the child. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order.

### **Religious Instruction**

Religion is a required class at each grade level. Catholic sacramental preparation is a parish responsibility and is coordinated with the students' parish religious education administrators.

St. Mary Catholic Middle School provides for students, faculty, and staff a faith-filled environment. Faith is expressed in personal prayer, liturgy, Reconciliation opportunities, devotions, etc. All who enter SMCMS are encouraged to use the school chapel as a place for personal prayer, meditation, and reflection. Students may use this space as time and availability permit. Weekly school Masses and other worship activities are a regular part of the school schedule.

### **Schedule Changes**

Students may request schedule changes within three school days after the beginning of a quarter if: 1) the student receives written approval from a parent and the classroom teacher; 2)



there is space available in the class into which the student wishes to transfer; and 3) the student obtains approval from the administrator.

### **School Colors / School Mascot**

The St. Mary Catholic Middle School mascot is the Zephyr train, personified in The Zephyrator. School colors are Columbia blue, white, navy, and gold.

### **Textbooks**

Textbooks and workbooks are provided for student use. If a book is lost, misused, or damaged beyond reasonable wear, the student will replace the book according to the following guidelines

New (1<sup>st</sup> year of use)- 100% of replacement cost

2<sup>nd</sup> year of use - 80% of replacement cost

3<sup>rd</sup> year of use - 60% of replacement cost

4<sup>th</sup> year of use - 40% of replacement cost

5<sup>th</sup> year of use or older - 20% of replacement cost

A minimum fee is charged for the following damages, up to the replacement value of the book:

Damaged bindings	\$20.00	Damaged pages	\$3.00 each
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All fines must be paid prior to receiving the final report card.

### **Visitors and Parent Meetings**

Parents are welcome and encouraged to visit the school. All parents and visitors must sign in at the office. Parents wishing to speak with teachers should set up appointment times to meet with them and should not just show up.

### **Yearbook**

A yearbook is available for a fee. Yearbooks are distributed at the end of the current school year.

*The administrator reserves the right to waive and/or deviate from any and all disciplinary regulations for just cause at his or her discretion. Parents/students will be given prompt notification if changes are made.*