

Parent-Student Handbook



Parent-Student Handbook 2025-2026

St. Mary School Diocese of San Diego

130 East 13th Avenue
Escondido, CA 92025
760-743-3431

www.stmesc.org

St. Mary School is an elementary and middle school fully accredited by the Western Catholic Education Association (WCEA) and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). The school renewed accreditation in March, 2025.

Dear Families,

Welcome to a new and exciting school year at St. Mary School! We are blessed to partner with you in the important mission of educating your child in a Christ-centered environment rooted in the Catholic faith, academic excellence, and service.

At St. Mary School, we recognize and honor you as the primary educators of your children. Together, as a faith-filled community, we work to provide every student with an individualized and rigorous education that nurtures the whole child—spiritually, intellectually, physically, socially, and emotionally. Our dedicated staff are committed to fostering an environment of dignity, respect, and Gospel-centered values where students can grow in faith and develop their God-given talents.

We offer a strong academic program complemented by a variety of co-curricular opportunities designed to engage students, promote leadership, and inspire lifelong learning. Through daily prayer, liturgical celebrations, service projects, and spiritual development, our students are continually invited to deepen their personal relationship with God and grow as future Catholic leaders.

The St. Mary School Parent-Student Handbook has been carefully prepared and updated to provide you with the essential information you need for a successful school year. It outlines our school's policies, procedures, and expectations. We ask that you take the time to read it thoroughly and refer to it throughout the year. By enrolling your child at St. Mary School, you agree to support and uphold the values and guidelines set forth in this handbook.

We look forward to a year filled with joy, growth, and shared success. With God's grace, strong family partnerships, and the dedicated efforts of our students and staff, we are confident that this will be a blessed and memorable year for all.

God bless,
Emily Silady
Principal

Mission Statement

St. Mary School provides all students a quality, Catholic education rooted in faith, dedicated to academic excellence, and committed to service.

Vision Statement

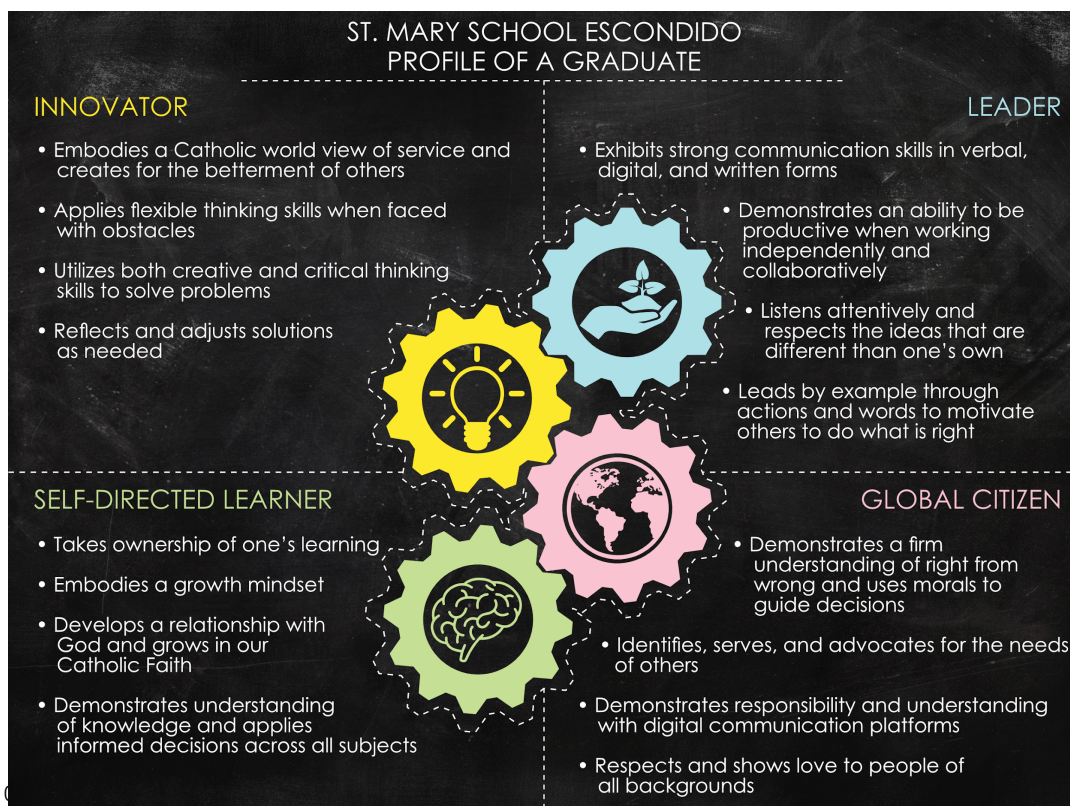
To provide all students with an individualized & Christ-centered learning experience focused on preparing future Catholic leaders, in an environment where all stakeholders give witness to the Gospel values & are committed to the development of relationships with God & growth in faith.

Philosophy Statement

St. Mary School students are immersed in a Christ-centered learning environment, grounded in the Catholic faith, which supports the development of the whole child; spiritually, intellectually, physically, socially, and emotionally. We acknowledge parents as the primary educators of their children and we partner with parents to provide an outstanding Catholic education. We encourage students to develop their God-given talents by fostering an atmosphere of dignity and respect for all. Students have multiple opportunities to grow in their faith through liturgical celebrations, prayer services, sacramental preparation, daily prayer, retreats and service projects. Teachers and parents model Gospel values in class and around campus for students to witness faith in action. Our rigorous curriculum encourages critical thinking and problem solving skills for students to apply the knowledge learned in class and to promote lifelong learning. Students are taught responsible digital citizenship through the use of technology embedded throughout our curriculum.

Profile of a Graduate

The Graduate Profile is a set of schoolwide learning expectations that guides St. Mary School's teaching and learning. The actions, attitudes, and behaviors included in the graphic below are expected for each of our students to be working toward. The Profile of Graduate is not only for students, but for all St. Mary School stakeholders. We each hope to embody these qualities in our day to day interactions with our students, staff, families, and community members.



Admissions

Non-Discriminatory Policy:

The Catholic Schools in the Diocese of San Diego, mindful of their mission to be witnesses to the love of Christ for all, admit students of any race, color, and national and/or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the schools. The Catholic Schools in the Diocese of San Diego do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, and national and/or ethnic origin, age, sex or disability in the administration of educational policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

Likewise, the Catholic Schools in the Diocese of San Diego do not discriminate against any applicant for employment on the basis of sex, age, disability, race, color and national and/or ethnic origin.

Additionally, St. Mary School accepts students of all religious backgrounds so long as they are willing to participate in the school's religion classes and attend Mass and other religious services during the school day.

General Qualifications for Enrollment:

All students and parents must agree to abide by the philosophy, policies, and regulations of St. Mary School and the Diocese of San Diego.

Application Process

1. Complete the prospective family form and schedule a tour with the principal.
2. Submit the new student application and \$50 entrance assessment fee.
3. Disclose any academic, behavioral, or medical needs.

Before Shadow Day:

- Submit the following:
 - Recent report card
 - Standardized test scores
 - IEPs, medical/psychological evaluations (if applicable)

Shadow Day & Entrance Assessment:

- Grades 1–7 students attend a shadow day (8:00am–12:00pm), if possible.
- Entrance assessment takes place during the shadow day.

Post-Assessment:

- Families are notified of acceptance status.
- Accepted families meet with the principal.
- Parents commit to supporting spiritual, academic, volunteer, and fundraising programs.

Upon Acceptance, Submit:

- Birth certificate
- Immunization & health records
- Baptismal certificate (if applicable)
- All IEPs and evaluations (mandatory disclosure)

Note: New students are accepted conditionally for one trimester. Grades, attendance, behavior, and punctuality are monitored to determine final placement.

Age Requirements

- **Kindergarten:** Must be 5 years old by August 31
- **1st Grade:** Must be 6 years old by August 31

Health Requirements:

California law requires specific health screening procedures for all children entering school for the first time. Additionally, all Kindergarten, Grade 7, and transfer students must present proper evidence of compliance with California immunization laws for school before they can be admitted to school.

The requirements as of January 2021 are as follows for students entering Kindergarten and transfer students:

Immunization	Dosage
Diphtheria, Pertussis, and Tetanus (DPT)	5 doses
Polio	4 doses
Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR)	2 doses
Hepatitis B	3 doses
Varicella (chickenpox)	2 doses

Students Entering Grade Seven (and Transfer Students in Grades 7 and 8):

Immunization	Dosage
Tetanus, reduced Diphtheria, and acellular Pertussis (Tdap)	1 dose
Varicella (chickenpox)	2 doses

*Please note that these policies change and St. Mary School will always follow the rules set forth by the state of California. [Click here](#) for more information in English and [click here](#) for more information in Spanish. COVID-19 Vaccine- The COVID-19 vaccine is not a requirement for students.

Marital & Custodial Arrangements

- Inform school of any custody changes.
- Provide court-certified custody documents.
- Undocumented agreements will not be enforced.

Student Records

Access:

- Parents may request to review records with advance notice.

Release:

- Records sent directly to the new school upon written request.
- Official transcripts are not handed to parents.
- St. Mary follows FERPA (Buckley Amendment).

General Policies and Procedures

School Office Hours:

- Mon/Tue/Thu/Fri: 8:00am–2:50pm
- Wed: 8:45am–11:50am

Bell Schedule:

Full Day

- Kindergarten: 8:00am–3:00pm (Recess 10:10–10:30am, Lunch 12:15–1:10pm)
- Grades 1–8: 8:00am–3:00pm (Recess 10:15–10:30am, Lunch 12:25–1:10pm)

Early Dismissal (Wednesdays):

- Kindergarten: 8:00am–12:00pm (Recess 10:10–10:30am)
- Grades 1–8: 8:00am–12:00pm (Recess 10:15–10:30am)

Arrival and Dismissal Rules

Please help keep all students safe by following procedures outlined below. Parental cooperation and support are required in the following areas:

- Students wait in designated areas only.

- No playground use during drop-off/pick-up.
- Students walking/biking must have written permission.
- Students not picked up within 15 minutes are checked into After-School Care.
- **Please follow all directions of the staff.**

Carline Procedures:

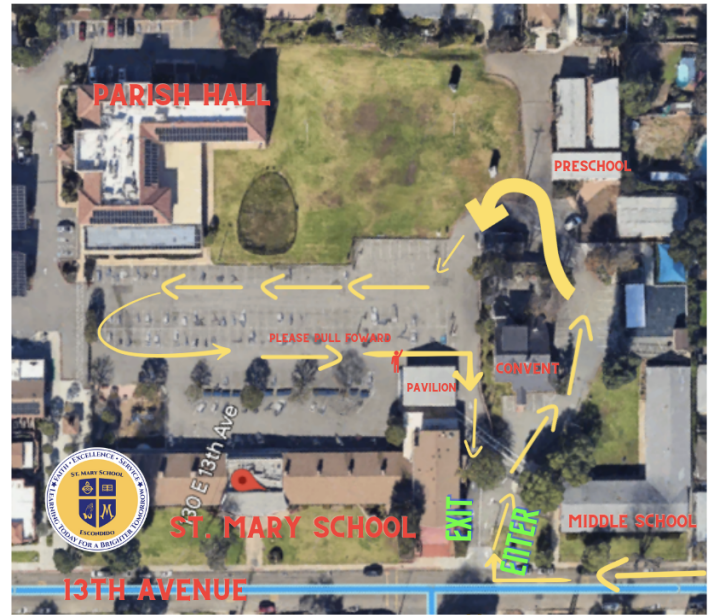
- Use 13th Ave entrance from Juniper Street.
- Follow traffic flow as directed (see graphic).
- Morning Drop-Off: 7:30am–7:55am
- Afternoon Pick-Up: 3:00pm–3:15pm
- Passenger side exit/entry only; parents stay in vehicles.
- Gate closes at 7:55am (Mass days 7:50am). Late arrivals must check in at the office.
- Afternoon gates reopen at 2:50pm (11:50am on minimum days).

Rainy Day Pick-Up:

- Grades K–5: Parents park and pick up from classrooms.
- Middle School: Students may walk to car with teacher permission.

When driving on school campus and through the carline, we kindly ask that you **reserve honking the car horn for an emergency only. Please follow all directions of the staff.**

DROP OFF & PICK UP CARLINE ROUTE



Lunch Program

- Daily hot/cold lunch via Ki's School Lunches: kisschoollunches.com
- Pack healthy lunches; avoid candy, soda, energy drinks.

After-School Care

- Hours: End of carline – 6:00pm
- Not available on holidays/vacations
- Billed via FACTS in 10 monthly payments

Rates:

- 1 Child: \$2,500
- 2 Children: \$3,600
- 3 Children: \$4,400
- 4 Children: \$4,900
- Drop-in: \$12 first hour, \$6 per additional half-hour
- Late fee: \$2/minute after 6:00pm

Attendance

Tardies:

- Students are tardy if not in class by 8:00am.
- Tardy students must be signed in at the school office (or walked to Church on Mass days).
- Students are also marked tardy if not seated and ready when class begins.

Truancy:

- Follow CA state laws: Click [here](#) for details.

Reporting Absences:

- Email attendance@stmesc.org or call by 8:15am

Excused Absences:

- [Click here](#) for a full list of excused absences.
- A doctor's note is required for absences of 3 days or more.

Appointments During School:

- Email attendance@stmesc.org and homeroom teacher in advance
- Sign out at front office
- Authorized non-parent pickups must show ID and be listed in FACTS

Make-Up Work:

- Student's responsibility
- Vacation absences are not excused.
- Parents must email dates to attendance@stmesc.org and teacher.
- Teachers are not required to provide work in advance. Make-up work will be provided at the teacher's discretion.

After-School Eligibility:

- Students absent may not participate and/or attend activities that day
- Exception: Doctor's note for a well-child appointment

Excessive Absences:

- May result in:
 - Written notice
 - Parent meeting
 - Grade retention or non-renewal

Mandatory Events:

- Weekend School Mass (Each class leads one weekend school Mass. Schedule can be found [here](#).)
- Fall Fiesta Performance: Oct 11, 2025, 3:00pm
- May Crowning: May 6, 2026, 7:00pm

Notify teacher if absent; a make-up assignment is required for participation credit.

Medical Information

When to Keep your Child Home:

- A fever of 100.4° or higher (and must be fever-free without medication for 24 hours before returning)
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Coughing that disrupts normal activity or difficulty breathing/wheezing
- Significant pain (earache, headache, sore throat)
- Yellow/green eye drainage
- A new rash (doctor's clearance may be required before return)
- General weakness or fatigue that prevents participation in normal school activities

Illness or Injury:

If a student becomes ill or injured during the school day, the office will notify a parent or guardian.

Authorization for Treatment:

If a parent or guardian cannot be reached and the situation requires immediate medical attention, the principal or designee will refer to the emergency information on file and arrange for appropriate care. By enrolling at St. Mary School, parents grant the school permission to secure emergency medical services as necessary.

Emergency Information:

Emergency contact details provided during annual registration in FACTS are used in urgent situations. It is essential that families keep this information up to date in the FACTS Family Portal.

Medication at School:

If a student must take medication during school hours:

- A [Parent Permission to Store/Take Medication](#) form must be completed and submitted to the office.
- All medications must be in the original container, clearly labeled with the student's name, dosage, and instructions.
- The school cannot accept or administer any loose pills or unlabeled medication.
- Medication may only be administered by a parent or self-administered by the student, provided the appropriate paperwork has been submitted. Staff are not permitted to administer medication.

Medical Conditions:

Parents are responsible for notifying administration, school office, and the child's teacher(s) via email about any allergies, chronic illnesses, physical limitations, or other medical conditions.

Communicable Diseases:

Parents must inform the school office if their child is diagnosed with a communicable disease, including but not limited to:

- COVID-19
- Chickenpox
- Measles
- Mumps
- Strep throat
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Head lice
- Scarlet fever
- Whooping cough

The school will notify families of other students who may have been exposed. Notifications are typically sent to families in the same grade or homeroom and may include sibling grades if applicable. If warranted, a schoolwide notification will be issued. The identity of the affected student will remain confidential.

Head Lice:

If your child is found to have head lice, please notify the school as soon as possible at office@stmesc.org and begin treatment right away.

- Exclude your child from attendance at school until 1–2 days after their first treatment with a medicated head lice product (either over-the-counter or prescription) and all active lice are removed.
- Your child's absence will be excused.

[Notification](#)

COVID-19:

The school follows all current guidelines provided by local and state health departments. Please refer to the school newsletter for a link to the most recent decision tree.

Dress Code

St. Mary School uniform supplier is Tommy Hilfiger. School uniforms by Tommy Hilfiger can be accessed [here](#). Please include student last name on all clothing and personal items.

Girls:

- Plaid jumper*—Tommy Hilfiger brand only (Grades K-4)
 - Plaid skirt*—Tommy Hilfiger brand only (Grades 5-8)
 - Skorts—Tommy Hilfiger brand only (all grades)
 - Khaki pants—Tommy Hilfiger brand only
 - Khaki shorts—Tommy Hilfiger brand only
- *Jumpers/Skirts must be longer than 3 inches above knee

Boys

- Khaki pants—Tommy Hilfiger brand only*
- Khaki shorts—Tommy Hilfiger brand only*
- Belts are mandatory for Grades 4 and up—Regulation size, not oversized. Belts must be black or brown.

*Unless written exemption from principal is given due to a special circumstance.

All Students

- **Mass Attire Uniform** (required for all students on Mass days):
 - Navy polo only
 - **Girls:** plaid jumper, skirt, or skort (no pants)
 - **Boys:** Dennis long pants (no shorts)
 - Please note: 8th grade sweatshirts are not part of the Mass attire uniform. 8th grade sweatshirts may not be worn on days when Mass attire uniform is required.

- **Polos:**
 - Solid white, navy blue, green, or red polo shirts with the St. Mary School logo*
 - Kinder students are required to have a **red** St. Mary polo shirt to be worn on field trip days.

*Polo shirts must be tucked in at all times, except during active play at recess and lunch.
- **Shoes:**
 - Color: mostly black, mostly white, or mostly navy with only **neutral** (black, white, gray, tan or brown) accents
 - Must be closed toe, closed heel
 - No lights, sounds, wheels, open-toed, open-heeled, no boots (high tops are okay as long as sock is showing)
- **Socks:**
 - Solid white, black, navy blue, gray only
 - Must be seen above the shoe
 - Logos on socks must be neutral colors (black, navy, gray, tan). No pattern socks, stripes, or bright color accents.
- **Accessories:**
 - Watches* – neutral or uniform colors (**no SMART watches** or watches with internet access*) Smart watches worn to school will be held in the principal's office until carline or pick up by a parent.
 - *Unless written exemption from principal is given due to special circumstance
 - Conservative stud earrings (lobe piercing only, no cartilage piercings, no dangling, no hoop/huggie earrings)
 - Religious necklaces only
 - Bracelets must be religious and/or school spirit merchandise purchased at school with max of 3 on each wrist
 - No nail polish/make-up allowed
- **Cold/Rainy Weather:**
 - Solid **white** long sleeved shirt/turtleneck may be worn under the school polo shirt
 - Non-uniform jacket may be worn **outside** over the student's uniform on rainy days.
 - Students are expected to remove non-uniform jackets when entering any building.
 - **Non-uniform jackets do not substitute for Tommy Hilfiger uniform outerwear.**
 - Solid black or navy tights or leggings (non flare, no holes) may be worn on cold days under uniform.
 - No rain boots.
- **P.E. Uniforms:**
 - Required for all grades (Students have PE twice a week)
 - Must be ordered from Tommy Hilfiger
 - Spirit shirts may not substitute for a P.E. shirt (Exception: Thursdays the current spirit shirt may be worn)
 - Navy blue Tommy Hilfiger P.E. shorts or Tommy Hilfiger sweatpants with logo
 - Gray Tommy Hilfiger P.E. uniform T-shirt with logo
 - Shoes:
 - Must be athletic (ie. for running/active play)
 - Any color
 - No lights, sounds, wheels

In an emergency when your child cannot be in uniform, an email must be sent to the homeroom teacher and office@stmesc.org prior to the school day beginning.

Hairstyles:

Hair must be kept out of students' eyes and faces at all times.

- **Boys** must maintain short haircuts. Hair must be above the ears, out of the face, and above the shirt collar at the hairline.
- **Girls** must pull back their hair for P.E. and sports.

- **Hair Color:** Dyed, bleached, or highlighted hair (including Sun-In) is not allowed. Students with altered hair color must return it to their natural color.
- **Hair Accessories:** Must be small and in uniform-approved colors only.

Free Dress Policy:

The following items are **not permitted** on Free Dress Days:

- Halter tops, spaghetti straps, crop tops
- Sandals, flip flops, backless shoes, platform shoes, slippers, rain boots
- Clothing with offensive graphics or language
- Costumes
- Skirts, dresses, and shorts shorter than 3" above the knee

Spirit Shirts:

Spirit Shirts are available for pre-purchase at the start of the school year. Only the **current** Spirit Shirt may be worn with uniform bottoms on Thursdays.

8th Grade Sweatshirts:

Eighth grade students have the privilege of designing and wearing a special 8th grade sweatshirt. This privilege comes with the responsibility to follow the guidelines below:

- 8th grade sweatshirt is not permitted on Mass attire days. Students must wear the full, designated Mass uniform for the entire school day.
- Hoods must remain down at all times, except when it is actively raining and students are outside.
- If the hood is worn up when it is not raining, the sweatshirt will be confiscated, and the student may lose the privilege of wearing the 8th grade sweatshirt at school.

Dress Code Violations:

Failure to comply with the dress code will result in a dress code violation. Dress code violations are sent through FACTS. These act as a communication tool between parent, student, and staff.

Water Bottles:

Students must bring a water bottle daily. Bottles must seal completely.

Not allowed: Straw cups or bottles that do not fully close. Only water is permitted in the classroom.

Gum:

Chewing gum is not allowed on campus. A violation results in automatic lunchtime detention.

School and Home Communications

Back to School Night:

Back to School Night is held within the first few weeks of school each year. Teachers explain policies, rules, curriculum, grading practices, homework expectations and other important issues pertaining to each classroom. **Attendance at Back to School Night is required for at least one parent/guardian.**

Class Dojo:

Class Dojo is utilized as a school wide communication platform. Please [click here](#) to access our school on Class Dojo. All parents are expected to connect to their child's classroom on Class Dojo. Teachers utilize Class Dojo for weekly posts highlighting student learning and upcoming events.

FACTS:

The school utilizes FACTS for online gradebook, attendance, email, and announcements.

Weekly Newsletter:

A weekly newsletter will be emailed via FACTS each Friday with updates and pertinent information. All parents/guardians are expected to read these newsletters.

Ways to Stay Informed:

- Read our weekly newsletter (Access 2025-2026 Newsletters [here](#).)
- Read communication sent via FACTS.
- [Download Class Dojo App](#) on your phone.
- [Click here](#) to add the School Calendar to your own calendar.
- Bookmark the [school website](#).
- Attend Parent Teacher Group (PTG) meetings.

Role of Parents:

POLICY # 1200 - Parents as Primary Educators Parents have the primary responsibility for the education of their child.

Specifically this includes the responsibility:

- To establish a home environment which teaches the moral values, religious habits, social skills, self-discipline, and commitment to learning upon which successful Catholic schooling is based. (Cf. 6143.3 – Sunday Mass and Personal Prayer).
- To make a wise and informed choice of schools for their child, keeping in mind that each school has its own unique character, tone and strengths.
- To be fully informed regarding all aspects of their child's developmental progress, and where needed, to take and/or support the appropriate remedial action.
- To make every effort to establish and maintain a collaborative and mutually supportive relationship with the school in which they have selected for their child.

Schools have the correlative responsibility to guide, assist, support, and complement parents in their efforts to meet these responsibilities. Of particular gravity is the school's obligation to assist parents in gaining the information and insight necessary to make informed judgments regarding the religious and moral education of their child.

Parent/Guardian Requirements:

Parents and guardians are expected to:

- Comply with the educational policies and regulations of the Diocese of San Diego and St. Mary School
- Support and follow all school guidelines outlined in the Parent-Student Handbook and Weekly Newsletters
- Respond in a timely manner to communication from teachers or the principal
- Personally attend and ensure their child attends:
 - School Masses
 - Religious and spiritual activities
 - School meetings, PTG events, and special functions
- Demonstrate a spirit of partnership with teachers, administration, and the Diocese
- Refrain from negative speech or actions that may harm students, parents, faculty, or administration

Note: Students are never excused from participating in school Masses or liturgical celebrations (e.g., May Crowning, Christmas Pageant).

Service Hours:

The Family Expectation for School Service enhances St. Mary School's educational program and it provides an equitable distribution of service, time, and energy among the families of St. Mary School.

Family Expectation for School Service:

Service is essential to building our school community. All families contribute time and talents to support the success of St. Mary School.

- **Two-parent households:** 40 service hours per year
- **Single-parent households:** 20 service hours per year
- **Submission:** Families must track and submit hours via the **FACTS Family Portal**
- **Deadline:** All hours must be submitted by the **first Friday in May**
- **Incomplete hours:** A \$10/hour fee for unfulfilled hours will be charged to your **FACTS account by May 15**

- Hardship Exemptions: Requests must be made in writing to the principal before January 1.

Suggested activities for fulfilling service hours

- Parent Teacher Group (PTG) ([Click here](#) to join!)
- Gala (Email gala@stmesc.org to help!)
- Set-up and clean-up for events
- Purchase RaiseRight gift cards for shopping
- After-school sports (coaches, team parents, drivers for away games, etc.) (Email athleticdirector@stmesc.org to volunteer.)
- Field Trip drivers
- Hot lunch and supervision volunteers (Email office@stmesc.org to volunteer.)
- **Church Safety Team** (Email office@stmesc.org to be connected with our Safety Team Lead.)
- Assistance with maintenance work ([Click here](#) for a current list of needs. Email office@stmesc.org to volunteer.)
- Donating items from [school wishlist](#)

Parent Teacher Group (PTG)

The **Parent Teacher Group (PTG)** is a dedicated group of parents and guardians committed to advancing the mission of St. Mary School through service, support, and collaboration.

St. Mary School is more than just a school, it is a faith-filled community committed to forming and educating future Catholic leaders. PTG members support and strengthen this mission through their time and talent.

PTG Objectives

- Foster strong partnerships between families and the school
- Represent St. Mary positively within the wider community
- Support school programs, events, and leadership
- Model respect, cooperation, and faith-based values
- Encourage open communication by directing concerns appropriately to school administration

PTG Expectations

PTG members are expected to:

- Lead with a spirit of service
- Uplift the school community by discouraging negativity
- Support school-wide goals and encourage family participation

Through service and leadership, PTG members model the values of faith, respect, and cooperation that are central to the St. Mary School community. PTG position descriptions can be found [here](#).

Volunteer Requirements:

Volunteers at St. Mary School must complete the following requirements set forth by the Diocese of San Diego prior to volunteering:

1. **CMG connect** – <https://sandiego.cmgconnect.org/> Create an account and complete the training videos listed below. Be sure to select St. Mary School, not the parish.
 - Background Check – expires every 5 years- \$19 fee will be assessed via FACTS*
 - Safe Environment Curriculum – expires every 5 years*
 - Defensive Driving Curriculum – never expires
2. **TB test results** or a Risk Assessment form filled out by Physician/Nurse Practitioner (Expires every 4 years)  [TB Risk Assessment.pdf](#)
3. **Drivers** for field trips/sporting events/etc.
 - Fill out this form  [Driver Form for Volunteers \(1\).pdf](#)
 - Provide copies of:
 - Unexpired Driver's License
 - Unexpired insurance Card- showing proof of having appropriate minimums
 - Unexpired Vehicle Registration for the car that will be used

On Campus Visitors:

All visitors must enter through the front office and sign in upon arrival. After signing in, a visitor badge will be issued and must be worn at all times while on campus. For the safety and continuity of our school day, visitor badges will only be provided to individuals who have been authorized in advance by a teacher or staff member. Authorized visitors will be listed in the office with their approved date and time of visit. Any individual without a visitor badge will be asked to leave campus.

Instructional Program

Students experience various learning domains. The curriculum is compatible with Diocesan Policy, school philosophy and the standards (Common Core State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, etc.). Infused in all subject areas is a focus on Catholic values and faith development aimed at commitment to the message of Christ and service to others.

Blended Learning:

Blended Learning is an innovative educational approach that blends individualized, online learning, teacher-led classroom instruction, and collaborative student-led activities. Blended Learning follows the Station Rotation approach, where instruction is delivered via three main stations: (1) traditional teacher-led instruction, (2) collaborative small group activities, and (3) individualized computer and online instruction and assessment using our iPads. Blended Learning follows the Station Rotation model, which means students receive direct, small group instruction from the teachers, personalized assessments via iPads, and collaborate with fellow students in small group learning activities. Students have more opportunities to ask direct questions of teachers and teachers have the capability of driving instruction based on immediate feedback from online assessments of students. The following subject areas comprise St. Mary School's curriculum:

- Religion (Diocese of San Diego Religion Standards)
- English Language Arts [English Language Arts \(CCSS\)](#)
- Mathematics [Math \(CCSS\)](#)
- Science [Science \(NGSS\)](#)
- Social Studies [Social Studies \(CA\)](#)
- Visual and Performing Arts (Music, Art)
- Physical Education [Physical Education \(CA\)](#)

The curriculum meets or exceeds California state standards and is integrated with our Catholic faith and values.

Technology:

[Click here](#) to view the 2025-2026 Acceptable Use Policy and 1:1 Device Addendum.

Retention:

Consultation between teacher, parents, and principal will take place when students are considered at risk. In all cases, the final determination regarding retention remains the responsibility of the principal (Diocesan Policy 524). Regular supplementary tutoring, individualized program modification, adjustment to another school, specialized testing, or summer school may be required.

Homework:

Purpose:

1. To reinforce concepts/skills learned in class.
2. To foster student's creativity and curiosity.
3. To guide the student to work independently and to accept responsibility for completing a task.

Time spent on homework should not exceed an average:

Kindergarten	15 minutes per day
Grades 1-2	15-20 minutes per day
Grades 3	20-30 minutes per day
Grades 4-5	30-45 minutes per day
Grades 6-8	45-60 hours per day*

*Time guidelines do not include student's daily Freckle practice if not completed in class, unfinished classwork or projects that are assigned throughout the year.

If your child consistently exceeds the allocated amount of time for homework, please see your teacher/s. It is the student's responsibility to record assignments and to complete them on time. Homework is late if not turned in at the start of the school day. Any item dropped off in the office after 8am will be considered late.

Grading:

[Standards Referenced Grading](#): Grades K-5

Traditional Grading: Grades 6-8

Letter Grade	Percentage	GPA
A+	97-100%	4.0
A	93-96%	3.9
A-	90-92%	3.7
B+	87-89%	3.3
B	83-86%	3.0
B-	80-82%	2.7
C+	77-79%	2.3
C	73-76%	2.0
C-	70-72%	1.7
D+	67-69%	1.3
D	63-66%	1.0
D-	60-62%	0.7
F	0-59%	0.0

Grades are posted and updated regularly on FACTS. Students and Parents have log in information to access and view grades on FACTS Family Portal. Report cards are posted on and sent digitally at the end of each Trimester.

Parent/Teacher Conferences:

A formal parent/teacher conference is required during the first trimester. A sign up for these conferences will be sent via email. Other conferences may be held as needed when requested by the teacher or parent.

Plagiarism:

Students are expected to complete their own work with honesty and integrity. Plagiarism is defined as using someone else's words, ideas, or work without giving proper credit.

Examples of plagiarism include:

- Copying another student's work and submitting it as own
- Copying text directly from a book, website, or AI tool (like ChatGPT) without citing the source
- Submitting work that was completed by someone else

Consequences for plagiarism include:

- Receiving a grade of "0" on the assignment
- Being asked to redo the assignment with proper citation

- A parent/guardian communication and possible further disciplinary action

Academic Review Board (ARB):

Purpose is to support students experiencing ongoing academic challenges by fostering collaboration between the school, student, and family. The ARB process includes a meeting with the student, parents or guardians, and designated staff members to review the student's academic performance, effort, and any interventions already in place. Together, the team develops an individualized support plan tailored to the student's needs, which may include academic goals, counseling, tutoring, accommodations, and scheduled follow-up meetings. ARB membership may include the principal, the student's homeroom teacher or subject-specific teachers. The overall goal of the ARB is to promote a growth mindset, reinforce accountability, and provide students with the tools and structure necessary to achieve academic success.

Student Activities:

Academic Decathlon:

The Academic Decathlon is open to students in Grades 6-8. The event is coordinated and coached by parents. This event is dependent on the number of students interested and volunteer coaches.

Altar Servers:

Altar Serving is for children in Grades 3-8 who have received their First Holy Communion. A member of the parish trains them and coordinates the altar serving schedule. If a student wishes to only serve at school Masses (Wednesdays and Holy Days), the student must still complete the training. Please contact mgomez@stmaryp.org for training. After a student is fully trained to altar serve, complete [this form](#) to be added to the [school Mass altar serving schedule](#). The Pastor determines eligibility, standards of dress, and conduct.

Athletic Program:

[Policy for After School Sports](#) Grades 5-8

[Pee Wee Policy for After School Sports](#) Grade K-4

Birthdays:

Families may send a small treat (e.g., cookies or cupcakes) for their child's class on or near their birthday.

- Limit treats to one item per student, and please ensure all items are the same for fairness.
- Freezer items are discouraged due to limited storage space.
- Party favors are not permitted.
- Please email the homeroom teacher in advance to coordinate.

Note: Deliveries of distracting items such as balloons or flowers will be held in the office until the end of the day. For off-campus birthday parties, invitations should only be distributed at school if inviting:

- All the girls,
- All the boys, or
- The entire class.

Otherwise, invitations must be delivered outside of school.

Classroom Parties:

Classroom parties are held for holidays and special occasions and typically include a small treat and activity—not a full meal.

- Planned by the homeroom teacher in partnership with the room parent.
Donations and volunteers are coordinated by the room parent under teacher direction.
- All on-campus volunteers must meet the school's volunteer requirements.

Field Trips:

Field trips are designed to support educational objectives aligned with the curriculum.

- Planned by the classroom teacher.

- Fees vary by trip and are communicated in advance. All payments are made through FACTS.

Transportation:

- Usually provided by parent drivers.
- All participating parents must have a complete volunteer profile on file.
- Chaperones may not bring siblings or guests.
- Chaperones must drive directly to and from the field trip—no extra stops (e.g., food, shopping).
- Students may not use cell phones, DVDs, or gaming devices in vehicles.

Permission Slips:

- A signed permission slip is required for participation.
- Students without permission slips will remain on campus and be assigned alternative work.

Robotics:

Robotics Club is offered to students in grades 4-8. Robotics meets after school once per week. Students will:

- Learn engineering principles as they build robots capable of performing various tasks and missions.
- Engage with coding and programming while problem solving and improving their designs.
- Students must be in good academic/behavioral standing and have written parent permission to join.

Student Council:

- Elected students from grades 6-8 serve for one year.
- Students must be in good academic standing in order to serve on the Student Council.
- Students are expected to:
 - Represent St. Mary School through kind, respectful, and professional conduct.
 - Design, organize, and implement activities for the St. Mary School student body.
 - Work cooperatively with fellow classmates on the council.
 - Plan, attend, and help with school events, such as, school dances, sports assemblies, Fall Fiesta, Family Nights, Catholic Schools Week, Open House, weekend school Masses, etc.

Discipline

General policies and procedures are set by Diocesan Office for Schools. St. Mary students are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate Christian manner on campus as well as when representing the school.

Church Rules:

Students are expected to act reverently in church, entering and exiting quietly. Students are expected to fully participate in the liturgies and prayers, giving their full attention to the pastor or speaker. Any student who enters Church after the opening song has started, will be marked tardy.

Cell Phones:

Students may not have cell phones at school. If a student must bring a cell phone to school, it is to remain in the student's backpack, turned off or on Do Not Disturb. Cell phones that are out of a backpack, being used, or heard will be kept safe in the Principal's office until a parent or guardian can pick it up at the end of the day. Only school issued electronic devices may be used on school property.

Disciplinary Procedures:

1. The staff member witnessing or made aware of the incident will investigate and may consult with the Grade Level Lead, homeroom teacher, and/or Principal.
2. Appropriate consequences will be communicated to the student—and parents, if necessary.
3. Documentation will be submitted through a Behavior Referral on FACTS when warranted. Behavior Referrals serve as a communication tool between staff and families.

Inappropriate behavior could result in loss of play time, detention, a parent conference, assignment of special tasks, referral to the principal, sports probation, in-school suspension, suspension, referral to the Academic/Discipline Review Board (ADRB), or expulsion from school after due process.

The Tiers for [Behavior Interventions](#) serves as a guide for academic/behavioral actions and possible consequences. Please see Tiers for Behavior Interventions for examples of behaviors that may result in disciplinary action.

Rule of 3's:

- 3 Behavior Referrals = 1 lunchtime detention and probation from next sports/extracurricular activity
- 3 Lunchtime Detentions = 1 in-school suspension and 1-week sports/extracurricular probation
- 3 In-School Suspensions = Parent-student-administrator meeting to determine next steps

Types of Disciplinary Action:

- Behavior Referrals: Issued through FACTS to document incidents and communicate with families.
- Lunchtime Detention: Held in the office on Thursdays. Students eat quietly, complete behavior reflections, and may meet with a teacher or administrator.
- In-School Suspension: Assigned when necessary. Students complete work in a supervised setting. Reflection or counseling may also be required.
- Due-Process Rights for Expulsion: The student's family will have access to FACTS documentation and the opportunity to meet with the principal and staff involved. The Office for Schools at the Diocese of San Diego is involved in the process.

Communicating Concerns:

Below is the proper order to communicate a concern and resolve an issue.

1. Discuss concern with your child.
2. Schedule an appointment to discuss with the subject area teacher.
3. If the situation is still not resolved, schedule an appointment to discuss with the Principal.
4. If needed, schedule an appointment to discuss with the Associate Superintendent from the Diocese of San Diego's Office for Schools assigned to our school.

(Please note we are a diocesan school, all governing authority comes from the Diocese of San Diego.)

Communication with teachers via email, voice mail, or in person must be conducted in a positive, courteous, and productive manner. Parents should address concerns in such a way that agreement or compromise may be reached. The administration retains the right to call a meeting with parents who do not follow these guidelines.

Student Safety Policies from Diocese of San Diego:

The school is committed to providing a safe and comfortable learning environment that respects Christian values and is free from harassment, bullying, or hazing in any form. Harassment, bullying, or hazing of any student by any other student, lay employee, religious, clergy, school volunteer, or parent/guardian is prohibited. The school will treat allegations of any such conduct seriously and will review and investigate such allegations in a prompt, confidential manner that is appropriate to the claim.

Credible acts of harassment, bullying, or hazing by a student will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal of the student. Students who file false or frivolous charges will also be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Harassment and Bullying

Harassment or bullying occurs when an individual is subjected to treatment that is hostile, demeaning, intimidating, or threatening, and communicated in person, in hard copy, or electronically, including on social media. A determination that a student has engaged in harassment or bullying does not require that the conduct meets applicable legal standards.

Examples of harassing or bullying conduct, which can occur once or habitually, include:

- Derogatory, demeaning, humiliating, inflammatory, intimidating, or threatening words spoken to, written to, or written about another person
- Unwanted physical touching, contact, or assault
- Deliberate impeding or blocking of another's movement

- Intimidating interference with normal work or movement
- Derogatory, demeaning, inflammatory, intimidating, or threatening gestures, posters, cartoons, drawings, images, and photos
- Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature

Bullying typically consists of direct behaviors, such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting, shoving, and stealing that are initiated by one or more students against a victim or victims. In addition to direct attacks, bullying may also be indirect, such as spreading rumors that cause victims to be socially isolated through intentional exclusion.

Cyberbullying or cyber harassment occurs when students bully or harass each other using electronic devices. This can include but is not limited to:

- Sending inappropriate texts, emails, or instant messages
- Posting inappropriate pictures, videos, or messages about others on blogs, social media, or websites
- Using someone else's username to spread rumors or lies about another person

Read about cyberbullying on StopBullying.gov.

Hazing

Hazing is any method of initiation or pre-initiation into a student organization or body, whether or not the organization or body is officially recognized by an educational institution, which is likely to cause serious bodily injury or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to any student or other person. All hazing is prohibited.

All students must:

- Conduct themselves in a manner that contributes to a positive school environment that conforms to Catholic values
- Avoid any activity that may be considered intimidating, harassing, bullying, or hazing
- If possible, inform the person(s) engaging in conduct that is considered a violation of this policy that the conduct is offensive and unwelcome
- Report all incidents that may be considered intimidating, harassing, bullying, or hazing to the principal or teacher

Reporting

The school expects students, parents/guardians, and school staff to immediately report incidents of harassment or bullying to the school principal or designee. The school has established procedures for reporting incidents of harassment or bullying anonymously, and with assurance of protection against retaliation. The school's anonymous report form can be found [here](#).

Students, school staff, and parents/guardians are able to make reports of harassment or bullying to school administrators through face to face communication, written incident reports, or through each school site's online bullying reporting process.

Each complaint of harassment or bullying will be promptly investigated by the principal or designee. This policy applies to incidents occurring on school grounds, during a school-sponsored event, or while traveling to and from school or a school-sponsored activity. This policy also applies to acts or communication initiated outside of the school environment if the incident creates the potential for a disruption on the school campus.

Responding

Confirmed incidents of harassment or bullying will result in one or more of the following interventions implemented by the school:

1. Provide support and protection from additional harassment, bullying or retaliation for the target of the situation.
2. Apply disciplinary action to the offender(s) up to and including suspension and/or recommended expulsion of students participating in an act of harassment or bullying.

3. Notify the local law enforcement agency if criminal charges may be pursued against the offender.
4. Assist the offender in building an awareness of the consequences of his/her behavior, and in developing strategies to engage in more positive actions.
5. Educate the bystanders involved in the incident to respond when witnessing or becoming aware of harassment and bullying.
6. Communicate with the parents of the individuals involved to develop a plan to prevent future incidents.

Student Threat Policy

The school will take all student threats seriously, including those from students that threaten to inflict serious harm to themselves or others or to destroy property. Whoever hears or becomes aware of any threat made by a student should immediately report it to the pastor, the principal, or a teacher. The principal should follow the [Threat Assessment and Response Protocol](#) and notify the police and the Office for Schools immediately.

The student who has made the threat should be kept in the school office under supervision until the police arrive. The parents/guardians of the student who has made the threat will be notified by the school. Any student or adult who has been identified as a potential victim, or mentioned in writing as a potential victim, should be notified immediately.

The student who has made the threat shall be suspended until the police and school investigations have been completed, and at that time the student may face other disciplinary sanctions, up to and including expulsion.

The school will take all actions of a threatening nature seriously, including practical jokes or offhand comments, and the school will investigate them. The school may remove a student from school while the investigation is pending.

On a case-by-case basis, the superintendent and principal will make any decision to re-admit a student who has made a threat.

This student threat policy shall be communicated clearly to students, parents/guardians, faculty, staff, and volunteers.

Suspension Policy

Any of the listed reasons for expulsion with mitigating circumstances are adequate cause for suspending a student. This list is not comprehensive, but can be interpreted as a guide to the severity of certain behaviors that warrant suspension. The suspended student shall be responsible for all academic assignments while on suspension.

No student shall be suspended from school for more than two consecutive weeks, unless there is an ongoing school investigation or a police investigation of a possible crime, in which case the student may be suspended during the entire investigation.

The school must give notice of the suspension to the parents/guardians verbally by phone, in writing (hard copy or electronic), or in person during a conference.

The principal shall schedule a conference with the suspended student's parents/guardians to discuss matters pertinent to the suspension, especially the means by which the parents/guardians and school can cooperatively encourage the student to improve his or her behavior. The suspended student may be present at the conference.

In no case will a teacher on his or her own authority suspend a student.

Expulsion Policy

Reasons for expulsion include but are not limited to the following offenses:

- Actions that are gravely detrimental to the moral and spiritual welfare of other students
- Habitual profanity or vulgarity
- Assault, battery, or any threat of force or violence directed toward any student or school personnel
- Harassing, bullying, or hazing other students or school personnel
- Open, persistent defiance of the teacher's authority
- Continued willful disobedience
- Use, sale, distribution, or possession of narcotics, drugs, or any other controlled substance
- Use, sale, distribution, or possession of any alcoholic beverages on or near school premises
- Smoking, possession of tobacco, vaping or possession of vaping devices
- Theft
- Forgery of signatures
- Cheating or plagiarism
- Willful defacement or damage of school property, real or personal
- Habitual truancy
- Possession of harmful weapons (e.g., knives or guns) or materials that can be used as weapons
- Membership in, active involvement in, or affiliation with a gang or group responsible for coercive or violent activity
- Actions in or out of school that are detrimental to the school's reputation
- Violations of the electronic acceptable use policies and guidelines
- Inappropriate conduct or behavior unbecoming a student in a Catholic school

Procedure for Expulsion

Except in cases involving grave offenses, the school must take the following steps to expel a student:

- The principal, teacher, parents/guardians, and student must attend a conference. The principal will advise the family that the student could be expelled unless there is immediate improvement in the student's behavior.
- If the student's behavior does not improve, the final decision will be communicated at a second conference attended by the principal, teacher, parents/guardians. If the parents/guardians fail, without cause, to attend the conference, the final decision will still apply and the parents/guardians will be notified. The final decision rests with the superintendent in consultation with the principal.
- In no case will a teacher on his or her own authority expel a student.
- The school will give full credit for all work the student accomplished up to the moment of expulsion.

Written Records

The school must keep on file a written record of the steps leading to an expulsion, with copies of all communications and reports. This record should be maintained for one year following the expulsion.

Cases Involving Grave Offenses

In a case involving a grave offense, which may include a violation of law or actions so outrageous as to shock the conscience of the community, the student is immediately suspended and there is no requirement to hold the initial conference. The school should follow this procedure when the continued presence of the student at school (even for a short period of time) will pose, in the reasonable judgment of the principal, a serious threat to the health and welfare of students, faculty, or staff.

When a student is immediately suspended and expulsion is probable, the school should clearly explain the rules and consequences of the violation to the student and his or her parents/guardians while the case is being investigated.

Time of Expulsion

A school may immediately expel a student if the reasons are urgent. If an expulsion happens during the last quarter of the school year or during the last semester in the case of a graduating student, the school needs prior consultation with the Office for Schools before the expulsion can take effect.

Reporting of Expulsions

Even if they occur at the end of the school year, all expulsions are to be reported by phone to the superintendent at the Office for Schools within 24 hours and subsequently submitted in writing.

The school shall immediately notify the county office of education of expulsions. A copy of the Cumulative Pupil Record should be held until requested.

Right to Make Exceptions

The principal, in consultation with the superintendent, retains the right to make exceptions in cases where mitigating circumstances call for a different response than policy suggests.

Home Study

Certain circumstances may dictate that a student, at the discretion of the principal, be excluded from school attendance for a period of time. This is a remedy for unusual situations and is not considered a suspension. The school may give students tests, etc., outside school hours so that grades can be reported. A student placed on home study is expected to pay full tuition. Parents/guardians are responsible for supervising a student on home study. At the discretion of the principal, any student who is accused of a felony may be placed on home study until the case is resolved.

Emergency/Disaster Procedures

St. Mary School conducts regular emergency drills in accordance with Diocesan and city guidelines. In the event of a real emergency:

- Monitor local news for information and official updates.
- The school will communicate via email and text (for those who have opted in), if possible.
- Do not call the school. Phone lines must remain open for communication with emergency personnel.
- Do not immediately drive to campus. Roads may be blocked or unsafe. School entrances must remain clear for emergency vehicles.
- Students will only be released to individuals listed as emergency contacts in FACTS Family Portal. These individuals must present identification and sign students out at the front office or at the designated emergency release station. No exceptions.
- If a parent or guardian cannot reach the school, staff will continue to care for students on campus or relocate them to a designated emergency shelter.
- St. Mary School complies with all directives from local emergency officials. There may be times when communication is delayed or not possible. We ask for your understanding and cooperation.

Financial Obligations and Information

Parents sign a Tuition Agreement and payment plan when registering for each school year. Registration fees are collected and used to support learning.

Payment Agreement:

Tuition must be paid according to the Tuition Agreement and payment preferences signed by the parent. Students may not start school in the fall unless the tuition account is current. Any delinquent tuition, After School-Care Program balances, service hours, or any other outstanding fees prevent re-registration for the following year and can be grounds for dismissal from the school prior to the end of the school year. Outstanding balances will also prevent your child from participating in First Communion, Graduation, and all graduation activities.

Tuition/Cooperation Agreement:

Each family registering or re-registering at St. Mary signs a Tuition Agreement via FACTS stating that they:

- Agree to uphold school standards and have their children comply with school and Diocesan policies and regulations stated in the Parent Student Handbook and all supporting documents.
- Pledge cooperation and accept responsibility for all parent and family obligations.
- Agree to pay the selected tuition option according to the provisions of the signed tuition payment plan.

The signed Tuition Agreement stipulates the following to clarify the process of collecting unpaid balances: Should St. Mary School incur any attorney fees, court costs or other expenses in collecting the balance of

tuition and fees due, the undersigned agrees to pay all such costs forthwith and that the same shall be considered as additional fees due. Deposits, fees, and expenses shall be paid when stipulated by the school.

Early Withdrawal Policy:

The principal must be notified in advance if a student(s) will be withdrawing from the school. A student enrolled for any part of a trimester is not eligible for a tuition refund for that particular trimester. Refunds are based only on unused school trimesters. The first trimester for tuition purposes begins on July 1, 2025.

Tuition Assistance:

Tuition assistance is available to all registered families and is awarded based on need and available funding.

- **Returning Families:**

Applications must be submitted through FACTS during the month of February. The deadline to apply is March 1. Late applications are not guaranteed. All required documentation must be submitted online in order to be considered.

- **New Families:**

Applications must be submitted through FACTS within two weeks of acceptance. All required documentation must be submitted online in order to be considered. Late applications are not guaranteed.

Principal's Right to Amend

The principal reserves the right to make adjustments to the handbook as deemed appropriate. If there is a discrepancy in the interpretation of the handbook, the final decision will be determined by the principal.