



SAINT MARY
INTERPAROCHIAL
SCHOOL

Family and Student Handbook
2025-2026

Saint Mary Interparochial School
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Philadelphia, PA 19106

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Dear Families and Students,

The mission of Saint Mary Interparochial School is to challenge our diverse student body to grow morally, academically and socially into passionate, confident and Christ-centered leaders. To achieve our mission, we provide a comprehensive curriculum that integrates academic, technological, artistic, and cultural programming. Recognizing the unique qualities of every student, we build on a strong foundation to prepare students for an ever changing world. In partnership with parents and the community, we strive to foster an environment where students want to learn and see the benefit of their learning.

In choosing Saint Mary Interparochial School, you have demonstrated a commitment to the values and philosophy of a Catholic education. The Family and Student Handbook, previously known as the Parent and Student Handbook, reflects the policies of Saint Mary Interparochial for the 2025-2026 school year. Please read this document carefully and sign the handbook agreement. This agreement indicates your compliance with the policies of Saint Mary Interparochial School. If any parent and/or family does not have a signed agreement on file, that does not exempt their student(s) from the rules, regulations, and policies outlined in the Family and Student Handbook (previously known as the Parent and Student Handbook).

The faculty and staff of Saint Mary Interparochial School look forward to working with you to promote academic excellence and spiritual development in the context of the teachings of the Catholic Church. Thank you for choosing Saint Mary Interparochial School!

Many blessings,

Denise Pimpinella
Acting Principal

Christina Ruskey Haciski
Executive Director

Introduction

Founded in 1782 to educate the children of Philadelphians, Saint Mary Interparochial School exists today to teach children how to live and work as Catholic Christians in the twenty-first century. Saint Mary Interparochial, an elementary school within the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, assists children in finding their niche in today's world by cultivating their religious, academic, and service potential. All of this is accomplished within the context of the Gospel message of Jesus Christ, the Master Teacher, the foundation of all learning at Saint Mary Interparochial School.

Our school is part of a community of faith which includes the home, where parents and guardians are the primary educators. Within this community of faith, we hope to nourish the spiritual development of each child. Our strong belief in the Gospel message of Jesus allows this community of faith to develop. Through active worship and prayer, students and teachers work together to practice the lessons of Jesus. The spirit of Jesus allows us to live the Gospel message through our service to others in our school and our community.

Educating the whole child within this Gospel context is a task undertaken by Saint Mary Interparochial's faculty and staff. The spiritual development of each child is the focus of each day's lessons and interactions. From this religious foundation, the academic and social pieces grow. Saint Mary Interparochial School strives to provide an outstanding academic program for our students. The curriculum is based on the Archdiocese of Philadelphia guidelines and is further enhanced by the faculty to ensure that it meets the needs of our student population. The principal and faculty work together to determine which teaching strategies will maximize individual performance. We emphasize the teaching of basic skills, problem solving strategies and reading and writing across the curriculum. At Saint Mary Interparochial, we want to provide each student with skills that will be the foundation for continued success as lifelong learners.

The Saint Mary Interparochial School faculty and staff are firmly rooted in our calling as Catholic educators. We believe in the message of Jesus and serve as role models for the students in conveying that message. Each of us view the school as an integral part of the larger Catholic Church and as such we regard ourselves as dynamic instruments who collaborate, support, and challenge one another. The members of our school community take a positive view of the efforts of one another and support those efforts through cohesive actions. The spirit of Saint Mary Interparochial School is one of living out our Baptismal call; to love, honor and serve God through His children.

Saint Mary Interparochial School Mission Statement

Saint Mary Interparochial School challenges its diverse student body to grow morally, academically and socially, into passionate, confident, Christ-centered leaders.

History

The rich academic and historic heritage of Saint Mary Interparochial School dates to the early days of Philadelphia, as Catholics and Protestants engaged in a spirited debate over educational practices. Founded in 1782 by the Jesuit fathers of old St. Joseph's Church, Saint Mary Interparochial is known as "The Mother School of Catholic parochial education" and is credited with influencing Catholic educational patterns in this country.

Situated in Independence National Historical Park, Saint Mary Interparochial is within walking distance of several key sites pivotal to our nation's founding, including Independence Hall, the Liberty Bell, Carpenter's Hall, the First Bank of the United States, and Washington Square, the location of the Tomb of the Unknown Revolutionary War Soldier. Saint Mary served children from the early days of Philadelphia for more than a century before closing in 1902 after a devastating fire. In 1969, the school was re-opened by the Sisters of Notre Dame to serve a growing and diverse population of young students from all parts of Philadelphia. The school's historic associations extend to its parish churches as well. Saint Mary Interparochial was originally the official parish school for Old St. Mary's Church, Old St. Joseph's Church, and Holy Trinity Church, however, today it receives its unique inter-parochial status by welcoming students from parishes across the region.

Philosophy

Saint Mary Interparochial School endorses the call of the Catholic Bishops of the United States to express its educational ministry through the objectives of personal spirituality, social justice, and a strong academic program in accord with the Curriculum Guide for Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

- To develop the total Christian personality by instilling in students a respect for life and reverence for Christian living
- To develop within the school a strong religious educational program based on Catholic Theology, Scripture, liturgical experience, and service so that each child will grow and develop in the Christian way of life
- To facilitate the intellectual, social, and physical development of each child through a variety of instructional methods such as small and large group instruction, departmental classes, and other tools for basic knowledge and formation; and
- To aid students in evaluation of their own capabilities and vocational possibilities

It is the consensus of the faculty that every human being has a right to pursue knowledge corresponding with his/her dignity and God-given ability, regardless of background or sex. In the early years, education is of the utmost importance because through education and guidance the children of today become the Catholic citizens of tomorrow.

Absences

Parents and guardians must notify the school when their student is absent. When your student is absent from school, a parent/guardian must call the office by 9:00 AM each day of the absence. You may leave a message on voicemail at any time (215-923-7522) or send an email to Mary

Ellen Penna, School Secretary, at mpenna@saintmarys.us. A student who has been absent from school is required by Pennsylvania law and by school policy to bring a written note upon his/her return signed by a parent or guardian stating the reason for his/her absence. In lieu of a written parent note, an attending physician note may be sent into school for illnesses. For unplanned absences that extend three consecutive days, a physician's note is required for illness related absences. Advanced notice is needed for all other absences. After nine (9) absences which are accumulated throughout the school year for illness related incidents, for which a parent writes an excuse note, the 10th absence for illness must be accompanied by a physician's note, if prior physician's notes have not been submitted.

All planned early dismissals must have a written note or email, informing the school of the reason for the early dismissal. If the early dismissal is medically-related, the student should bring in a note from the physician's office the following day.

For the safety of all students all sudden onset illness communication will be made by the school nurse or school office staff. If a student sickness occurs during the school day, parents will be notified and the child may be picked up at the school office. All phone calls will be made through the main office. If students contact parents directly for early dismissal (using their personal device, through student email, etc.) without a teacher or principal consent, they will receive a consequence for inappropriate use of technology.

In order to arrange for assignments of children who are absent due to illness, please call the school office before 10:00 AM. This work may be picked up at the school office by 2:00 PM. It is the responsibility of the student to complete work and tests that have been missed due to an absence.

For students who model or render artistic creative expression in a live performance, radio, television, movie, internet, publication, documentary, reality programming, or other broadcast medium that is transmitted to an audience, the school must complete all sections applicable to performing and/or rehearsals during school hours (Pennsylvania Child Labor Act). The student must have an excellent discipline record and in good academic standing to be given school approval for absences due to modeling and/or acting.

Students who miss in excess of 18 school days in an academic year miss 10% of the school year and are considered chronically absent. Helping your student to consistently attend school is a vital parental responsibility. Any student with excessive absences, tardiness, or early dismissals (25 or more) can be subject to a school disciplinary meeting which could result in academic probation, grade reduction, or dismissal from Saint Mary Interparochial School. The school shall give ten days notice of intended disciplinary action. All disciplinary actions are at the discretion of the principal, pastor delegate, and the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

Any student who has 60 absences will be dismissed from Saint Mary Interparochial School, as one-third of the school year has been missed

Academic Information

Curriculum

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia curriculum guidelines, consistent with the State of Pennsylvania guidelines, are followed for the teaching of all subject areas. The curriculum for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia is posted at <https://www.aop Catholicschools.org/elementary-schools/curriculum/>

Saint Mary Interparochial School offers students opportunities for growth in the following areas:

- English Language Arts (ELA)
- Entrepreneurship
- Fine Arts
- Handwriting and Cursive
- Mathematics
- Music
- Library Skills
- Physical Education
- Religion and Faith Formation
- Robotics
- Science
- Service
- Social Studies
- World Language
- STREAM (Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Arts, Math)
- Technology
- Writing Skills

Academic Probation

A student whose academic performance indicates serious deficiencies or deficiencies due to attendance may be placed on academic probation.

Students on academic probation may be placed on a two week improvement plan. At the end of the two week period, the student's academic progress will be assessed.

Students whose average is an U (or below 69) in behavior, conduct, or any subject area will not be permitted to participate in any school-sponsored sport, which include practices, academic competitions, tournaments, championships, or other related privileges until the grade has improved to a passing grade, effective at the distribution of progress reports and/or report cards.

Additionally, if a student is suspected of plagiarism and/or not completing their work themselves, a meeting will be held with the family and the student may possibly be placed on academic probation. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is utilized on a case-by-case basis to support students in fostering critical thinking and improving educational outcomes. AI tools are employed thoughtfully to complement traditional teaching methods under teacher supervision only. Misuse of AI tools could lead to a breach in the integrity clause. Please review the integrity clause for more information.

Admissions Information

Nondiscriminatory Policy

Saint Mary Interparochial School admits students of any race, color, religion, and national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students of the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, or athletic and other school-administered programs. Children entering Kindergarten must be five (5) years of age by August 31st. Students will be conditionally accepted into Kindergarten with full acceptance contingent on space, displayed readiness on the Kindergarten entrance assessment, and our “Kindergarten Readiness” Session.

Requirements Include

Permission letter from Pastor giving authorization for child to attend Saint Mary Interparochial Health Records

Immunization Records

All students entering must have current immunizations. *The only exception to the policy is in the event that a student has an illness that would compromise his/her life by being immunized. Documentation of a compromising condition must be presented prior to acceptance. This letter must be approved by the Office of Catholic Education before official acceptance.

Birth Certificate (original)

Baptismal Certificate (Catholic applicants only)

Report Cards (if applicable)

Standardized Test Results (if applicable)

Record of IEP (if applicable) or evaluation

Teacher letter of recommendation (strongly recommended but not required)

Students applying for Admission in Grades 1-8 must present a copy of current and past report cards, standardized test results and a teacher letter of recommendation. These will be reviewed to determine whether the program at Saint Mary Interparochial School will meet the educational needs of the students. An interview with the student and a grade level placement test is part of the admission process.

All new students will be given a trial period of one year in which to prove himself/herself both socially and academically. If during this trial period there are academic, behavioral, and other related concerns, a student may be dismissed from Saint Mary Interparochial School. The recommendation and decision of the school is final.

Saint Mary Interparochial School is limited in its human capital resources and will make reasonable accommodations for learning differences when possible. Saint Mary Interparochial School cannot accommodate students who have significant learning differences. If after admission, the educational, behavioral, and/or medical needs of a student exceed what Saint Mary Interparochial School has the capacity to accommodate, the student may need to be separated from Saint Mary Interparochial School. This decision will be made in order for students to receive the appropriate educational, behavioral, and/or medical accommodations and

modifications. If the decision to separate the student from Saint Mary Interparochial School is made, the student's tuition due would be prorated. All separation actions are at the discretion of the principal, pastor delegate, and the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

Non-Catholic students whose parents accept the philosophy of Saint Mary Interparochial School will be accepted. Non-Catholic students are expected to attend all religious observances.

Allergy and Asthma Policies

Saint Mary Interparochial School recognizes that an allergy is an important condition affecting many school children and positively welcomes all pupils with allergies. This school encourages children with allergies to achieve their potential in all aspects of school life by having a clear policy that is understood by school staff and pupils. Teachers and new staff are also made aware of the policy. All staff who come into contact with children with allergies are provided with training on allergies from the school nurse who has had specialized training. Training is updated as needed. Saint Mary Interparochial School is **not** a peanut-free school. We currently allow peanut-products to be eaten during snack and lunches.

Allergy and Asthma Policies: Asthma Medication

Immediate access to reliever inhalers is vital. Children are encouraged to carry their reliever inhaler. Parents are asked to ensure that the school is provided with a labeled spare reliever inhaler which is kept in the Nurse's office. All inhalers must be labeled with the child's name.

Allergy and Asthma Policies: Record Keeping

At the beginning of each school year, or when a child joins Saint Mary Interparochial School, parents are asked to submit a child's medical record. From this information the school keeps its asthma registry which is available to all school staff. If medication changes in between times, parents are required to inform the school.

Allergy and Asthma Policies: The School Environment

The school does all that it can to ensure the school environment is favorable to children with asthma or allergies. As much as possible, the school does not use chemicals in science and art lessons that are potential triggers for children with asthma. During any lessons which students taste test food, parents are notified of foods in advance.

Allergy and Asthma Policies: Food Allergy Policy

Saint Mary Interparochial School recognizes that life threatening food allergies are an important condition affecting many school children and positively welcomes all pupils with food allergies. In order to minimize the incidence of life threatening allergic reactions, Saint Mary Interparochial School maintains a system-wide procedure for addressing life threatening allergic reactions and maintain an Emergency Action Plan for any student(s) whose parent/guardian, and physicians have informed the school in writing that the student(s) has a potentially life

threatening allergy. If your child has a severe food allergy, please ensure that an EPI pen is kept at school at all times.

Allergy and Asthma Policies: Classrooms

Teachers must be made familiar with any Emergency Action Plan of students in their classes, and will respond to emergencies as per the emergency protocol documented in the Emergency Action Plan. In the event of a suspected allergic reaction (where there is no known allergic history), the emergency medical services will be called immediately. Information will be kept about students' food allergies in the classroom and in the substitute emergency folder, accessible by teachers, substitutes or other responsible adults. All teachers and substitutes will be educated about the risk of food allergies. A parent or guardian of a student with food allergies is responsible for providing all food for his/her own child. Snacks will be kept in a separate snack box or chest provided by the parent or guardian. Tables will be washed with soap and water following any food related events held in the classroom. Proper hand cleaning techniques will be taught and encouraged before and after the handling/consumption of food.

Allergy and Asthma Policies: Field Trips

Students with allergies who participate in field trips may face challenges to their physical health. Saint Mary Interparochial School will make reasonable accommodations for all students and will inform field trip chaperones regarding a student's allergy issues. Every effort will be made to provide a safe learning experience for all students. A field trip generally occurs in a less controlled environment where allergen triggers may be present. In the event that a parent is concerned about a child's presence on a field trip due to his/her special health needs, a parent may choose to keep their child at home on the day of the field trip.

Allergy and Asthma Policies: Birthday Observances

We ask that parents who wish to celebrate their child's birthday or other special occasion with the class to please consult with the teacher before sending in treats to the classroom. Some children have food allergies and will not be served any given food or treats if cross contamination could be suspected. All treats should be prepackaged for each individual student. Please consult with the teacher for specific directives. One recommendation for those with allergies is to send a small inedible trinket to celebrate your child's special event.

Blogs, Messaging, and Social Media

Engagement with blogs, messaging, and social media may result in disciplinary action if the content of the student or parent's social media includes defamatory and/or threatening comments regarding the school, staff, students, parents, or community members. Any inappropriate content posted, whether inside or outside of school, including but not limited to threats of violence, vulgar pictures, and other content deemed inappropriate may be grounds for immediate dismissal, regardless of previous disciplinary record. It is important to note that all online content has no statute of limitations; therefore, as long as a given student or parent is still a current member of the school, disciplinary action will occur. No student or parent should open a social media account under the name of the school or a particular grade or organization, without prior

permission from the school. A student or parent who chooses to create such an account may subject his/her child(ren) to significant disciplinary action and could result in dismissal from the school. Please note that students should not be using social media platforms in which they do not meet the age requirement to join; most social media platforms are 13-years-old to join. Please see the [Responsible Use Policy](#) from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia for the most up to date Social Media and technology policy.

Buckley Amendment

Saint Mary Interparochial School adheres to the Buckley Amendment (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act) in regard to privacy of student records and the rights of non-custodial parents. It is the responsibility of the parents to share any official custodial information decided through the courts. Official custodial agreements will be kept in a confidential file in the administrative office. **In the absence of any court document, the school will view each parent as having full legal custody of his/her child. Informal letters and emails from either parent and/or guardian do not permit prioritizing any parent and/or guardian more than another, especially when an emergency occurs.** In the absence of a court order to the contrary, non-custodial parents have the right to receive records about their child's academic progress or lack thereof. The school reserves the right to charge a shipping and processing fee for extra records sent to more than one home address. Be advised that if a teacher is subpoenaed to testify in a child custody case, the parent will need to pay the cost of a substitute teacher and any other costs associated with the testimony (mileage, parking, food, etc.).

Bullying, Cyberbullying, and Safe2Say Something

Saint Mary Interparochial School attempts to provide a safe environment for all individuals. As a school, we are committed to creating and sustaining a comprehensive coordinated effort to improve the overall safety and well-being of our students and educators. Recently a new initiative was passed in Pennsylvania called Act 44. This initiative is mandated in all schools within the state and is called "Safe2Say Something" (S2SS).

"Safe2Say Something" (S2SS) is an anonymous reporting system. It is a multifaceted program that teaches students, teachers and administrators how to recognize the warning signs and signals within social media, especially, of individuals who may be a threat to themselves or others. Secondly, the program hopes to encourage individuals to Say Something to a trusted adult or use its anonymous reporting system: <https://www.safe2saypa.org/>

Verbal, written, or physical threats made against the well-being of any individual are taken very seriously. Students making such threats may face immediate detention, suspension, and/or dismissal. Consequences are issued based on the severity of the incident and actions are at the discretion of the principal, pastor delegate, and Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

Buses

The School District of Philadelphia provides Saint Mary Interparochial School with free transportation for students in first through 8th Grade. To ensure the safety of our students and the bus drivers, below you will find general information and rules for school bus transportation.

Please note that bus transportation services are still impacted by the lack of available bus drivers, and transportation routes may be temporarily unavailable. Please check with the school for available routes. All families whose routes are unavailable or choose to drive their own student(s) to school may qualify for the flat rate program.

Rules and Procedures for School Buses

Use only the bus and bus stop that is assigned. The school bus picks up students at pre-assigned locations along a defined route. The School District of Philadelphia and the bus company are responsible for all pick-up/drop off locations and bus routes.

Orderly behavior is required at all times to ensure the safety of all passengers. Riders should remain seated, facing front, and wearing a mask (when necessary) when the bus is in motion. Riders are expected to keep their head and arms inside the bus at all times. Riders should not eat and/or drink without prior permission from the bus driver.

Students are not permitted to change their assigned bus arrangement unless the school has prior permission from a parent and/or guardian.

Students will be held responsible for any damage which he/she may cause to the bus. This includes, but is not limited to, physical damage, graffiti and littering.

Families should be at their bus stop at least 10 minutes prior to pick up and drop off. Please be mindful that the bus company's policy is to drop off all students at their given bus stop, even if an adult may not be present. All families should ensure that you have your bus driver's phone number in the case of an emergency.

If your child is encountering an issue with another student on the school bus, the student and/or parent must follow these steps before contacting the school:

- Inform the bus driver of the concern and/or issue that is occurring.
- The bus driver must document this issue with an incident report.
- Once the school receives documentation from the bus driver, the school is able to investigate and take further action, if needed.
- Infractions documented with incident reports/write-ups could result in the suspension or denial of transportation services.

Social distancing regulations may be employed by the School District of Philadelphia at any time. If social distancing rules are reinstated, students must maintain social distancing on the school bus and remain in their assigned seats.

If a student does not abide by the School District of Philadelphia's school busing rules and/or Saint Mary Interparochial School Code of Conduct, students may be subject to suspension or dismissal from bus services.

A student should not dismiss with the school bus line if they are not a bus student. If a student is found leaving in the bus line and dismisses themselves (e.g., not going on the school bus but leaving as a walker or car-rider from the bus line) the student is considered “out of bounds” and will receive disciplinary action.

Cafeteria

The cafeteria is a place where social skills can be developed. Each student is expected to practice general rules of good manners. Some simple rules of courteous behavior are:

- Observing good table manners and language.
- Leaving the table and surrounding area clean and orderly.
- Remaining seated while eating and using inside voices to talk with friends.
- Not wasting food.
- Being polite to the staff and any aides who work in the lunchroom.
- Following all rules and procedures of the lunchroom.

Lunch Program

We are pleased to announce a new, fully outsourced school lunch program for the upcoming academic year. This program, provided by Cousins Mike, has been selected to offer students fresh, wholesome meals delivered directly to the school.

Please visit our Family Resources page on our website and click on Ordering Lunch. Click on the link for the Saint Mary Lunch Portal. Choose the desired lunches for each of your Saint Mary students for the upcoming week. Orders and payments must be confirmed and submitted no later than **midnight on Friday** for the following week. Payments are made directly to Cousins Mike. Saint Mary Interparochial will not collect any lunch payments this year. A fresh, prepared lunch will be delivered to your student during their scheduled lunch period.

- This will be the exclusive option for a prepared lunch provided by the school.
- All lunch orders must be submitted by the Friday midnight deadline. **Please note that same-day or next-day orders are not available.**
- There will not be extra lunches or snacks available for students to purchase or for students who forgot lunch. Students will call home for these items to be supplied if they are forgotten.
- Any lunches that have been forgotten may be left at the school office and will be given to your student(s). Your student’s name and grade should be written on the bag or box.

For any inquiries or support, please contact Cousins Mike directly at support@cousinsmike12.com.

Cell Phones and Smart Devices

If a student has a cell phone, a smart watch (Apple Watch, Fitbit, etc.), or any other type of communication device, all devices must be kept in the student's book bag (K-4) or in the Personal device station (5-8) either on silent mode or turned off. Students may not wear any smart devices, there are no exceptions to this policy, unless given permission by administration for extraordinary circumstances. At the beginning of the 2025-2026 school year, no student has permission to wear a smart device in school. Strictly at the teacher's discretion, at times, students may be given permission to use their device in school for a specific school-based activity. If a student is found contacting any individuals (including parents/guardians) via their device, social media, or email without prior permission, they will be subject to disciplinary action. Students are always welcome to contact parents via the main office phone. Students should not have their devices in-hand on the steps during dismissal. Students may use their device once they have fully exited the building at the conclusion of the school day. Cell phones and smart devices may only be used in afterschool programs at the teacher and/or director's discretion.

Cheating

Cheating of any kind will not be tolerated. Students who choose to cheat, or help another student cheat, will receive a failing grade and face possible detention and/or suspension. A student athlete or student involved in extracurricular activities who is involved in cheating may be unable to participate in sports and/or extra-curricular competitions.

Child Abuse Laws

Saint Mary Interparochial School abides by the Child Abuse laws of the State of Pennsylvania. This law mandates that all cases of suspected abuse and/or neglect be reported to the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS). All personnel and school-based volunteers at Saint Mary Interparochial School are mandated reporters.

Conduct

In accordance with the stated philosophy of the school, which emphasizes respect for the human dignity and uniqueness of every individual, each student will be considerate of the rights of others in all interactions. All students are expected to comply with school policies, which are designed to foster mature development and personal responsibility. This requires courtesy in all personal relationships, promptness in fulfilling obligations, concern for the environment, and many other factors which the students' sense of appropriateness will indicate to them.

Saint Mary Interparochial School implements a progressive discipline model. The goal of progressive discipline is prevention of a recurrence of negative behavior by helping students learn from their mistakes. Essential to the implementation of progressive discipline is helping students who have engaged in unacceptable behavior to:

- Understand why the behavior is unacceptable and the harm it has caused
- Understand what they could have done differently in the same situation
- Be given the opportunity to learn prosocial strategies and skills to use in the future
- Understand the progression of more stringent consequences if the behavior recurs

Students may be required to personally contact their parent(s) and/or guardians via phone or email to discuss their behavior infraction and their plans for improvement. This practice is to teach students how to take responsibility for their actions. A school personnel may follow-up with more information, if needed.

Saint Mary Interparochial School reserves the right to impose consequences for inappropriate behavior that takes place off-campus and outside school hours. Thus, inappropriate use of technology, may subject the student to consequences. Inappropriate use includes harassment of others, inappropriate use of the school name, remarks directed to or about teachers, inappropriate remarks directed to or about other students/families, offensive communications, sexting, bullying, the use of images without permission, and/or safety threats. Saint Mary Interparochial School does not actively monitor student use of technology outside of school. While our filtering system establishes some parameters for appropriate use within our building, students and parents/guardians are primarily responsible for the appropriate and ethical use of technology, especially in the home. We are partners with parents in their children's education.

The school will notify parents of concerns about student life or behavior, even when not in school. When the school addresses inappropriate conduct, the school evaluates the totality of the circumstances surrounding the conduct. The school will conduct an investigation. The following facts will be considered prior to determining the appropriate disciplinary measures at the conclusion of the investigation:

- The nature, severity, and scope of the behavior
- The student's age and maturity
- The circumstances/context in which the conduct occurred
- The frequency and duration of the behavior
- The student's disciplinary record (including the nature of any prior misconduct, the number of prior instances of misconduct, and the disciplinary and guidance intervention measures applied for each)

Consequences for such actions may include but are not limited to, verbal warning, warnings via email, detention, suspension, and dismissal from Saint Mary Interparochial School. All disciplinary actions are at the discretion of the principal, pastor delegate, and the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, in accordance with federal, state, and local laws. All consequences are confidential, and families will not be informed in regards to an outcome of an investigation.

Conduct (Consequences)

Detention

Detention may be issued for a breach of classroom and/or school rules. For lunch detentions, parents may or may not be notified due to the level of severity. For after school detentions, parents will be provided with a detention form with written notification of the detention. The day, date, and time of the detention are at the discretion of the teacher who monitors the detention. Detention is mandatory and parents/guardians must make the appropriate arrangements with the teacher.

Suspension

Students who are given an in-school suspension will be required to report to school each day and work in the principal's office. Students who receive an out-of-school suspension will not be allowed on campus during the time of their suspension. Students must complete all class work and tests from the days of suspension but failing grades will be recorded for this work.

Expulsion / Dismissal

If a student is recommended for expulsion/dismissal, families will receive prior written notice as well as an opportunity to meet with the school about the given issue. All decisions regarding expulsion or dismissal from Saint Mary Interparochial School are at the discretion of the principal, pastor delegate, and the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, in accordance with federal, state, and local laws.

Students whose parents have violated the Parents as Partners agreement in this handbook may also result in having their children dismissed from Saint Mary Interparochial School.

Counseling

A certified counselor, contracted through CORA, serves the needs of students through individual consultations, small group sessions, and whole-group classroom exercises. The counselor may also be used for conflict resolution. If you believe your student is in need of counseling services, please contact the main office. If it is believed that more intense counseling is needed for your student, a meeting will be held with the family to discuss additional counseling options.

Custodial Rights

It is the responsibility of the parents to share any official custodial information decided through the courts. Official custodial agreements will be kept in a confidential file in the office of the principal. In the absence of any court document, the school will view each parent as having full legal custody of his/her child. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, non-custodial parents have the right to receive records about their child's academic progress or lack thereof. It is a great benefit to the child to have both parents involved in his/her education.

Drugs and Alcohol

Students who possess and/or use cigarettes/vapes, drugs, or alcohol on school property, at any school function, or demonstrate use via technology (e.g., text, email, social media, etc.) may face serious consequences, up to and including suspension and/or expulsion.

Emergency Drills

Fire Drill

Pennsylvania State Law requires that fire drills be held monthly. During the fire drills, students should follow these regulations:

- Rise in silence when the alarm sounds;
- Close windows and doors;

- Walk to the assigned place briskly, in single file at all times, and in silence;
- Stand in two rows, facing away from the building;
- Return to the building when a signal is given.

Lockdown Drill

Lockdown drills are held every other month. The procedures are:

- Rise in silence when the lockdown signal is given;
- Close windows, doors, and door shades;
- Walk to the assigned place briskly;
- Sit still and quiet, out of view until lockdown is lifted.

Shelter-in-Place Drill

Shelter-in-place drills are held periodically. The procedures are:

- Rise in silence when the alarm sounds;
- Walk briskly to the assigned place in single file;
- Sit, face wall, and put hands over head;
- Return to the classroom when a signal is given.

Evacuation Drill and Plan

Saint Mary Interparochial School has implemented an “evacuation crisis plan” in case of an emergency. All teachers and staff are aware of the procedure to follow to keep your children safe. In the event of such an emergency, circumstances permitting, the building will be evacuated and students will be moved to one of the secure designated locations:

Old Saint Joseph’s Church

321 Willings Alley, Philadelphia, PA 19106

Old Saint Mary’s Church

252 S 4th St, Philadelphia, PA 19106

Field Trips

Field trips are encouraged to expand the curriculum and add enrichment to the school program. The school’s geographical location gives access to many cultural, social, and historical sites. Written permission from parents, including insurance information, is required for children to participate in trips. Parents/guardians are required to give blanket permission for walking field trips in our immediate neighborhood. While we wish all children to benefit from these trips, the principal and the homeroom teacher reserves the right to deny permission to leave the school building to any student who has demonstrated a history of non-cooperation with authority.

Field Trip Reminders

- A field trip is a privilege and not a right.

- Class participation in a particular field trip over consecutive years does not mean that a given field trip has become a school tradition. Field trips may and will change over time.
- All grades do not have the same number of field trips.
- Individual teachers, in consultation with the administration, reserve the right to restrict or deny student participation on any field trip due to, but not limited to, poor academic performance and/or poor conduct.
- A written official permission slip, signed by the parent, is required before a child will be permitted to attend a field trip activity.
- Parents may refuse to permit their child from participating in a field trip by stating so on the proper form. Students who do not attend a field trip will remain at home with the parent and will be marked absent for the day.
- All money collected for the field trip is non-refundable, unless otherwise noted.
- Student cell phones and smart devices are not allowed on field trips unless otherwise directed by the teacher and/or administration.
- Parents who are “official” chaperones may not drive their car to a field trip destination with the plan of accompanying the class on the field trip. Saint Mary Interparochial School risk management insurance company insures the “official” chaperones and participation by unofficial chaperones jeopardizes the protection for our students.
- Parents who chaperone a field trip may not bring infant, toddler, preschool or school-age siblings on the field trip.
- Parents/Chaperones are asked not to bring “treats” for the children on a field trip without consulting the teacher.
- All chaperones must be 18 years of age or older and have the proper clearances.

Financial Obligations

Tuition Schedule
2025-2026

Kindergarten

Actual Tuition Rate per child..... \$9,825.00

First Grade - Eighth Grade

Actual Tuition Rate per child..... \$7,675.00

Tuition does not include FACTS charges and other school fees. Sibling discounts are available for families only when three or more children from the same household are enrolled.

Financial assistance is available and we encourage all families to apply for aid, even if you feel as if you are not eligible. Financial aid forms may be completed online at:

BLOCS (Business Leadership Organized for Catholic Schools):

<https://blocs.org/scholarships-2/>

FACTS Grant and Aid Application:

<https://online.factsmgt.com/aid>

Children's Scholarship Fund of Philadelphia:
<https://www.csphiladelphia.org/scholarships/apply/>

Tuition Reminders

All tuition should be paid up-to-date according to the tuition schedule that works best for you and your family. If your family is currently experiencing financial difficulties and is unable to keep up your current tuition schedule, please contact Mary Ellen Penna (mpenna@saintmarys.us) and Christina Haciski (crhaciski@saintmarys.us).

Tuition Schedule Options

Pay in Full If you select this option, tuition must be paid in full by August 1, 2025
\$100 discount for 2025-2026 Tuition for families that pay in full by June 30, 2025

Monthly 10 months August 2025 – May 2026 (via FACTS)

If a given family does not make a well-documented effort to satisfy outstanding tuition balances (e.g., applying for financial aid, creating payment arrangements, communicating with the school about financial plans and/or difficulties, etc.), they will be given written notice that if their account is not satisfied by the end of the trimester, their student(s) could be dismissed.

School records (e.g., report cards, TerraNova scores, etc.) are unable to be released to schools and families whose tuition is not paid up-to-date. Students of families with overdue tuition balances will be excluded from field trips and/or class trips.

Tuition Policy: Transfer and/or Dismissal:

Families must notify the school in writing if a student is withdrawing from school. This enables the school to prepare the necessary information and settle accounts. Registered students who withdraw before the first full day of school are responsible for one-third ($\frac{1}{3}$) of the full tuition amount. Registered students who withdraw between the first day of school and December 31st are responsible for half ($\frac{1}{2}$) of the full tuition amount. Registered students who withdraw after December 31st are responsible for the full tuition amount. The school will not forward records for students who withdraw with an outstanding balance. Students who are dismissed from Saint Mary Interparochial School fall under the category of withdrawn and all aforementioned policies apply to students who are dismissed. There are no exceptions to all aforementioned policies out of fairness for all families.

Grading Scale

Kindergarten Grading Scale

3	Achieving	(Applying Independently)
2	Growing	(Progressing Satisfactorily)
1	Emerging	(Beginning to Develop)
N/A	Not Assessed	(Not Assessed at this Time) *based on the curriculum

1st Grade - 3rd Grade Grading Scale

O	Consistently produces work of high quality and applies learned skills
VG	Regularly produces work of high quality and applies learned skills
G	Frequently produces quality work and applies learned skills
S	Produces work of satisfactory quality and usually applies learned skills
I	Produces work of inconsistent quality and needs frequent reteaching
U	Produces work of unsatisfactory quality

4th Grade - 8th Grade Grading Scale

All grades in English Language Arts (Reading, Writing, Vocabulary/Spelling), Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, and Religion range from 100% - 0%. Although students may earn a grade lower than 60%, no grade lower than 60% will be displayed on the report card. Students whose grades are modified due to a psychoeducational evaluation with a educational learning plan will have an asterisk (*) next to their grade in the final T3 report card.

All grades in Personal and Social Growth, Effort and Study Skills, Art, Music, Physical Education, STREAM (Grades 4-7 Only), Entrepreneurship (8th Grade Only) and World Language use the following grading scale:

4	Exceeding Goals
3	Developing Appropriately
2	Needs Improvement
1	Unsatisfactory

Harassment

Harassment of any type (e.g., verbal, physical, digital, etc.) is not tolerated. The principal and pastor delegate investigate all complaints of harassment. Additionally, if any student harasses another student and/or staff member which causes harm to the given individual, the Philadelphia Police Department may be contacted. Students involved in harassing behavior may face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion.

Home and School Association

All parents are invited to join the Home and School Association. Meetings are held throughout the school year. The organization aids in building community, educating parents about school programs, and holding special community-based events for students and their families. The committee chairpersons are always in search of Home and School Association members.

Criteria for Home and School Executive Board candidates:

- Candidates must have one or more students currently enrolled in the school.
- Candidates must be a dues-paying member of the organization.
- Candidates must have all required clearances.

- Candidates must write a letter stating agreement with the mission and philosophy of the school as well as display this mission and philosophy as a parent.
- Candidates must make a written declaration to the nominating committee for the desired Home and School Association position.
- All paperwork should be completed on or before May 31.
- Home and School Executive Board members must be willing to sign a volunteer contract.

Homework

Homework, which includes both written and study assignments, as well as special projects, is intended to expand and reinforce learning concepts presented in class. Assuming the responsibility for completing homework assignments is part of the maturing process of a growing child. In the beginning years, the parent must accept total responsibility for the quality of the home assignments. As the child progresses into grades 3, 4 and beyond, he/she should begin gradually to assume greater personal responsibility until he/she arrives at the stage where he/she accepts full control and therefore responsibility for the work assigned. Parental interest and care about progress should never disappear. **The following is a recommendation from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, and lists how much time should be allotted by teachers for homework assignments.** Please be reminded that this is an allotted time range and daily time is based on a combination of daily teacher requirements, your student's academic level, and work ethic. The time ranges posted below may also include daily reading requirements and recommended time for studying:

Kindergarten:	10-15 minutes
Grades 1-2:	15-30 minutes
Grades 3-4:	30-45 minutes
Grades 5-6:	45-60 minutes
Grades 7-8:	60-90 minutes

Homework Due to Vacations and/or Planned Absences

The school calendar provides for extended weekends throughout the school year. Parents are encouraged to schedule trips or family outings during these times. We do understand that vacations allow for students to become well-rounded individuals, but we ask that you be mindful of the amount of vacations taken during the school year. Vacation/Travel absences count in the students total number of absences and may lead a student to be characterized as chronically absent. **Teachers are not required to provide students with work prior to planned absences, even if adequate notice is given.** All parents should contact the teacher at least two weeks before the planned absences to see what is the best solution for the missed content. Missed assignments are the student and family's responsibility. **Teachers are not required to give additional make-up assignments for students to improve their overall grade due to excessive absences. Students will be allowed up to one day for each day of absence to make-up any missed assignments and homework.** For example, a student who was absent three days will be given three school days to complete the missed work. Any tests and/or assessments will be expected to be completed upon return to school. **Please do not schedule any vacations during the TerraNova testing window.**

Homework Policy Due to Illness

When a student is absent due to illness, a parent may call the school office before 9:00 AM to arrange for homework assignments to be picked up or to be emailed home. Most student assignments for students will be located in their Google Classrooms. Students may also receive missed assignments from their teacher when they return to school. Students will be allowed up to one day to make up work for each day of absence due to illness. For example, a student who was absent three days will be given three school days to complete any missed work. Any tests and/or assessments will be expected to be completed upon return to school. For students who have a chronic illness, a doctor's note must be kept on file along with any additional and/or supporting paperwork.

Homework Policy Due to Other Circumstances

If a student is out of the building due to other circumstances, such as a death in the family, family emergency, or any other non-medical related reason, students will be allowed up to one day to make up work for each day of absence. For example, a student who was absent three days will be given three school days to complete any missed work. Any tests and/or assessments will be expected to be completed upon return to school.

Homework Policy Due to Mental Health Crisis

If a student is out of the building due to a mental health reason (e.g., student is in crisis situation, family is in a crisis situation, etc.) the school must receive paperwork from a hospital, psychiatrist, medical doctor, and/or a certified mental health related personnel at least 48 hours after the reported issue. The paperwork must describe the student's current mental state and suggestions for school-based support. After the paperwork is received, the school will set up a Safety Plan meeting which will ensure that all needed school-based personnel are informed about a plan for the student socially, emotionally, and academically (which includes homework). The long-term plan for homework completion due to a mental health crisis is evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Integrity Clause

Students are expected to know what is considered acceptable and unacceptable behavior when it comes to academic honesty. The following outlines what constitutes academic dishonesty as well as the potential consequences.

Cheating:

“To violate rules and regulations. To act in a dishonest way”.

Examples of cheating include but are not limited to:

- Using any unauthorized aid during a test (i.e. other devices, apps, calculators, digital or printed notes, search engines, other people including parent(s)/guardian(s)) without prior permission.

- Giving or receiving answers during a test from any of those sources.
- Accessing or sharing a test before it is assigned.
- Using technology for translating languages and submitting it as your own translation without prior permission.
- Taking credit for group work without doing an appropriate share of the work.
- Directly copying assignments from other students (including homework).
- Turning in any assignment (classwork, homework, projects, etc.) as your own work that is actually the work of others, including tutors, parents, siblings, etc.
- Giving the impression that someone else's notes or work are your own.
- Collaborating or sharing answers on independent assignments.
- Giving your work to another student that will be copied or used.
- Using AI generated work on any assignment without teacher approval.

Plagiarism:

"...representing someone else's works, words, images, data or ideas as your own without properly citing the source."

Examples of plagiarism include but are not limited to:

- Copying or paraphrasing someone else's words or ideas from the Internet, books, magazine articles or directly from that person without citing the source.
- Copying or representing someone else's work as if it were your own.
- Submitting purchased papers as your own.
- Giving your work to another student whether or not you believe it will be copied.

The possible consequences for cheating or plagiarism may include the following:

- Assignment of a failing grade, including a zero
- Parent notification
- Detention from teacher or principal
- Requiring of make-up work or alternative assignment for a reduced grade
- Meeting with principal, teacher, and parent
- Failure in the subject-area
- Repeated offenses may lead to more severe consequences including school dismissal

Immunizations

All students enrolled in Saint Mary Interparochial School must have current immunizations. The only exception to the policy is in the event that a student has an illness that would compromise his/her life by being immunized. **Documentation of a compromising condition must be presented prior to the first day of the school and must be approved by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia's Office of Catholic Education.** Parents and guardians cannot claim religious reasons for non-immunization. The Catholic Church recommends that your family be vaccinated and protected. Flu shots and COVID-19 vaccines are not required, but strongly recommended.

Items Brought To School

Saint Mary Interparochial School is not responsible for loss or damage to any personal items brought to school by a student. This includes, but is not limited to books, toys, scooters, bicycles, and electronic devices (e.g., phones, smart devices, video gaming systems, etc.).

Library

The school has a well-equipped library and media center. Students are encouraged to use the library for curricular enrichment and reading, as follows:

- Borrowed books are to be returned on time and in good condition.
- Children in grades 1-8 may check out library materials; parents of kindergarten students are encouraged to visit the library with their children to check out books.
- All parents are encouraged to visit the library and select books to read at home.
- Parents and students are encouraged to browse the online public access catalog to select reading material for school projects and recreational reading.
- All students should have a library card from the Free Library of Philadelphia, to take advantage of the many resources offered at local branches and online.
- The library can be open to families at any time for borrowing books with an appointment.

Lost and Found

Any items left in the school building or on the school grounds should be given to the school secretary to be placed in the Lost and Found basket. Items placed in the Lost and Found remain there for 30 days. After 30 days, any items are discarded or donated. **Students who lose a library book, textbook or workbook must pay the replacement cost of the book plus shipping in order to receive a new copy.** Parents are encouraged to look for their child's item in the Lost and Found box.

Medication

If a child must take any medication in school which is prescribed by a doctor, that medication must be sent to the School Nurse in the container received from the pharmacy and must have the following information on the label: child's name, name of doctor prescribing the child's medication, frequency, dose and date. All non-prescription medication can be administered by the school nurse, the school office, and/or the teacher with prior written permission only.

National Parks

One of the most beautiful and serene sites that surround Saint Mary Interparochial School is the garden of Independence Historical Park. They are tended by the Park Rangers and the Horticultural Society. The gardens contain not just beautiful flowers but also some plants with historical significance. Varieties of roses and trees are descendants of plants brought to Philadelphia centuries ago. It is a matter of great importance that we work to preserve this gift.

In that spirit:

- Any student using the gardens between the hours of 7:00 AM and 5:00 PM must be in the care of his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) or a staff member.
- Absolutely no organized games may be played in the gardens unless they are organized by the school. This is at the recommendation of the Philadelphia Parks Department.
- Students may not go into the plantings or bushes when permitted in the gardens. They must stay on the sidewalks and grassy areas. No paper or trash may be left behind after an authorized use of the gardens and should treat the Nationals Parks with respect.
- Any official activity requires a permit from the Park Rangers. The school holds a permit for any special functions and/or events hosted by the school.

Thank you for helping us continue a positive partnership with the Philadelphia Parks Department and the National Park rangers.

Off-Campus Conduct

The administration of Saint Mary Interparochial School reserves the right to discipline its students for off-campus behavior that is not in keeping with the expectations of students during the course of the school day. This off-campus behavior includes, but is not limited to cyber-bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, defamatory social media/blog posts against the school or its staff members, students, parents or community members and threats toward school, students, parents or community members. All disciplinary actions are at the discretion of the principal, pastor delegate, and the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, in accordance with federal, state, and local laws.

Office Records

Parents and guardians are requested to notify the school office in writing by letter, fax or email of any change of address, custody, home telephone numbers, cell phone numbers, business phone numbers, email addresses and/or phone numbers of emergency contacts. This will guarantee that office records are accurate, complete, and up-to-date. Families can update their contact information at any time via FACTS SIS/ParentsWeb.

Parents As Partners Policy

As partners in the educational process at Saint Mary Interparochial School, we ask all parents and guardians:

- Set rules, times, and limits so that your student:
 - Gets to bed early on school nights;
 - Arrives at school on time and is picked up on time at the end of the day;
 - Is dressed according to the school dress code;
 - Completes assignments on time, including summer homework
 - Has a snack and lunch (packed and/or purchased) every day
- Actively participate in school activities and functions (e.g., conferences, workshops, events, etc.);
- Ensure that all student books are properly covered with contact paper, book sock, etc.;
- See that the family pays for any damage to school books or property due to carelessness or neglect

on the part of the student;

- Notify the school with a written note and/or email when the student has been absent or tardy;
- Notify the school office immediately of any changes to a family's home address, phone number, or email address;
- Meet all financial obligations to the school; See financial obligations and tuition policy for details.
- Inform the school of any special situations regarding the student and/or the family's well-being, safety, and health;
- Complete and return to school any requested information promptly;
- Read school emails and newsletters regularly and to show interest in the student's total education;
- Support the religious and educational goals of the school;
- Attend Mass and teach the Catholic faith by word and example (if Catholic) or support the teachings of the Catholic faith (non-Catholic);
- Support and cooperate with the educational policies and discipline policy of the school;
- Treat teachers with respect and courtesy in discussing student problems;
- Refrain from posting negative comments about students, teachers, or the administration on social media or other public means;

We, at Saint Mary Interparochial School, consider it a privilege to work with parents in the education of children because we believe parents are the primary educators of their children. Therefore, it is your right and your duty to become the primary role models for the development of your child's life physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally, and academically.

Your choice of Saint Mary Interparochial School involves a commitment and exhibits a concern for helping your child to recognize God as the greatest good in his/her life. Good example is the strongest teacher. Your personal relationship with God, with each other, and with the Church community will affect the way your child relates to God and others. Ideals taught in school are not well-rooted in the child unless they are nurtured by the example of good Catholic morality and by an honest personal relationship with God in your family life.

Once you have chosen to enter into a partnership with us at Saint Mary Interparochial School, we trust you will be loyal to this commitment. During these formative years (K-8), your child needs constant support from both parents and/or guardians and faculty in order to develop his/her moral, intellectual, social, cultural, and physical endowment. Neither parents nor teachers can afford to doubt the sincerity of the efforts of their educational partner in the quest of challenging, yet nourishing, the student to reach his/her potential.

It is vital that both parent(s)/guardian(s) and teacher(s) remember that allowing oneself to be caught between the student and the other partner will never have positive results. To divide authority between school and home or within the home will only teach disrespect of all authority. If there is an incident at school, you as parents must make investigation of the complete story your first step. Evidence of mutual respect between parents and teachers will model good mature behavior and relationships. Talking negatively about a child's teacher at home will only create an attitude of distrust toward the teacher, the school, and the parent.

Students are naturally eager to grow and learn. However, sometimes in the process of maturation new interests may cause them to lose focus. As this natural process occurs, the student needs both understanding and discipline. At times, your child may perceive discipline as restrictive. However, boundaries and limits provide a young person with both guidance and security. Parents are encouraged to let their child experience a logical consequence for an inappropriate action or behavior. This responsibility also extends to times of absence. This continued partnership helps your child to achieve his/her personal best.

It is also essential that a child take responsibility for grades he/she has earned and be accountable for homework, long-term assignments, major tests, service projects, and all other assignments. This responsibility also extends to times of absence. Students who miss in excess of 18 school days in an academic year miss 10% of the school year and are considered chronically absent. Helping your student to consistently attend school is a vital parental responsibility. A student will be immediately dismissed at 60 absences. Families must support the school in ensuring age-appropriate responsibilities in work, service, independence, and leadership.

A formal meeting will be held with any family that violates the Family Partnership Policy. Plans for immediate family improvement are discussed during the meeting and if the family cannot comply with the Family Partnership Policy or improve on recommended areas within the given time period, the family will be dismissed from the Saint Mary Interparochial School. All decisions regarding official dismissal from Saint Mary Interparochial School are at the discretion of school administration, pastor delegate, and the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

Promotion Policy/Retention/Transfer Policy

Advancement to the next grade in Saint Mary Interparochial School is based on a student's daily performance, test results, recommendations of teachers, and the student's ability to complete work successfully on a more advanced level. Promotion to the next grade depends on successful completion of all subject areas. The teacher and administration may recommend the repetition of a grade, tutoring, or summer school classes as a requirement for promotion when, after conferences with teachers and parents, it is believed that such action will better prepare the student academically or emotionally. **A student who is not promoted to the next grade level is not permitted to continue as a student at Saint Mary Interparochial School.**

Reception of Sacraments of Initiation

Saint Mary Interparochial is an Archdiocesan elementary school and is governed by the policies and procedures of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Current policy for reception of sacraments states: **"Individuals are to receive their First Holy Communion and Confirmation in their own parish Church."** Exceptions may be made for private and special education schools. **Since we are an interparochial Archdiocesan elementary school, not a parish, private, or special education school, we are not able to apply for an exception.**

We take the responsibility of preparing students for their reception of the Sacraments of Initiation, Holy Eucharist and Confirmation, but children will receive these sacraments at their home parishes in the loving environment of their worshiping community. Parents are asked to notify school after your child has received these sacraments for the first time.

First Holy Communion and May Procession Celebration

During the month of May, we honor our mother, Mary. Saint Mary Interparochial School highlights this devotion through an annual May Procession. Our 8th Grade graduates and 2nd Grade students are highlighted participants in this special mass. All students who are making or have made their First Holy Communion are expected to wear their First Holy Communion outfit. **If any 2nd Grade student is non-Catholic, they are still expected to dress in formal wear for this special day. (Boys: suit, tie, dress jacket, dress shoes) (Girls: formal dress, dress shoes)**

Recess

Kindergarten Recess

In Kindergarten, we value opportunities for students to play and explore. In addition to structured play time, students have two recess periods, morning and afternoon recess. Morning recess is about 20 minutes in length and allows time for students to use the restroom and eat a healthy snack. Afternoon recess is held after the Kindergarten lunch period, either outside at the Magnolia Garden (adjacent to Saint Mary's), outside on the school's roof, or inside the classroom. Students should be dressed appropriately for the weather, which includes a hat, gloves, scarf, and coat for weather lower than 35 degrees.

Grades 1-8 Recess

In Grades 1 through 8, students have two recess periods, morning and afternoon recess. Morning recess is about 20 minutes in length and allows time for students to use the restroom and eat a snack. Afternoon recess is about 25 minutes as is held either before or after their lunch period. Although recess is a built-in activity to our school day, students may lose access to either morning or afternoon recess based on rough play, displays of bullying, or disrespect. Middle school students also often use recess opportunities to meet with teachers about work and assignments. Students should be dressed appropriately for the weather, with a jacket and/or coat for weather lower than 35 degrees. Students will not be forced to wear jackets if the weather is nice, but should have them in the case that they are cold. All students will be required to wear their jacket and/or coat if the weather is lower than 35 degrees.

Report Cards/Progress Reports

Report Cards are important tools for communication. Report Cards are given three (3) times during the academic school year. Progress Reports are given mid-way between each grading period. Report cards are sent home via email.

School Hours (2025-2026 Academic School Year)

Kindergarten: 7:45 AM – 2:45 PM
Grades 1st - 8th: 7:45 AM – 3:00 PM

At Saint Mary Interparochial School, we work in partnership with parents to enable each child to develop as an independent learner. Parents should allow their child(ren) to enter the school building on their own each morning. Various classes invite parent involvement or visitation on particular occasions. The school doors are open for students at 7:30 AM. Students arriving at that time will go to their classroom. Morning prayers and announcements begin at 7:45 AM. Prayer and afternoon announcements begin at 2:45 PM each day. Dismissal immediately follows. Please check the school calendar and weekly newsletter for early dismissal dates. As a reminder, three (3) tardies or three (3) early withdrawals is considered a one-half day absence. Excessive tardies will have a direct impact on a student's academic evaluation and promotion to the next grade. Please reference the absences section for more detailed information.

Saint Mary Interparochial School offers a paid after-school CARES program for Grades K-4. Students who are enrolled in the program must pay a deposit at the time of registration. A fee is charged for students remaining in the program after 5:30 PM. Please contact the CARES director, Mary Ellen Penna, for a list of current prices and policies. Students who are not picked up by 5:30 PM (within the CARES program) may receive a phone call or in person verbal reminder of our CARES policies and/or dismissal from the CARES program.

Saint Mary Interparochial School offers a free after-school STEAM program for students in Grades 5-8 which is held from 2:45 PM to 6:00 PM. When the after-school STEAM program is unavailable for students the CARES program will be made available to students. However, middle school families must pay for the CARES program.

School Office Hours

The school office is open on school days from 7:00 AM – 2:45 PM. If you need to contact the main office, please call (215) 923-7522 or email mpenna@saintmarys.us. **In the case of an emergency, please call Mrs. Penna (via cell) at 267-231-4405.**

School Property

The parent of a child who carelessly destroys or damages any furniture, equipment, building, or personal property will be obligated to pay the full amount of repairs and labor or replacement of items. Textbooks and workbooks used by the student must have a proper book cover. No writing in textbooks is permitted, unless given permission from the teacher. The student will pay a fine for damaged or lost texts before any final reports, transcripts, or diplomas are presented.

School Safety

Saint Mary Interparochial School attempts to provide a safe environment for all individuals. Verbal or written threats made against the physical or emotional well-being of any individual are taken very seriously. Students making such threats face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion. Harassment of any type is not tolerated. The principal investigates all

complaints of harassment. Students involved in harassing behavior face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion. In the event that the school suspects danger to a student or the school community, the school reserves the right to call the local authorities. All disciplinary actions are at the discretion of the principal, pastor delegate, and the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, in accordance with federal, state, and local laws.

Search

The school reserves the right to search anything brought on school property. This includes school bags, cell phones, and other electronic devices. School issued email addresses may be searched at any time as well as any other school-based technology device or program.

Service Projects

The purpose of the stewardship program for students in Kindergarten through Grade 8 is to provide students with the opportunity to make a difference in our Church and surrounding communities through various service and support programs. Each grade will participate in service learning projects throughout the year.

Special Education Programming and Specialized Services

Saint Mary Interparochial School provides support to students with academic, emotional, social, and medical needs. Students must have paperwork on file at the school in order to receive any accommodations or modifications. Meetings are held with families at the beginning of each school year to review all accommodations or modifications that will be provided to students with any identified need. Academic evaluations may be requested one of the following ways:

1. A parent or legal guardian may contact Saint Mary Interparochial to request an psychoeducational evaluation to be completed by our school psychologist. Our school psychologist is contracted through CORA Services. Students may be assessed through a combination of approaches to determine eligibility.
2. A parent or legal guardian may request a psychoeducational evaluation by (a) emailing ossequitableparticipation-request@philasd.org, (b) request an evaluation in person at their neighborhood school (School District of Philadelphia), or (c) by completing the EP Evaluation Request Form online here. For more information on this process, please go to this website: <https://www.philasd.org/grantcompliance/idea-equitable-participation/iu-26-child-find-overview-process/>. Once an evaluation is complete, it should be shared with the school.
3. A parent or legal guardian may request a psychoeducational evaluation to be completed by a private, outside organization; however, the cost of the evaluation is covered by the parent or legal guardian. Once an evaluation is complete, it should be shared with the school.
4. A parent or legal guardian may request an evaluation at your student's Primary Care Physician's (PCP) office or pediatrician's office for Attention Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), neurodivergent

disorders, anxiety, limited vision/blindness, hard-of-hearing/deafness, severe food allergies, or other physical disabilities. Once an evaluation is complete, it should be shared with the school.

Please note that Saint Mary Interparochial School is not legally required to follow any recommendations as outlined in a student's evaluation. Saint Mary Interparochial School's choice to follow a student's evaluation is a moral and ethical decision to do what is best for students.

Please note that if the school does not have the given resources (e.g., individualized aide, etc.), the family may choose to provide the resources to the school or seek services outside school hours. If support is given outside of school hours, the school must have an up-to-date list of all supports and/or copies of all paperwork and agreements. If Saint Mary Interparochial School exhausts all available school-based services, and if the student is not making appropriate growth and/or progress at their instructional level, the student may be required to transfer to another school with more specialized support for their specific needs.

To support student needs, Saint Mary Interparochial School has the following specialized services available as provided internally or contracted through an outside organization:

- K-8 Reading Specialist (Catapult)
- School Psychologist (CORA)
- School Counselor (CORA)
- Math Interventionist (CORA)
- Speech and Language Therapist (CORA)
- Family Connections Counselor (Catapult)
- School Nurse (School District of Philadelphia)

If additional services are needed based on student demographics, such as an English as a Second Language (ESL) Teacher, Occupational Therapist (OT), etc., the school may be able to provide services as needed on a case-by-case basis.

Student Records

Saint Mary Interparochial School adheres to the Buckley Amendment (Family Education Rights and Privacy) regarding access to student records. Records of students transferring to other schools will only be sent through the U.S. Mail. No records will be given to parents to transport to the new school. Students requesting records, transcripts, and/or recommendations must make a five school-day request to the school office. All forms must be submitted to the school office for distribution. Completed forms will be sent via the U.S. Mail. When transferring, it is the responsibility of the parents to share any official custodial information decided by the courts with the school of choice. No records will be sent to transferring schools of students whose financial responsibility has not been met.

Summer Homework ("Save Our Skills")

Saint Mary Interparochial School wants to ensure that your child retains the academic skills acquired throughout the school year. Therefore, all students are required to complete summer homework for the grade in which they are entering. It is recommended that students complete their homework throughout the summer. Students will be assigned summer reading,

content-specific review activities, and project-based learning assignments in ELA, Math, and Religion. **Summer homework is used as an assessment and/or project grade for the first trimester of the grade in which they are entering.**

Telephone

Permission to use the telephone must be obtained from the school secretary. Students must submit a note from their teacher. The office phone is a business phone and students are permitted to use it only in case of contacting a parent and/or guardian in regards to an emergency or serious personal matter. Arrangements for after-school visits with friends should be made at home.

Terranova NEXT: Standardized Testing

The TerraNova is a norm-referenced nationally standardized achievement test. Nationally standardized means that the test is administered to students across the country. Norms are set for the time of year the tests are taken. The TerraNova is one of the most respected and widely used achievement tests, measuring mastery in core subjects. Currently, TerraNova testing is administered to students in Grades 2nd through 7th. The TerraNova assessment is conducted annually in March; however, the exact testing window is issued by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The Terranova NEXT assessment data is used for planning, special education referrals, Honors Mathematics placement, and application for admission into high school.

Title IX

Saint Mary Interparochial School adheres to the tenets of Title IX: “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

Uniform

The school uniform is to be worn by all students, Grades Kindergarten through 8th Grade, starting on the first day of school in September until the last day of school in June. It is very important that students wear the proper school uniform daily. Accommodations will be made for students who are experiencing a medical condition that prevents the student from wearing the proper uniform.

Please note, summer, winter, and gym uniforms:

- should be cleaned regularly; uniforms should be washed and should be body odor-free.
- should not have large holes in school shirts, sweaters, pants, dresses, socks, or shoes.
- should fit your student properly.

Families will be contacted if their student(s) is out of proper uniform. If the student is continually out of uniform, an in-person meeting will occur to review the Parents as Partners Policy. If any family is struggling to afford a school uniform or parts of the uniform, the school keeps new and gently used uniforms in the 5th Street stairwell cabinet that is available to all families at no cost. Please see below for the following uniform guidelines.

Fall/Spring “Summer” Uniform (Optional)	
Fall: September 3, 2025 - October 31, 2025	Spring: April 8, 2026 - June 11, 2026
Option 1	
Boys	Girls
Navy Blue Walking Shorts Black Belt White Knit Golf Shirt with Saint Mary logo*** White socks White sneakers** -No Vans or Converse permitted	Navy Blue Walking Shorts or Navy Blue Skort Black Belt (with walking shorts only) White Knit Golf Shirt with Saint Mary logo*** White socks White sneakers** -No Vans or Converse permitted
Option 2	
Boys	Girls (in Grades 5-8 Only)
Navy Blue Pants Black Belt White Knit Golf Shirt with Saint Mary logo Black, Navy or Maroon Socks Black or Navy Dress Shoes* *Loafers are recommended, no boots or sneakers allowed. See FlynnO’Hara for good options.	Plaid Skirt / Skort <u>Please be mindful of skirt/skort length; no pinning/rolling of skirts/skorts is permitted.</u> White Knit Golf Shirt with Saint Mary logo Black, Navy or Maroon Knee Socks Black or Navy Dress Shoes* *Loafers are recommended, no boots allowed or sneakers allowed. Mary Janes are permitted. See FlynnO’Hara for good options.

**White sneakers are permitted to have a small colored logo, but sneakers should be white without an accent trim color.

***Golf polo shirts must have the school logo, “Saint Mary Interparochial”.

Formal “Winter” Uniform November 3, 2025 - April 7, 2026	
Boys	Girls
Navy Blue Pants Black Belt White Button Shirt with Plaid Tie or Bowtie Or White Turtleneck (no tie or bowtie) Prescott Red Sweater or Red Sweater Vest	Plaid Jumper (K-8) or Plaid Skirt or Plaid Skort (Grades 5-8 Only) <u>Please be mindful of skirt/skort length; no pinning/rolling of skirts/skorts is permitted.</u> White blouse or white turtleneck Prescott Red Sweater or Red Sweater Vest

Black, Navy or Maroon Socks Black or Navy Dress Shoes* *Loafers are recommended, no boots or sneakers allowed. See FlynnO'Hara for good options. –Students in Grades 5-8 may wear Black Sweater or Black Sweater Vest	Black, Navy or Maroon Knee Socks or Tights Black or Navy Dress Shoes* *Loafers are recommended, no boots allowed or sneakers allowed. Mary Janes are permitted. See FlynnO'Hara for good options. – Students in Grades 5-8 may wear Black Sweater or Black Sweater Vest
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Gym Uniforms are available for purchase at Saint Mary Interparochial School via order form. Orders will be submitted once per trimester. We will not stock gym uniforms at school any longer. Please plan accordingly.

<p style="text-align: center;">Fall/Spring “Summer” Gym Uniform Fall: September 3, 2025 - October 31, 2025 and Spring: April 8, 2026 - June 11, 2026 –Winter gym uniforms are also be worn during this time</p>
Maroon Shorts with Saint Mary Storm logo Maroon T-Shirt with Saint Mary Storm logo White socks White sneakers –No Vans or Converse permitted
<p style="text-align: center;">“Winter” Gym Uniform Winter: November 3, 2025 - April 7, 2026 –Summer gym uniforms (shorts) should not be worn during this time</p>
Maroon Sweatpants with Saint Mary Storm logo Maroon T-Shirt with Saint Mary Storm logo Maroon Sweatshirt or Hoodie with Saint Mary Storm logo White socks White sneakers –No Vans or Converse permitted

As a reminder, all gym classes are held outside unless it is raining. Please be sure that your student is dressed for the appropriate weather. Jackets are required for all students for any temperature below 40 degrees. A school sweatshirt does not replace a jacket. There are no exceptions to this rule.

Students should not wear excessive accessories with their school uniform (e.g., sunglasses, jewelry, large earrings, large bows, etc.). These should only be worn on dress down days with school/teacher permission.

Hair and Nail Rules

Please send your child in with neat and combed/brushed hair each day. Best school practices is for students with shoulder-length or longer hair to have their hair up each day. Students are not

permitted to have permanent non-natural colors in their hair (e.g., green, blue, pink, purple, etc.). All hair colors must be naturally occurring human hair. Students may have temporary unnatural “wild” colors on dress down days only.

Students are not permitted to have unnatural or colorful nails and/or acrylic nails on uniform days. Natural nails may be painted neutrals: pale pink, tan, or clear or have an American/French manicure only. Acrylic/Gel/Dipped etc. long nails are only permitted for the 8th Grade students for May Procession and Graduation.

“Dress Down Day” Rules

Students should follow the appropriate dress code for the given dress down day. Families, we ask that you are mindful of what your student(s) wear to school and ensure that it is considered school-appropriate. Students should not be wearing any clothing that contains “suggestive or offensive” language and/or references inappropriate content. All “dress down” or “dress up” clothing should meet uniform length and coverage standards. Students may not wear open-toed shoes, flip flops, or open-back shoes on dress down days. If Crocs are worn, they must be worn in sport mode. If a student is not dressed appropriately, they will be asked to change their clothes immediately either by having a parent and/or guardian drop off a change of clothes or be issued a gym uniform. If improper footwear is worn, a student will be excluded from outdoor recess on the roof.

Visitors

School visitors (volunteers, parents, etc.) must come to the main office which is located on the 5th Street side of the school building. For safety and security reasons, each person is required to sign in at the office when he/she enters the building for any reason. Visitors and/or volunteers are to sign out at the time of departure. Visitors may be asked to show identification in the form of a driver’s license or other government issued identification. Parents who volunteer to serve lunch or who volunteer in another capacity in the school may not drop into a classroom to see their child during the day. This is an interruption to the teacher and to the educational process. All school volunteers must have up-to-date clearances.

Volunteer Requirements

Any individual who wishes to volunteer at Saint Mary Interparochial School must have the following clearances:

The following clearances must be obtained by volunteers living in PA continuously for less than 10 years:

- PA State Police Criminal Background Check
- PA Department Human Services Child Abuse History Clearance
- FBI Fingerprints Clearance - Code: **1KG6TR**
- Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination (Optional)

The following clearances must be obtained by volunteers living in PA continuously for 10 years:

- PA State Police Criminal Background Check
- PA Department Human Services Child Abuse History Clearance
- Disclosure Statement application for volunteers to be filed at the place of service
- Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination (Optional)

Archdioceses Requirements:

- Protecting God's Children (PGC) Awareness Sessions for Adults
- Mandated Reporter Training

Weather Emergencies

Saint Mary Interparochial School will email, call, and text you with any announcements of closing, late arrival, or early dismissal. Information will also be posted to social media. It is imperative that we have accurate and current email and phone contact information for you and your emergency contacts. Please listen to the message before calling school.

If it starts to snow in the evening or in the early morning hours:

- Turn on KYW Newsradio (1060 AM) in the morning at 6:00 a.m., or check the Saint Mary Interparochial website.
- If the announcement is that ALL PUBLIC AND PHILADELPHIA ARCHDIOCESAN SCHOOLS ARE CLOSED, we are CLOSED.
- If the announcement is that ALL PUBLIC AND PHILADELPHIA ARCHDIOCESAN SCHOOLS ARE OPEN, then we are OPEN.

If snow starts after the children are in school:

- Parents may pick up their children at any time. Call school (215) 923-7522 to let us know that you are coming.
- Listen to KYW Newsradio (1060AM) or www.KYW1060.com to hear if the schools are closing early.
- If school buses take the children home early, we will make every effort to call you. You and your child should have an emergency plan in the event of early dismissal.

Withdraw of Students

Notice of withdrawal of a student should be made by the parent in writing to Saint Mary Interparochial School in advance of the withdrawal date. This enables the school to prepare the necessary information and settle accounts. No student records will be forwarded to another school until your account has been settled. Please refer to the Tuition Policy: Transfer or Dismissal for more details.

Right to Amend

Saint Mary Interparochial School reserves the right to amend this Family and Student Handbook at any time. Notice of amendments will be sent to families via email communication. Last Amendment: 09/02/2025