



# St. Margaret Mary School

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2017-2018

**SAINT MARGARET MARY SCHOOL**

**2826 HERR STREET**

**HARRISBURG, PA**

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*Let it be known to all who enter here  
that Christ is the reason for this school  
This unseen, but ever-present, Teacher in its classes  
the Model of its faculty,  
the Inspiration of its students*

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## **FOREWARD**

This handbook has been designed to describe to you the philosophy, curriculum, and procedures of the school. It is believed that you can contribute much to the success of the school program if you understand what the school is trying to do. The education and training of children must remain the joint responsibility and cooperative program of the home and school.

Nothing contained in this handbook is intended to, or shall be construed to, create any contractual obligations, express or implied, on the part of the diocese, or school.

It is hoped that you will read the handbook, acquaint yourself thoroughly with its contents, keep it in a safe place, and consult it for the assistance it is designed to give.

## **RIGHT TO AMEND**

The School Administration, in consultation with the Pastor and the Board of Education of Saint Margaret Mary School, reserves the right to amend this handbook when circumstances warrant it. Parents and students will be promptly notified, in writing, of any such amendment.

## **SAINT MARGARET MARY SCHOOL**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Saint Margaret Mary School provides the best possible Catholic education in a faith-filled, safe and happy environment while fostering a love for God, self and others. The administration, faculty, and staff encourage peacemaking, self-discipline, and learning through a variety of experiences that will lead to well-rounded individuals who will become future leaders in our church and in the world.

### **Core Values and Beliefs of Saint Margaret Mary School**

#### **We believe...**

- We must provide an excellent religious and academic education in a Catholic environment.
- We must help each child grow in faith, knowledge, and sense of service to the community within and outside the school.
- Self-esteem, self-discipline, a spirit of cooperation, and a desire to learn are values, which we must encourage and incorporate into our curriculum and foster in our multi-cultural school community.
- In this humbling mission, teachers are partners with our parents, the primary educators of the children entrusted to them.
- Evangelization is part of our mission to our Catholic families, our parishes, and our non-Catholic students and families.
- St. Margaret Mary School is a family oriented school guided by caring qualified teachers.

## **HISTORY OF SAINT MARGARET MARY SCHOOL**

Saint Margaret Mary School has a solid tradition of bringing Catholic education to the Harrisburg area community. St Margaret Mary Parish was established in March 1948 with Father Francis A. Kircher serving as the first pastor. In October 1949 the school and chapel dedication took place. The School Sisters of Notre Dame taught in the school, and, in 1955, the St. Margaret Mary Convent was built.

With the growing Catholic community, an additional four classrooms were built in 1958. In 1970, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate were invited to serve St. Margaret Mary Parish. By 1979, half day Kindergarten was added to the school. In 1985, the Sisters of Notre Dame departed from our school, and Dr. Kathleen McKenna became the first lay Principal. In July 1986, with the closing of Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament School, the students from both Our Lady's and St. Matthew's enrolled in St. Margaret Mary School. At the same time, two Sisters of Mercy began teaching in the school.

Due to the growing enrollment, a modular classroom building was added to the school in July 1987. In 1995, diocesan priests replaced the Oblates at St. Margaret Mary Parish. In that same year, the Sisters of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ moved into the convent.

The A-STEP program, which provides after school care for our school children, began in 1997. The program is independent of our school but is supervised by teachers from the school.

In 1998, St. Margaret Mary Parish celebrated 50-year Jubilee. A Mass of Thanksgiving with Bishop Nicholas C. Dattilo as the main celebrant took place at the Cathedral of St. Patrick in Harrisburg on April 26, 1998.

In the summer of 1999, extensive renovation was completed on the school building. Tragically, in February 2000, a fire destroyed the modular classrooms in the back of the school. With insurance funds and the overwhelming support of the community, a new annex consisting of six modular classrooms was attached to the main building in August 2000.

In June 2003, Father Daniel Powell became the Pastor of St. Margaret Mary Parish. A four-year-old Pre-Kindergarten Program began in September 2007, in the former Sacred Heart Room of the convent building. Morning and afternoon sessions take place on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. In the same year, a Before-School Program, known as B-STEP, began. A year later, a three-year old Pre-School opened on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. In 2010, the Pre-K 3-year-old class added afternoon sessions.

Father Charles Persing, and avid supporter of Catholic education, became pastor in 2012. Parish-wide support is the real foundation of the school, and makes it possible for Saint Margaret Mary School to keep the commitment to provide Catholic education.

Father Paul Helwig became pastor in June of 2015. Father Helwig brings an extensive background in working in a parish with the mission of a Catholic School. Father Helwig sets aside one

day each week to visit the classrooms to teach religion to the students. He also brought the parish 8:30 Mass back to the school every Friday.

## **SCHOOL BOARD**

The School Board is a consultative body established by the pastor to assist him and the principal in the governance of the school. The Board is elected by the people of St. Margaret Mary Parish, and appointed by the pastors of Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament and St. Matthew parishes.

The board of a parochial school is a consultative body and is not similar to a public school board. A parochial school board has no direct control over, or responsibility for, the administration of the school. Rather, a parochial school board has responsibilities for matters of policy. Policy dictates what is to be done, not how it is to be done.

The School Board of St. Margaret Mary School welcomes input from parents, and encourages parents to get involved in its various committees (e.g., Development, Student Life, Finance, Facilities, etc). Elections are held in May/June of each year. Other responsibilities of the School Board include organizing and participating in Kindergarten registration and Open Houses, leading the Annual Giving Campaign each fall and organizing other fundraising activities such as the 5K Race.

## **PARENTS AS EDUCATORS**

Parents have a serious obligation first and foremost of providing and supervising the education of their children. The family is the first school but needs assistance from society as a whole and from the Church. Parents must create a family atmosphere filled with love and respect for God and His people, in which a well-rounded personal and social education is fostered. The family is the first school for developing values, attitudes, and love of Christ, self, and others.

The Catholic school is an extension of the education that begins in the home. By the time a child enters school, he/she is not beginning his/her education; the child is continuing their education with the help of parents. Parent attitude toward the school and the teacher is most important because it will be reflected in the attitude of the child.

When conflicts between teachers and students surface, parental judgments should be reserved until a time when a conference with the teacher can be arranged. If disciplinary action toward a student, excluding corporal punishment, is necessary, the school must have the full support of the parents. A disregard of authority allowed to continue at this level of education may carry into adulthood.

## **FACULTY AND STAFF**

The faculty is comprised of lay teachers who are dedicated to providing students with quality Catholic education in accordance with the Office of Catholic Education, Diocese of Harrisburg and Pennsylvania state regulations. The faculty has obtained teacher certification and many possess master's degrees.

## ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

To ensure the safety of every child, parents are required to notify the school office before 8:30 A.M. on the day of absence. **It is mandatory for a parent to send a note reporting an absence.** On the first day that a student returns to school after an absence, the student is required to present to his/her teacher an absentee note properly completed and signed by a parent. **If the child is absent for three or more consecutive days, a medical excuse from the doctor is required with the absentee note.** Please try to prevent unnecessary absenteeism. **Extensive absences may be reported to the Diocese Department of Education and Children and Youth Services.**

**It is imperative that students arrive to school in time and should be in homeroom before 8:00 A.M. Any student arriving to school after 8:00 A.M. will be sent to the school office for a tardy slip. It is Diocesan policy that 5 tardies will be changed to 1 day absent on the final grade report. A lunch detention will be assigned for every 5 tardies. Please note that a doctor's appointment that causes a student to arrive late will not be held against a student provided a note from the doctor is presented. Further action will be taken with continued tardies.**

No student is permitted to leave the school after arrival in the morning or at any time during the day before the regular dismissal except in case of a doctor's appointment, sickness or similar emergency. In such cases, the student is permitted to wait in the school office until the parent or person authorized by the parent arrives. No student will be permitted to wait outside the building or leave with an individual other than the one who has been designated through a note or phone call by the parent. Parents are encouraged to make doctor and dental appointments after 3 o'clock to avoid interruption of the school day.

A student will not be dismissed early for reasons other than sickness unless the homeroom teacher and the school office receive a written statement from the parent explaining the reasons (e.g., Doctor's appt.) for the early dismissal request. Upon arrival at the school, the parent must sign the student out in a book provided for this purpose. If a student is going to be absent from school for more than two days because of a personal reason, such as a funeral, special request in writing must be submitted to the principal for approval.

Schoolwork that is missed must be made up upon return to school. If your child is absent from school and you wish to obtain the assignments for that day, please call the office by noon so that we may have the assignments ready for you after 2:30 P.M. that day. For prolonged absences special arrangements are made between the teacher and parent. **Parents are requested not to plan vacations during the school term, as this is disruptive to the class as well as the student.** Saint Margaret Mary School does not concede to parents the right to alter the school calendar for personal convenience; included in this is Take Your Child to Work Day. If you plan to have your child participate in Take Your Child to Work Day, you must obtain permission from the principal prior to the day of the event. A written request must be submitted to the principal along with a written itinerary of events from your employer at least one week prior to the event. Any student who is out of school for this event will be marked absent and is responsible to make up any work that is missed.

Any change in transportation arrangements can only be made through a written note from a parent. Change of Transportation forms are provided on our website for your convenience. No child's

transportation will be changed without a note in writing. When an emergency develops, a parent may notify the office through the telephone; however, the call should be placed as early in the day as possible and only in an emergency situation. **Parents should not email a change of transportation request to a teacher after the school day begins. Because they are engaged in instruction throughout the day and also may have supervisory duties such as lunch and recess, they may not have the opportunity to check their email until after dismissal.**

## **ACADEMIC PROGRAM**

The Office for Catholic Education of the Diocese of Harrisburg sets the guidelines for all curricula in the school. The total development of the child depends upon his/her ability to learn as well as he/she can with interest, comprehension, and enjoyment. To attain these goals, there is a multi-level range of curriculum. The objectives are listed as follows:

### **Religion**

- To provide the essentials of Catholic doctrine and the principals of morality
- To teach the Catholic Liturgy with the Mass as its center
- To familiarize the student with the Scriptures
- To expose the students to the historical development of the Church
- To teach truths that illuminate our understanding of life
- To teach reverence for God and for all creatures
- To prepare students for first reception of the Sacraments

**Please note that part of the religion curriculum for grades 7 & 8 is to provide service to others. A minimum of 30 hours is required in both 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. Ten service hours are required to be submitted to the Religion teachers by the last day trimesters 1 & 2. The service hours for the 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester are due no later than May 1. Service hours may be turned in early and will be credited to the appropriate trimester. Failing to complete these service hour each trimester will have a negative impact on a student's religion grade as well as a negative impact on their ability to participate in special end of the year activities such as school dances, special assemblies, Track & Field Day and the class fieldtrip.**

### **Human Sexuality/Formation in Christian Chastity**

The Diocese of Harrisburg has approved guidelines for programs in Human Sexuality and Formation in Christian Chastity. Saint Margaret Mary School integrates both programs into the religion curriculum.

Students in grades one through eight are guided in identifying life as a gift from God to be explored. The emphasis is upon an awareness and simple appreciation of creation in all forms: plants, animals, family, and self. In addition, students are encouraged to become more aware of their personal attitudes toward life, their dignity as persons, along with their normal physical and emotional development. They explore the wonders of life through sound theological materials and under the



watchful eye of parents, church, and faculty. In short, students are presented with the idea that “what they are is God’s gift to them and what they become is their gift to God.”

### **Language Arts**

- To develop and practice correct grammar
- To improve oral and written communication skills
- To teach writing in accordance with acceptable English usage
- To master logical organization of ideas in both written and spoken forms
- To develop reading and comprehension skills
- To acquaint students with literary classics

### **Mathematics**

- To develop mathematical and application skills
- To teach quantitative concepts
- To teach mathematical computations
- To teach concepts and operations in practical applications
- To develop the ability to prove geometrical relationships and to use units of measurements
- To encourage sound reasoning and logical thinking
- To emphasize problem solving
- To involve the students in math competitions and math-a-thons

### **Science**

- To utilize a hands-on approach in teaching science
- To develop for each student a working knowledge of terminology, laws, theories, methods of investigation, and scientific process skills
- To expose students to laboratory experiences and techniques
- To have students participate in science fairs
- To teach scientific achievement in historical context

### **Social Studies**

- To present the different geological areas of the world
- To emphasize cultures, industries, and natural resources
- To chronologically trace the development of civilization throughout the world
- To familiarize the student with the United States Constitution, the American political process, and the structure of the American government
- To expose the student to current events that affect the world today and evaluate them in relation to past events that constitute our American heritage
- To have students participate in National History Day

## **Music**

- To develop music appreciation through theory and singing
- To teach liturgical music
- To offer optional instrumental music lessons and a band experience

## **Art**

- To expose students to various art forms and styles
- To familiarize the students with many artists and to help them appreciate the beauty in all forms of art and history
- To allow for creativity in the student's own expression of art
- To involve the students in art competitions

## **Physical Education/Health**

- To teach the student basic calisthenics and physical fitness
- To teach the student the basics in hygiene, proper nutrition and danger of drugs and alcohol

## **Spanish**

- To expose students to the language and culture of Spanish speaking countries
- To learn basic grammar, conversation, idioms and vocabulary of the Spanish language

## **Technology**

- To teach basic computer terminology
- To teach students to collect, graph and analyze data
- To have students explore a variety of simulations and applications
- To reinforce basic computer literacy to include keyboarding and word processing
- To instruct students on Internet safety and proper Internet behavior
- To participate in distance learning via the Wide Area Network

## **Services for Special Needs**

Through the use of state funds, the school shares in certain special services provided for all non-public schools under PA Act 89. Capital Area Intermediate Unit (CAIU) provides:

- Speech and Language Therapy
- Educational/Psychological Evaluation
- Remedial Math/Reading
- Guidance Services

## **Remedial Reading and Mathematics**

Remedial reading and math instruction is available on a part-time basis to students who are in need of individualized help. The classroom teacher and the remedial teacher in conjunction with the

parent make this determination. This service is provided through the Capital Area Intermediate Unit. The program allows for carefully planned and executed activities geared to individual needs, and individual evaluations to determine level of ability and measured progress.

## **Instructional Support**

St. Margaret Mary School employs certified teachers who are the STMMS Instructional Support Team. They work with students identified with a learning disability and/or enrichment needs.

## **ACCEPTANCE**

Families of Saint Margaret Mary, Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament and St. Matthews Parishes who desire an educational experience founded on the Catholic philosophy of education have equal eligibility for admission to Saint Margaret Mary School. The request for admission of students from all three parishes will be carefully reviewed as to the family's parish registration, coupled with their commitment in church attendance and faithful parish support. After accommodating the families of the three parishes, Saint Margaret Mary School may provide space for other families to include children of other parishes, and children not of the Catholic faith. **All new admissions in grades 1-8 are on a provisionary basis. Students' academics and behavior are monitored throughout the first trimester of school. Support is given to help all new students to find success here at STMMS. Students who do not succeed academically or are unable to conform to our discipline policies will be asked to find a different educational setting.**

## **ACCIDENTS**

In minor cases, authorized school personnel will give first aid. In the event of an emergency requiring professional medical assistance, every effort will be made to contact the parents. If a parent is not available, an authorized local contact person on the emergency card will be called. If none of the authorized persons on the form can be reached, the school will seek the care needed. Parents will be responsible for any expenses incurred. If an emergency exists, the student will be taken to the nearest hospital by ambulance or by car, and efforts to contact a parent will continue. **For this reason, it is important that the emergency card information is kept current.**

## **ACHEIVEMENT TESTING**

In April, students in grades 3 through 8 participate in the Standardized testing, which measures achievement and ability. Test results are sent home to parents after they are received and reviewed by the school. All students are required to be in school during the week of testing.

## **ADDRESS CHANGE**

All changes of address, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses during the year must be reported promptly to the office, to the homeroom teacher, and to the nurse. Be certain that the school has a second telephone number to be used when a contact number cannot be reached with the home telephone.

## ADMISSION

Regarding the admission of students, Saint Margaret Mary School will not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, national origin or religion. Enrollment shall not exceed 25 students in any class except when approved by the principal and the pastor. For admission to grade one, a child shall be six years of age by September 1 of the school year in question.

Children who reach the age of five by September 1 of the school year in question may be admitted to kindergarten. Screening is done for incoming Kindergarten children during the month of May. This screening evaluates the child's vision, hearing, physical development, ability to listen and follow directions, and fine motor skills. The following must be presented upon registration:

- Birth Certificate
- Baptismal Certificate
- Verification of Immunization as required by the Commonwealth of PA
- Proof of custody where applicable
- Academic records from previous school (transfer students)

**All transfer students are accepted on a trial basis, and admission is reviewed after the first trimester.**

## ANTI-HAZING POLICY

The Diocese of Harrisburg prohibits any form of hazing of or by employees, volunteers or students. Hazing is defined as: "Any action or situation which recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a person or which willfully destroys or removes public or private property for the purpose of initiation or admission into or affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in, any organization. The term shall include, but not be limited to, any brutality of a physical nature, such as whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the elements, forced consumption of any food, liquor, drug or other substance, or any other forced physical activity which could adversely affect the physical health and safety of the individual, and shall include any activity which would subject the individual to extreme mental stress, such as sleep deprivation, forced exclusion from social contact, forced conduct which could result in extreme embarrassment, or any other forced activity which could adversely affect the mental health or dignity of the individual, or any willful destruction or removal of public or private property.

For purposes of this definition, any activity as described in this definition upon which the initiation or admission into or affiliation with or continued membership in an organization is directly or indirectly conditioned shall be presumed to be "forced" activity, the willingness of an individual to participate in such activity notwithstanding." (From Act 2016-31) Any student who experiences some form of hazing or staff member who becomes aware of hazing should report it to the school administration. Any staff member or volunteer coach who permits or encourages hazing will face disciplinary action, including possible dismissal. Any student who engages in

hazing is subject to discipline, up to and including expulsion, depending on the seriousness of the offensive conduct. Every elementary and secondary school shall promulgate this policy to parents and provide a copy to all athletic coaches and moderators of activities in accord with Pennsylvania state law.

Policy Adopted: July 1, 2016 RWG/Bishop of Harrisburg

### **ALTAR SERVERS**

Boys and girls in the fourth grade who have a desire to minister to the people of Saint Margaret Mary Parish are invited to become altar servers. The parish priest will train them before they begin to serve. Students from other parish churches are also encouraged to serve in their parishes as well as at school Masses. It is important that the children be: punctual, neat, reliable, and accurate in following the schedule, dependable in finding a substitute, and attentive while learning the proper functions.

### **ANNUAL FUNDRAISERS**

A variety of fundraisers take place during the year, including the Spartan Sprint for Education. Each student benefits from these endeavors; therefore, it is required that each parent fully participate and support them. **The PTO and the school administration depend upon the support of all families for the fundraisers to be successful. Your participation is crucial and greatly appreciated by the students, teachers and staff.**

### **ASSEMBLIES**

Assembly programs are held from time to time throughout the school year. Parents are cordially invited to attend. Advance notification of assemblies, listing dates, and times will be distributed to students and is also available through the school Web site.

### **A-STEP/B-STEP**

The Saint Margaret Mary School A-STEP (After School Tutorial and Enrichment Program) is designed to develop the social, intellectual, emotional, and physical dimensions of the children entrusted to its care. Certified teachers of St. Margaret Mary School staff both the A-STEP and B-STEP (Before School Tutorial and Enrichment Program). A-STEP provides its own handbook and fee schedule. For more information on the before and after school programs, please call the school office or school website.

### **ATTENDANCE**

**The students should be in the school cafeteria by 7:55 AM, but not before 7:30 AM.** When a student arrives for school after 8:00 AM, he/she is marked late unless the bus is late. If the student is late, he/she is required to report to the school office for a late slip before entering the classroom. Excessive lateness is detrimental to a child's learning, and, consequently, a parent conference will take place when a pattern of lateness occurs. **See Absence and Excuses section.**

## **BIRTHDAY TREATS**

Parents may send in a small birthday treat to celebrate your child's birthday. This treat should be an individual serving size for each student in the homeroom. These treats will be shared at morning recess or at lunch. Healthy snacks are the best choice. Please check with the homeroom teacher for student allergies.

## **BULLYING POLICY**

St. Margaret Mary School has an anti-bullying policy that is based on our Catholic faith. In the Gospel of Saint Matthew, Jesus tells us "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you." We continually work with our students to help them gain a complete understanding of this area of faith and to practice living this rule in all aspects of their lives. Because they are a work in progress, we feel that this is a necessary tool to help students who bully others in this area of their faith.

Bullying, as defined in our school community, is when someone is repeatedly being hurt on purpose physically, verbally, by written words, including by electronic correspondence, or by exclusion of a group or individual student.

These anti-bullying rules are posted and enforced in each classroom:

1. We will not bully.
2. We will help others who are bullied.
3. We will include students who are easily left out.
4. We will be responsible reporters when we see bullying occur.

The consequences for bullying are as follows:

First Offense – Bullying incident report will be given. The students receiving the report will make amends to the victim. The teacher involved will verify that this was done. Parents will be contacted by the teacher and/or the principal to discuss the incident.

Second Offense – A meeting will take place with the parents, teacher, principal, student, and school counselor.

Third Offense – Detention

Fourth Offense – Suspension from school

**Because each situation is unique, and we are dealing with a wide age range of students, the school has the right to adjust these consequences as we see fit.**

Along with having our policy posted in each classroom, we also have age-appropriate anti-bullying posters throughout our hallways. Teachers go over these rules and procedures at the beginning of each year. We use videos and role playing activities in religion classes as well to educate students in this area. We put great emphasis on the job of each student to be a responsible reporter when they see bullying occur. Bullying occurs most often when an adult is not present. This is why we train students in responsible reporting, and we encourage them to seek out a trusted adult when there is a bullying issue.

The name of students who report bullying is always kept confidential. To promote a friendly atmosphere each morning the students say a Friendship Pledge.

#### Friendship Pledge

1. I will treat others with kindness and respect.
2. I will offer help to anyone who needs it.
3. I will include others in games and activities throughout the day.
4. I will inform a trusted adult if I have a problem or see anyone else having a problem.
5. I understand that we are all important members of God's family and the St. Margaret Mary School Family.

### **CARE OF BOOKS AND SCHOOL PROPERTY**

Each student is required to have a book bag to carry books to and from school, and he or she is responsible for the proper care of his or her books. All textbooks must have book covers on them at all times. Soft-covered workbooks should be covered in clear contact paper. Writing in hard-covered books is not permitted. If a book is lost, the student/parent will be responsible for reimbursing the school for the cost of the book.

### **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

It is the policy of Saint Margaret Mary School, as well as all of the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Harrisburg, to take reasonable action to prevent and reduce incidents of child abuse and neglect. The school will cooperate with Childline and law enforcement officials in cases of child abuse or neglect. **All faculty and staff members are mandated reporters and are required by law to report any suspicion of child abuse, neglect or any reports of either.**

### **CHRISTIAN LIFE**

The whole atmosphere of Saint Margaret Mary School reflects the spirit of Christian life and learning. The building of a faith community in which the students can experience the living of the Gospel is paramount. The rite and ritual of worship permeates each child's life. Attendance at Mass allows students the opportunity to listen to God's Word in Scripture and to strengthen their personal lives through the reception of the Eucharist. Children delight in joining their parish community at Mass, as well as take pride in participating as a lector, altar server, gift bearer, or choir member. The students have the opportunity to experience the Father's love and forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, which is scheduled twice a year. Prayer becomes a lived experience each day as students develop their understanding of prayer. Non-Catholic students participate in all aspects of the religious education program with the exception of sacrament preparation.

#### **Sacramental Preparation**

A parental involvement program is used for the sacramental preparation of the students. In the second grade, the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Sacrament of Eucharist are celebrated. Confirmation is celebrated in the eighth grade. The candidates receive two years of instruction,

combining their heightened sense of knowledge of their faith with service, as they continue to grow in the life of the Church.

## CLASS PARTIES

Ordinarily, parties are scheduled during the school year celebrating Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day, etc. The teacher and homeroom parents are responsible for the planning and celebration of the parties. Any other celebration must have the prior approval of the school principal. Students are not permitted to distribute personal party invitations in the classroom unless the entire class is invited, or if either all boys or all girls in the class are invited.

Parents may send in a small birthday treat to celebrate your child's birthday. This treat should be an individual serving size for each student in the homeroom. Birthday treats will be shared at morning recess or at lunch time at the discretion of the homeroom teacher. Please check with the homeroom teacher to see if there are any allergy concerns in the class.

## CLUBS/ACTIVITIES

Many opportunities for service, social interaction, and growth are available at St. Margaret Mary School. The **Student Council** allows students in grade 4 through 8 to plan special events such as social events and community outreach programs. An elected position on Student Council gives opportunities for leadership and responsibility. The **Children of Mary Pro-Life Club** includes students in grades 5 through 8 who help others become more conscious of the unborn, the elderly and the homeless. **Little Flowers, Brownies, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts** are available for interested students. **CYO Basketball** is offered for both boys and girls. **Track** is available for boys and girls in the spring. The **Cheerleading Program** supports our basketball team, and it includes grades fifth through eighth. With the help of volunteers, other activities may be initiated. The **Quiz Bowl Team** involves students in grades 6 through 8 who are interested in trivia and competing with students from other schools in the area. Other activities include **Photography Club, Girls on the Run, Choir, Band, and Math 24** to name a few.

## CODE OF CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

The Catholic Church and this Catholic School recognize parents as the primary educators of their children and that the education of students is a partnership between parents and the school. The students' interest in receiving a quality, morally based education can be served if students, parents and school officials work together. Our school is committed to providing an environment that educates, nurtures, and supports students according to the basic Christian principles of charity and love of neighbor. Everyone involved in the development of children and youth—parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, family and friends—is expected to behave in accordance with these principles.

It shall be an express condition of enrollment that the students behave in a manner, both on and off campus that is consistent with the Christian principles of the school. These principles include, but are not limited to, the policies, principles or procedures set forth in our school's handbooks.



It shall also be expected that the parents/guardians of a student follow the standards of conduct that are consistent with the Christian principles of the school. These principles include, but are not limited to the policies, principles or procedures set forth in our school's handbooks.

Our codes of conduct for members of our school community were developed to promote a learning environment based on reverence, respect, discipline, responsibility and excellence. As a partnership, we all need to understand the importance of a good working relationship.

In most cases, differences can be resolved. In some rare instances, however, if, in the opinion of the administration, the partnership is irretrievably broken because of the severe nature of the conduct, the school reserves the right to disenroll a family.

The purpose of this policy then is to provide a reminder to all members of the community of the expected conduct, so that we may continue to thrive, progress and achieve in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect.

Our Christian principles provide that all members of our school community:

- Work courteously and cooperatively with the school to assist the student in meeting the school's academic, moral, and behavioral expectations
- Communicate and respectfully express concerns about the school operation and its personnel in a constructive and Christian manner within an appropriate setting

In order to support a Christian and safe school environment, the following behaviors are inconsistent with the Christian principles of the school and, therefore, are unacceptable:

- Physically or verbally intimidating a member of the school community
- Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the school or any of the students/parent/staff at the school on any social media sites (Any concerns are to be addressed through the appropriate channels)
- Abusive and/ or threatening electronic, written or verbal communication
- Disruptive behavior which interferes or threatens to interfere with the operation of the classroom, office, or any other area of the school property

## **DISCIPLINE**

We believe that Saint Margaret Mary provides a Christian atmosphere of love, trust, acceptance, and mutual respect. The parents must model Christian living, since they are the first teachers with the greatest influence on their children. In addition, the faculty acts as a model of the Gospel values inherent in our faith for students through their actions and teaching.

We realize that our students are still in formation, and that as they grow and mature, they need to be guided toward self-discipline. A Christian, positive, and consistent approach to discipline will lead our students to make responsible choices. As they mature, they will reflect Gospel living and learn to look beyond themselves to principled living as exemplified by Jesus.

Ultimately, our goal is that students, intellectually and spiritually, will become productive members of society who will give service God.

### **Application**

The principal and faculty are dedicated to fostering creative thinking. At the same time, they expect students to conform to school regulations. There are times, however, when correction is necessary, such as when students' behavior is disruptive or interferes with learning.

Students learn self-discipline and responsibility through the following means: cooperation in class by obeying the school and the teacher's regulations, respect for themselves, others, school property, and the property of others.

The school has an obligation to provide a safe and orderly school environment that will enable the individual student to progress at a rate commensurate with his or her own ability. The rights of an individual must be carefully considered and individual expression encouraged. When such expression interferes directly or indirectly with the rights of other, appropriate steps must be taken.

### **Disciplinary Measures**

Communications between teachers and parents will take place in order to inform parents about behavior problems as they occur. A reprimand, in the form of a Reflect and Correct or Detention for willful and/or repeated violation of school regulations, will be the responsibility of the classroom teacher. Additional reprimands which may result from continued or more serious offenses will involve parents and the principal. The principal determines the specific disciplinary step.

**When a parent feels that an issue or circumstance has developed which is interfering with their child's ability to profit from the educational experience at STMMS, the parent is asked to first consult with the teacher before contacting the principal.** Parents may contact the teacher and request an appointment via the school telephone, teacher e-mail or a written note. If the problem cannot be resolved with the teacher, the opportunity to discuss the issue with the principal may be requested.

In cases where serious disagreement between the school and parents cannot be resolved amicably, or in cases where the conduct of parents is deemed to interfere with the education mission of the school, STMMS reserves the right to require parents to withdraw their child.

### **Reflect and Correct & Detentions**

Reflect and Correct slips are issued without any required warning to the student for minor conduct and uniform infractions as well as for not completing in class or homework, repeatedly not returning correspondences between home and school or arriving to school late without a

written excuse, etc. For policy violation or for unacceptable behavior, students may be detained during lunch recess or after school depending on the severity of the action. Advanced notice of an after-school detention will be given to the student. It is the student's responsibility to notify his/her parents. A parent must sign the detention slip, and the student must return it to the teacher the next day. Parents have the responsibility for arranging transportation home after an after-school detention. The student must be picked up 4:00 PM.

While the violation of any of the school regulations is considered to be a serious matter, there are violations which are intolerable. Every effort is made to counsel students and parents so that drastic measures, such as in-school suspension, out of school suspension, or expulsion, will not be necessary. However, occasions may arise when such action is in the best interest of all.

### **Definition of Disciplinary Terms**

**In-School Suspension** – The exclusion of a student from class for a specified period of time usually lasts from one to five days. The student eats and does all the school assignments in a room provided by the principal. **ISS is assigned after 5 detentions within a trimester. Students with repeated ISS will be subject to loss of privileges such as field trip, Track & Field Day, school social and special assemblies.**

**Out of School Suspension** – The removal of a student from school for a specified period of time.

**Expulsion** – The permanent dismissal of a student by the decision of the principal in consultation with the pastor.

### **Categories of Misconduct**

The following are categories of misconduct which may result in an in-school suspension, out of school suspension, or expulsion. These categories are general in nature and are not deemed to be all-inclusive:

- **Matters relating to public and private property** – Examples: theft; misuse of books, materials and equipment; defacing property; trespassing (unauthorized presence in the building); and willful, malicious destruction of the property of the school or another person. Restitution of damages will be demanded.
- **Matters pertaining to citizenship** – Examples: Violation of state laws, local ordinances, approved safety and fire codes, laws pertaining to civil disobedience; use of profane and obscene language; possession, selling and/or use of drugs, narcotics and/or controlled substances, tobacco, cigarettes or alcoholic beverages; engaging in immoral conduct; physically threatening and/or actually abusing any student or staff member; cheating;

extortion; persistent disobedience; gross misbehavior; possession of pornography; sexual harassment; and Internet violations.

- **Matters pertaining to attendance** – Examples: Violation of compulsory attendance laws; persistent tardiness; and failure to attend school regularly.
- **Matters concerning threats** – A threat to inflict violence on another person will be investigated immediately by the school. If a threat is determined to be credible, the student(s) involved may be suspended from school and law enforcement officials notified. In a serious situation, students who are considered to pose a threat to themselves, or to other, may be asked to withdraw from the school.

Any other action or conduct which is deemed to be inappropriate will be subject to discipline by the school in its sole discretion.

Students may be suspended or expelled from school for serious offense. After consultation with the superintendent, the principal with the pastor has the authority to expel a student. The student and parents will be informed of the in-school suspension or expulsion. Should a student be accused of a serious or criminal violation whether inside or apart from school, the student may be placed on home study until the matter has been resolved, or another determination has been made by the administration.

### **Diocesan Policy on Expulsion**

Expulsion is viewed as a radical action in which the school feels the student's interest would be better served in another environment, or that the student's behavior is a serious threat to the school community. Expulsion is invoked as a last resort after the matter has been referred to the superintendent.

Parents/guardians have the right to appeal the expulsion of their student to a special Review Board consisting of two School Board members and one Parish Council member. The Review Board shall not have any direct involvement in the case, for example, the pastor, principal, teacher or relative of the student.

The task of the Review Board is to hear both sides of the case and to render impartial judgment as to whether or not the procedures and policies were followed.

The parents/guardians have ten days from the reception of the expulsion notice to request an appeal. The request must be made in writing and addressed to the principal. The hearing is to be held as soon as conveniently possible for all parties. Legal counsel or other support personnel are not admitted to an appeal before the Review Board. The Review Board will determine whether the school administration has followed appropriate policies and procedures, and confirm the expulsion. They may determine that the facts do not sustain the decision to expel the student, and recommend that the administration to rescind the expulsion.

Saint Margaret Mary School reserves the right to enforce its regulations in a manner best suited to the individual situation and in accordance with the regulations of the Diocesan Board of Education.

### **Safe Schools Act of 1997**

Pennsylvania legislation dealing with school crime and safety issues:

- **Record Keeping** – Non-public schools must keep records of incidents involving violence. A statistical summary of the record must be available to the public upon request.
- **Sworn Statement** – Parents enrolling a child in public school must give a sworn statement that their child was not under suspension or expulsion.
- **Student Records** – Public schools must automatically transfer a student’s discipline record, without parental permission. STMMS will continue to observe the general practice of not forwarding a student’s discipline file with academic records, with the following exceptions: A student involved with the possession of a weapon, the sale or possession of controlled substances, or involved with an act of violence which posed a potential threat to others. STMMS will send an advisement of these situations to any school a student transfers to, either in the case of expulsion or voluntary withdrawal of the student. (This policy reflects our commitment to the Safe Schools Act of 1997).

### **Alerting Law Enforcement**

STMMS will notify the local law enforcement authorities and the Diocesan Educational Office whenever a weapon is discovered on school grounds, or in the possession of a student under our care (i.e., school bus, etc.).

### **STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

To maintain a Christian academic atmosphere as a student of Saint Margaret Mary School, I will:

- Respect my teachers, volunteers, school personnel and fellow students.
- Obey the rules of my school, home and community.
- Strive to be honest with others and myself.
- Avoid the use of obscene language and gestures.
- Develop good study habits and work to the best of my ability.
- Maintain good sportsmanship.
- Take proper care of personal, school, and classmates’ property.
- Observe the dress code.
- Refrain from chewing gum on school property.
- Refrain from bringing cell phones or other electronic equipment to school.

- Refrain from fighting.
- Refrain from cheating.
- Refrain from smoking, using alcohol, drugs, and narcotics.
- Refrain from leaving school without permission.
- Treat others as Jesus would treat me.
- Maintain orderly and quiet behavior in the hallways and locker area.
- Observe bus regulations.
- Not carry or use a weapon, which could cause bodily harm (Diocesan Policy #5114).

Regarding classroom manners, I will:

- Be on time.
- Upon entering the classroom, go directly and quietly to my seat and prepare for the school day.
- Perform assignments completely and on time.
- Comply with the teacher's directives.
- Use my time wisely for my own growth and that of others.
- Obtain the owner's permission before borrowing anything.
- Be courteous at all times.
- Share the responsibility for keeping my classroom clean.
- Cooperate with my teacher in making the teaching-learning experience a creative and pleasant one.
- Be prepared with necessary covered books and materials for class.

Regarding morning arrival, I will:

- Proceed to the cafeteria and sit quietly until dismissed to my classroom to begin the assigned morning activity until the 7:55 AM bell rings.

Regarding the Church, I will:

- Walk to and from liturgies and assemblies in an orderly, quiet, and respectful manner.
- Be attentive, reverent, and prayerful in Church.
- Show politeness and respect toward speakers and performers at all times.
- Participate in assemblies, liturgies, and school functions by actions such as singing, listening, reciting and praying appropriately.

Regarding bathroom facilities, I will:

- Use the facility with care and consideration of others.
- Tend to my needs quickly without loitering.
- Bring no objects that will cause damage to the property.

- Conduct myself properly and respect the rights of others.
- Help to maintain the facility.

Regarding lunch, I will:

- Bring the proper clothing needed for the outdoors to the cafeteria. (During the winter months, a hat, gloves, and coat are requested.)
- After entering the cafeteria, ask permission from the principal or a teacher if there is a reason to leave.
- Stand calmly when waiting in line for hot lunch.
- Sit in my assigned area of the cafeteria.
- Remain seated while eating, using a conversational tone of voice.
- When directed, leave my assigned place clean with the chair in its proper position.
- Dispose of trash and line up to proceed to the playground.
- Obey and respect the teachers, principal, and the parent volunteers at all times.

Regarding recess, I will:

- Observe fair play with everyone.
- Stay in the section of the play area assigned to my class.
- Avoid fighting or pushing another student and pulling on another's clothing.
- Refrain from throwing any objects except balls.
- When the bell signifying the end of recess rings, stop playing and line up quietly in the assigned area.
- Walk to and from the play areas.

### **DRESS CODE**

Students are expected to present a neat and clean appearance. The dress code has been devised to help parents and students avoid confusion about what is to be worn to school. Each student is required to wear the complete uniform on the first day of school and thereafter, unless otherwise directed by the principal. When a student is not in uniform attire, the parent should send a note explaining the reason. Children in kindergarten wear neat and clean play clothes. Tattoos and other markings are never permitted on a student.

### **School Uniform**

School uniforms are worn by all students in grades 1 through 8 **to and from school and on all school days** except on the designated Physical Education day. Uniforms are usually available for purchase at reduced prices at the end of the school year, and during the summer. School uniforms, including sweater vests and sweaters, are to be purchased at Flynn & O'Hara Uniform Company located in Harrisburg.

## **GIRLS:**

### **Grades 1-8:**

- Navy or white knee socks or tights  
NO ATHLETIC OR ANKLE SOCKS
- Navy uniform shorts in September and May (Optional)
- Navy uniform slacks from October through April (Optional)
- Light blue long or short-sleeved uniform shirts may be worn with slacks and shorts
- No makeup (including lip gloss), large jewelry including dangling earrings, exotic hairdos, hair coloring or head decorations; one earring per ear; no necklaces unless of a religious nature; one ring per hand and one bracelet. Head bands must be the same print as the uniform or a solid color that matches the uniform such as navy, green, white, black. A watch may be worn.
- No baggy sweaters or short skirts; skirts should not be shorted than one inch above the knee.
- Only short, natural nails are allowed.
- **All students are required to wear all black, all leather sneakers.**

### **Grades 1-4:**

- Green/blue uniform plaid jumpers and round-collared, light blue short or long-sleeved blouses.
- Navy cardigan, v-neck sweater or vest.

### **Grades 5-8:**

- Light blue, button-down oxford shirt, uniform pleated skirts.
- A navy v-neck sweater must be worn from October through April. A cardigan or v-neck sweater may be worn in place of the vest.

## **BOYS:**

### **Grades 1-8:**

- Navy dress uniform pants.
- Navy or dark socks – NO ATHLETIC ANKLE SOCKS.
- Navy uniform shorts in September and May (Optional).
- A belt must be worn at the waistline and shirts must be tucked in at all times.
- No earrings or unconventional hairdos – hair may not touch the collar or cover the eyebrows.
- No baggy, washed-out, slouchy pants or sweaters.
- **All students are required to wear an all-black, leather sneaker.**



### **Grades 1-4:**

- Light blue long or short-sleeved knit uniform shirts.
- Navy cardigan, v-neck or vest (optional).

### **Grades 5-8:**

- Light blue short or long-sleeved button-down oxford uniform shirts.
- A navy v-neck sweater vest must be worn from October through April. A cardigan or v-neck sweater may be worn in place of the vest.

### **Grades 7-8:**

- Navy ties.

**Please have names on all items, particularly gloves, hats, sweaters, warm-ups, and lunch boxes.**

On special “dress-up” days or occasional “dress out of uniform” days (DOUD), students will receive information on the monthly calendar and/or through the intercom announcements about what is appropriate attire. We appreciate the effort of parents to check that all clothing worn to school is clean, modest and appropriate.

### **Phys Ed Uniform**

Students must wear the uniform shorts, shirts, sweatpants and sweatshirts purchased from the Flynn and O’Hara Uniform Store in Harrisburg. Sweatpants and sweatshirts are worn from October to April. Sneakers and **white socks** must be worn to Phys Ed class. Failure to follow these guidelines will result in disciplinary actions as well as affect the student’s PE grade.

### **EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

An emergency form must be properly completed, signed, and updated as needed throughout the school year. Any change in name, address, email, phone number, or emergency contacts should be made at the school office immediately.

### **EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING**

Should there be an occasion when weather or some other emergency necessitates a delayed opening, closing, or early dismissal of school; parents are notified by *One Call*, a school-wide, telephone service. **Saint Margaret Mary School follows the decision of the Central Dauphin School District for weather related delays and closings.** The school website, [stmmparishschool.org](http://stmmparishschool.org), Facebook and Twitter will also post the delay or closing as quickly as possible. Closings and delays will also be posted to local news stations.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are scheduled throughout the year. Field trips are privileges, not rights, and students can be denied participation if they fail to meet academic or behavioral requirements. The decision to attend a field trip will be made by the teacher and the principal. Parents of children participating in school-sponsored are required by diocesan policy to sign a permission form. A child who does not return a signed permission form will not be permitted to go on the trip. Verbal permission will not be accepted as a substitute for the signed school permission slip. If the child chooses not to participate in the field trip, he/she is still required to attend school. All trips are to be made in public licensed carriers or school buses adequately chaperoned by adults. The teacher will collect any fees necessary to offset the cost of the field trip. Proper attire for all field trips will be discussed before each field trip.

## **FIRE DRILLS**

Fire drills and emergency drills are conducted at regular intervals throughout the school year. Drills ensure that every student will be familiar with the emergency signals and respond appropriately.

## **FRIENDLY REMINDERS**

A friendly reminder slip will be sent home to remind parents and students about minor infractions. If compliance is not met, then detentions are given.

## **GRADE REPORT**

Grade reports are issued three times per year in December, March and June. Grades are based on class work, homework, class participation, projects, and test results.

Parents of students in grades kindergarten through three will receive a progress report, which must be signed and returned to the teacher. Parents of students in grades four through eight will have access to their child's/children's grades and assignments through an online system called MMS. Through a parent portal, parents will be able to access grades throughout each trimester. At the midpoint throughout each trimester, the teachers in grades four through eight will ask parents to verify that they have indeed seen their child's grades through MMS.

## **HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION**

In September of each year, St. Margaret Mary School holds a Back-to-School Night. At this meeting, teachers present their educational goals for the year to parents. It is important for parents to attend this meeting.

Parents are always encouraged to meet with teachers to discuss the progress of their child. To make an appointment, parents may contact a teacher via the school telephone, teacher e-mail, or a written note to the teacher. Teachers will schedule before or after school conferences; however, any contact made with a teacher during school hours should allow for a 24 turn-around time. In October, time is set aside for scheduled parent/teacher conferences in grades Kindergarten through 8.

All correspondence between school and home concerning calendars, upcoming events, and important forms to be signed and returned to the school office will be done electronically through our website via e-envelope each Thursday night at midnight. **All parents should check e-envelope each week.**

### **HONOR ROLL**

The Honor Roll is established for students in grades 5 through 8 to provide incentive for students to work to the best of their abilities. Students must achieve certain criteria in all subject areas as well as in conduct areas. Students who receive an “I” in Christian Values will not qualify for the Honor Roll.

- Distinguished Honors – All A’s
- Academic Honors – A’s & B’s
- Commended Honors – All A’s, B’s & 1 C (not in Religion)

### **INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC PROGRAM**

Music offers cultural and social advantages to young people. Information concerning the school band program for the school year is sent to parents in September. This program is open to students in grades 4 through 8.

### **IMMUNIZATIONS**

Pennsylvania law requires that every child attending school in grades pre-kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> must be properly immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, polio, measles, mumps, and rubella.

Written proof from a physician of the following immunizations is necessary:

- **Diphtheria, tetanus** – four or more properly spaced doses of DPT or DT; the fourth being after the fourth birthday.
- **Polio** – three or more properly spaced doses of oral polio vaccine
- **MMR** (measles, mumps, and rubella) – one administered after 12 months of age
- **MMR2** – prior to entrance of kindergarten
- **Hepatitis B Vaccine** – three properly spaced doses prior to entrance to Kindergarten

- **Varicella Immunity** – Varicella vaccine, or history of disease, or Serologic confirmation of Immunity

Pennsylvania state laws requires a physical examination for all students in kindergarten, or original entrance in grade one, grade six, and transfer students from other states.

### **Health Records and Illness at School**

A part-time nurse and aide, who provide minor first aid, staff the school health room. When a student becomes ill during school hours, the student is sent to the health room, and if necessary a parent is notified. School health forms are sent home annually, and parents are asked to keep this information current and accurate.

Parents of children with special medical needs (i.e. diabetes, epilepsy, asthma, etc.) must notify and instruct the school nurse, teachers, and principal on how to handle emergency situations pertaining to their child’s specific health need.

A scoliosis assessment is provided for students in grade 7. A hearing test is provided annually for students in kindergarten through grade 3 and grade 7. All new students to the school are tested. Hearing tests are performed on students when requested by parents and/or teachers. A dental exam is required for all students in grades K, 3, and 7.

A school nurse is provided by Central Dauphin School District on a part time basis. Students’ height, weight, and vision are checked annually. The school nurse will adhere to the Central Dauphin School District Health Policy. The policy, in part, as it pertains to medication, is as follows:

SCHOOL PERSONNEL ADMINISTER NO MEDICATION, INCLUDING NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICINE, UNLESS SPECIFIC WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS ARE RECEIVED FROM A PHYSICIAN AND SIGNED PARENT PERMISSION

Where medication is to be administered, the following applies:

- The original drug containers must be labeled with the student’s name, instructions for administration, content identification, and name of physician.
- Parent must request in writing that school personnel dispense medication as ordered.
- The school nurse or, in her absence the principal or her designee, shall administer the medication or arrange to assist the student.

**Please do not send a child to school if he or she is ill. If your child has a fever (100 or above), he/she should remain at home until the child’s temperature has been normal for at least 24 hours. If your child has the stomach flu they must be symptom free for 24 hour before returning to school.**

## **Communicable Diseases in Children and Personnel**

Diseases requiring a physician's consent to return to school:

|                |                         |          |
|----------------|-------------------------|----------|
| Conjunctivitis | Dysentery               | Polio    |
| Diphtheria     | Tuberculosis            | Typhoid  |
| Smallpox       | "Ringworm"              | Impetigo |
| Salmonellosis  | Pediculosis (Head Lice) |          |

## **HIV/AIDS or Related Diseases**

Students who are HIV-infected, have AIDS or other related diseases and desire to attend a diocesan elementary school will not be denied admission to or discriminated against solely because of their medical condition. However, the school does deserve the right to dismiss a student or curtail student activity. Steps will be taken on an individual basis by the principal in consultation with the student's attending physician.

Parents are required to inform the principal that their child has HIV/AIDS or related diseases in order that the school principal can provide for the protection of the child and other individuals in the school. If, for reasons of health or safety, a student can no longer continue to attend classes, the principal and the parents will determine arrangements for alternative instruction.

The school follows the Universal Precautions to Prevent the Spread of Infectious Disease to reduce the risk for employees, volunteers, and students. Instruction on HIV/AIDS shall be included as part of the school curriculum for all students on an age-appropriate basis.

STMMS reserves the right to amend this policy to comply with directives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Diocese of Harrisburg.

## **HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION**

Electronic communication is used between school and home whenever possible. Our E-envelope is updated every Thursday at midnight. E-Envelope can be found on the school website.

## **INSURANCE**

An optional insurance plan is offered through the diocese. In the event of an accident, a report must be completed and the principal will be notified immediately. Claims must be forwarded to the insurance company within ninety days.

## INTERNET AND COMPUTER USE POLICY

The Internet is a public forum with unrestricted access. For this reason, the school restricts permission for the posting of information related to the school, our staff, and our students on the Internet. No person is permitted to use the image of the school, the school logo or seal, school staff or students in any form on the Internet, or in any form of electronic communication without specific written permission from the administration. The posting of any such information on any Web site, bulletin board, chat room, e-mail, or other messaging system without permission, or the posting or transmission of images or information in any form related to the school, staff, or students that are defamatory, scurrilous, pornographic, or which could be construed as threatening or damaging the character of another person is prohibited. Any person involved in the posting or transmission of such material is subject to disciplinary action deemed appropriate by the administration at the school and/or by the Diocese of Harrisburg.

## LIBRARY

All students are entitled and encouraged to use the library during their scheduled time. Reference books may be used in the library. Parents should remind their child of their personal responsibility to return borrowed materials on time. The student shall pay compensation for damage to books beyond reasonable repair, as well as for lost books. The library conducts a book fair in September and during Catholic Schools Week.

## LOST AND FOUND

A student who has lost an item may inquire at the office before or after school and at lunchtime. **Parents are urged to mark each article of clothing with their child's name and grade**, and when items are found they can be returned. Any unclaimed items left for more than a month will be given to charity. If a book or other school-owned item is lost or damaged, the student will be responsible for reimbursement.

## LUNCH PROGRAM

Students may bring their lunch and a drink to school. Hot lunch is served several times a week. An online ordering system, [orderlunches.com](http://orderlunches.com), is used by our school to post lunch options and take orders for students who wish to purchase hot lunch. **Although soda is never permitted, we encourage healthy choices if a fast-food lunch is necessary. This is in compliance with the Diocese of Harrisburg and Pennsylvania Wellness Programs.**

## NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS

STMMS abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment that gives the parent or student the right to view school records. This also applies to non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, Saint Margaret Mary School will provide the non-custodial parent with 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.

### **NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICIES**

In compliance with the Diocesan Board of Education Policy, STMMS shall not discriminate on the basis of race, age, religion, national origin, or disability in the administration of educational policies, admission policies, athletic, or other school programs.

### **PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)**

The objectives of the PTO are to promote the welfare of the students attending STMMS and to foster a closer relationship between parents and teachers. The PTO meets monthly as an executive board. Parents are encouraged to attend the meetings. The PTO provides fundraisers for the benefit of the students and the school such as field trips, funds for contests and school awards. The PTO also sponsors the Spartan Sprint for Education. All funds raised from this event are used to purchase items needed for the students and the school. The principal and pastor oversee the spending. The PTO coordinates parent volunteers, publishes an annual school directory, hosts the annual Back-to-School Night and many other events throughout the year. Information on becoming a member of the PTO can be obtained at the Back-to-School Night in early September.

### **PARENT AND TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Parents are encouraged to keep in contact with teachers regarding student progress. A scheduled conference is held in the middle of the first trimester which parents are expected to attend. Parent/Teacher conferences are scheduled at 10-15 minute intervals, and every effort is made to schedule the meetings back-to-back for families with more than one child. Parent/Teacher conferences help to identify you child's strengths, allow time to discuss areas in need of improvement, and to develop reasonable goals.

It is the diocesan position that parents (having some defined custody rights) and stepparents may be present at school conferences. If a custodial or non-custodial parent objects to the presence of another stepparent at such a conference, then they must obtain a court order or made a change to the custody agreement that prevents the appearance of the other party at the conference. If parents begin an argument during the conference, the conference is terminated and not rescheduled until the matter is resolved. The school will not be responsible for adjudicating the custody agreements between parents. Our policy is to abide by the determinations of a court in these matters. This description applies to stepparents in a legal marriage (civil or religious). Live-in friends are not recognized as stepparents.

When it becomes necessary, the staff is willing to confer with parents concerning their child. Teachers may be contacted through the school office; however, they may not accept calls during their teaching time. Teachers will return telephone calls during their non-teaching time or after school. Parents should never contact teachers in their homes.

### **PROMOTION AND RETENTION**

A student is promoted when he/she adequately demonstrates mastery of material covered in all or the majority of major subject areas. Promotion is left to the discretion of the teacher and principal.

A student is retained if he/she has not adequately mastered the subject material in at least two major subjects and does not attend summer school or receive adequate tutoring in the failed subjects. The decision of retaining a pupil is left to the discretion of the teacher, school psychologist, principal, and the parent. The decision will be made after all responsible persons for the child's education have conferred upon the need for retention

### **SCHOOL PICTURES**

Official class pictures of the students are taken in October. These pictures are available for purchase. Spring pictures are offered to families.

### **SCHOOL SUPPLIES**

Each teacher before the start of the school year will distribute a list of necessary school supplies. Please obtain all items on the stationary list provided by your child's teacher. Parents should check with their child throughout the year to make sure the necessary supplies are still in the child's possession.

### **SNACKS**

Teachers in grades kindergarten through fourth grade arrange a snack time. Children may bring a nutritious snack to school each day. Sweets of any kind are not permitted. Don't forget to send a snack of days your child purchases hot lunch.

### **SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES**

The St. Margaret Mary Athletic Association offers boys and girls basketball and track and field teams that compete in the Harrisburg League of the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO). Any grade school students that are members of St. Margaret Mary, Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament or St. Matthew's parishes are eligible to participate. The CYO basketball season starts in November and ends in mid-March; track and field season starts in April and ends in May.



Girls in grades five through eight make up the STMMS junior varsity and varsity cheerleading squads.

Flag football is offered in the fall for students in grades seven and eight. Girls on the Run is offered to girls in grades three through five when a coach is available.

### **STUDENT COUNCIL**

Members of the Student Council are elected by the student body and serve for one year. Sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students are elected as officers of the council, and students in grades four through eight are elected as representatives to the council. All council members must have a “C” or better in all subject areas and may not have an “I” in Christian Values. The code of the council is to work with the faculty and the students to improve the life of the school. Members of the council are expected to set a good example at all times and are required to help with activities after school hours.

### **STUDENT SECURITY**

**Parents are required to call the school between 7AM and 8:30 AM to report their child’s absence.** The answering machine may be used if your call is placed before 7 AM. Teacher supervision begins at 7:30 AM. Students should not arrive at school before this time, unless buses transport them. The school reserves the right to take appropriate action to ensure adherence to this policy.

Parents must give advance notice in writing to the homeroom teacher regarding changes in after school student transportation. This includes car riders and bus riders who change their means of transportation for going home. A student may not ride another bus home from school unless the parent has contacted the district bus authorities. **A note to the school identifying the change and permission must be submitted in writing to the school office via the homeroom teacher.** No school district will allow a student to ride one of their buses unless the student resides in that district. **Without a written note to change transportation the student will be sent home their usual way. Change of transportation forms are provided on the school website.**

### **STUDENT WITHDRAWALS AND TRANSFERS**

When a withdrawal or transfer of a student occurs or is anticipated for any reason, parents should contact the school office. Parents should supply a letter, directed to the principal, to include the exact date of withdrawal, and the name and address of the new school that the child will be attending.

Student records will be mailed to the transferring school. An exception is made when students transfer to schools in foreign countries. In this case, records may be hand carried in a sealed envelope. Academic records are not forwarded to a new educational placement if tuition payments are not up to date.

## **STUDY AND HOMEWORK**

Each student must spend a reasonable amount of time each evening in preparation for his/her next day's class. Homework is a helpful educational tool, which reinforces the study skills presented in class, teaches the student to work independently, and gives the student time to complete certain projects that require individual and creative effort. Parents should provide a place to study, which is conducive to learning. The amount of homework each night is left to the discretion of the teacher. Suggested time allotments are as follows: grades one and two, 20-30 minutes; grades three, four, and five, 35-55 minutes; and grades six, seven, and eight, 60-90 minutes. Supervision and guidance in homework are encouraged, especially in the lower grades.

All students in grades two through eight have an assignment book in which homework must be recorded daily. Parents are asked to check this book nightly in order to monitor their child.

If a student receives a failing grade on his/her grade report and he/she is involved in any school activity, the parent will be notified and a conference requested to discuss the child's continued participation in the school activity.

### **How To Study**

- Attitude is important – think positively; work independently; seek help only when you have exhausted your own resources; then ask questions and use library resources
- Learning requires concentration – keep your mind on what you are doing
- At home, have a definite, well-lighted, quiet place to study
- Read the entire assignment, reread slowly and make notes
- Long-term project – do a little of it each day

## **TELEPHONE/CELL PHONES/ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT**

Students and teachers will not be summoned for incoming calls. Important messages will be relayed. Telephone use by students is restricted to urgent situations and requires the permission of the principal or school office staff. Cell phones, iPods, MP3 players, and any other electronic equipment are not permitted to be in a student's possession during the school day. **Cell phones or other electronic equipment must be turned off and kept in the backpack or locker at all times.** Any student with a cell phone or piece of electronic equipment in his/her possession will receive a detention and it will be confiscated. A parent will be notified and required to pick up the equipment from the school office.

## TRANSPORTATION

### Bus

The public school districts, which transport their students in buses, must also provide transportation for STMMS children. Buses are provided for children living in Central Dauphin, Susquehanna, Harrisburg, and other school districts. Children must obey the bus rules and regulations. If a child breaks a bus rule, the school is notified by letter and must take action against the student. To ensure safety, the bus drivers will pick up and drop off students in the church parking lot near the side entrance of the school. Teachers are always on duty with bus students.

### Car

To ensure safety, the children transported to school in cars are to be dropped off in the school parking lot. **It is necessary for parents to park their cars in a parking space and not stop their car in the driving lane. Parents are responsible for crossing the younger students at Brook's Alley.**

### Dismissal

At dismissal, parents must enter the school parking lot from the Herr Street entrance and park on the Herr Street (south) side of the parking lot. Each family will receive two laminated car rider cards to be used by parents or guardians for pick up. Parents are to place their card in the mailbox located outside the gym door when they arrive. Students will be kept in the gym. The cards will be taken out of the mailbox and will be used to call the students for pick up. As the student's name is called, they will come to the front of the gym and pick up their card. They will then exit the gym and meet their parents in the designated area of the parking lot. Parents are requested not to enter the building at dismissal time. If you are unable to meet your child(ren) on time, then it will be necessary for your child(ren) to utilize A-STEP and be charged accordingly. Car riders are dismissed at 2:55 PM. All children must be picked up by 3:15 PM. **At 3:15 students who have not been picked up will be sent to A-STEP and be charged the daily rate. Please call the school office to let us know you will be delayed.**

All cars must exit the parking lot via the exit on 29<sup>th</sup> street. Cars should yield to buses when leaving the parking lot. No car is allowed to cut across the parking lot and exit via Book's Alley.

## **BUS TRANSPORTATION**

Pennsylvania state law (Act 372) provides for transportation to all students within the district or outside the district boundaries at a distance not exceeding ten miles by the nearest public highway.

## **BUS SAFETY REGULATIONS**

Students are expected to follow the rules established by the local districts and each individual bus driver.

## **STMM BUS RULES AND REGULATIONS**

Students must ride the assigned bus, stay in the assigned seat, board and leave the bus at the assigned stop. **IN CASES OF EMERGENCY ONLY**, a written request for a change in the buses must be made to the district bus authorities prior to the day of change. Unless this permission is obtained, the bus driver will refuse to honor written requests from the parent. Only permission from the bus authorities will be honored. If a child does not obtain this permission and misses the assigned bus, he/she will be sent to the school office and the parent will be responsible for providing transportation.

Parents of students who ride the school bus are asked to review the rules of bus conduct with their children. Parents should remind their children that breaking these rules could result in suspension or loss of bus riding privileges. The rules are as follows:

- Be on time at the designated school bus stop, arriving five minutes before the bus is due.
- Wait for your bus at a safe place, well off the highway, on the side of the street on which you live. Cross the street to enter the bus only when the bus is stopped and the red flashing signals are lighted.
- Respect the property rights of people who reside at or near the bus stop.
- Do not get into private vehicles with strangers. All school district vehicles are clearly marked.
- Enter the bus in an orderly manner and take your assigned seat. Bus drivers may assign seats.
- Always obey your bus driver.
- Remain in your seat at all times except when boarding and unloading.
- Keep your hands, head and feet inside the bus. Never throw objects in or out of the bus.
- Be courteous to fellow students and the bus driver.
- Use respectful tones and never use profanity or bad language.
- Do not damage or tamper with any parts of the bus. In addition to disciplinary actions from violating this rule, you will be responsible for repair or replacement costs.
- Keep the aisle clear except when entering or exiting the bus.

- Horseplay, fighting, eating, and drinking are strictly forbidden.
- The following items are not permitted in any school vehicle: live animals, weapons, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, flammable liquid, fireworks, firecrackers, smoke bombs, tape recorders, radios, balls, water pistols, spray bottles, pea shooters, sling shots, and any item too large for students to hold on their laps.

Any misconduct that could be detrimental to the health or safety of the driver, other students, the bus, or persons outside the bus will not be tolerated.

## TUITION

In order to provide and maintain a high quality education for all students, it is necessary to charge tuition to help offset the parish financial responsibility to the school. A payment plan is available from May through February for the convenience of the family. It is imperative that parents stay current with the payment plan they have selected through FACTS Tuition Management. All tuition must be paid before a family can re-register for the next school year. Financial assistance is available to those who qualify but may vary from year to year.

### **Registration Fee**

A non-refundable registration fee is required for each child upon registration or re-registration for each school year. A kindergarten registration fee of \$200 is required. Each student in grades 1 through 8 is required to pay a \$125.00 registration or re-registration fee. All families who do not pay the tuition in full in the beginning of the year must pay a \$45.00 fee for the Tuition Management Services. **All tuition must be paid before a family will be able to register for the next school year.** STMMS utilizes FACTS Tuition Management to collect all tuition. Parents have the opportunity to select the type of payment plan. Each plan has a registration fee that will be charged with your first payment.

## VISITORS

**Parents who have the required diocesan clearances are welcome to visit the school. When visiting for any reason during the school day, parents must report and register at the school office first and wear their diocesan badge or receive a visitor's badge.** This is for the safety of the children. If it is necessary to contact a teacher or student, the secretary will make contact to avoid disturbing the learning experience. All transactions are performed through the school office during school hours.

**No parent may visit a classroom before school or during class time without reporting to the school office first unless special arrangements are made with the teachers.**

**No parent may bring children to the classroom door.**

## **VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**

Volunteers assist in areas where professional training is not necessary. Participation in one or more of the various programs is encouraged and greatly appreciated. Parents, grandparents, senior citizens, and all parish members are invited to become a part of this important program. All volunteers must obtain a Youth Protection Badge from the Diocese of Harrisburg to volunteer in our school. **In order to obtain this badge, you must apply for State Police and Department of Welfare clearances, and view the mandated reporting youth protection video online at [hbgdiocese.org](http://hbgdiocese.org).** All directions for this process can be found on the school website under the link Youth Protection.

## **YEARBOOK**

The annual yearbook will be published and available for sale in mid-May. Pre-orders will be taken in the fall. Pre-ordering a yearbook will guarantee you a copy. Extra yearbooks will be sold in May while supplies last.

