



PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

2026-2027

St. Mary's Nativity School

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Principal:	Veronica Pertuit
Administrative Secretary:	Kristie Lagarde
Bookkeeper:	Lori Chiasson

Revised 7/2026

"I would rather have learning joined with virtue than all the treasures of kings."
— St. Thomas More

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to St. Mary's Nativity School! In choosing St. Mary's Nativity School, you have demonstrated a commitment to the values and philosophy of a Catholic education.

The Parent/ Student Handbook reflects the policies of St. Mary's Nativity School for the 2026-2027 school year. Please read this document carefully and sign the agreement. This agreement states that you intend to abide by the policies of St. Mary's Nativity School during the 2026-2027 school year.

We consider this handbook to be a work in progress. St. Mary's Nativity School reserves the right to make changes in policies and procedures as needed throughout the school year. Any changes to the handbook will be made readily available to the parents and students on PlusPortals®, under the heading "School Links and Files", in addition to the official school website.

The ultimate authority in all school matters lies with the principal and pastor of St. Mary's Nativity School. The decisions made by the administration regarding the implementation of school policy are final. The administration of St. Mary's Nativity School has attempted to be as explicit as possible concerning the rules and regulations outlined in this handbook, but during the academic year, new and unusual circumstances may arise. The principal and the pastor have the authority to use discretion in making decisions regarding unforeseen circumstances. Policies outlined in this handbook are subject to interpretation by the administration.

The faculty and staff of St. Mary's Nativity School look forward to working with you to promote academic excellence and spiritual development in the context of the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Together let us pray that God, who has begun this good work in us, may carry it through to completion.

God bless you,
Veronica Pertuit
Principal

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HISTORY OF ST. MARY'S NATIVITY SCHOOL

St. Mary's Nativity School became a reality in 1963, under the leadership of Reverend Sabastian Arjonilla, a Honduran pastor, who led the growth of the parish with the construction of four two-room school units. He had the old St. Andrew Chapel from Bowie brought in and renovated to be used as a cafeteria, and he had a convent built to house nuns to be teachers. The convent eventually housed three orders of nuns. First, the Teresian Sisters, a Spanish order, staffed the school, along with a few lay teachers. When they were called to go back to Texas, an Irish order of nuns, the Sisters of Mercy, came to St. Mary's Nativity School. In 1984, they returned to Ireland, and yet another order from Ireland, the Sisters of Loretto, came to Raceland to teach and minister to the school and church parish. Eventually, they were called back to Ireland. St. Mary's is currently staffed by lay teachers who are committed to the continuance of the Catholic traditions of St. Mary's history.

Today, St. Mary's offers Pre-K (3) through eighth grade. A community center was built in 2009, which houses the school cafeteria, offices, gathering space, and currently serves as our Church as repairs to the main church are made following Hurricane Ida. As our student body has grown, additional learning spaces have been created. St. Andrew Hall was renovated in 2022 to create an additional classroom, an auditorium, meeting areas, and storage spaces.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

St. Mary's Nativity School is a pre-Kindergarten through Grade 8 Catholic Elementary School under the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux's Office of Catholic Schools.

The curriculum stresses academic achievement within a Christian community where the children are loved and respected by their peers as well as the teachers. Vatican II texts are used so that St. Mary's Nativity School theology is in compliance with the bishops of the world. United with each other in meaningful liturgy and prayer, the students can further come to an understanding of the Christian life. At St. Mary's Nativity School, we are attempting to "teach as Jesus did."

The Diocesan curriculum guidelines, consistent with the State of Louisiana guidelines, are followed for the teaching of all secular subject areas. The curriculum is marked by current content and fresh approaches to methodology. There is emphasis on principles rather than facts, on learning through problem-solving rather than by precept. We strive to offer a program that makes use of many sources of reading material, a wide variety of audio-visual and technology tools, and a multi-text approach to the content areas.

MISSION AND VISION STATEMENT

St. Mary's Nativity School integrates the principles of the Roman Catholic Church while providing an excellent academic education for a life-learning process that meets the needs of students in a Christ-centered school. St. Mary's Nativity School challenges each student to reach his/her potential while instilling leadership and advocating justice and respect.

Our Beliefs

1. Instilling a love of God and a respect for all His creations will foster Christ-like attitudes within the school, community, and world.
2. Children learn Christ-like attitudes when taught in a spiritual and loving atmosphere.
3. A student's self-esteem is enhanced by positive relationships and mutual respect among and between students and staff.
4. Each student is a valued individual with unique physical, social, emotional, and intellectual needs.
5. An academic and nurturing environment fosters educational growth.
6. Children learn best when our staff maintains high expectations for student learning.
7. Children must be academically challenged in order to meet the needs of the day and the challenges of tomorrow.
8. When parents are involved in the learning process, children perform at a higher level of achievement.
9. The commitment to continuous improvement is imperative for our school to enable students to become life-long learners.
10. An emphasis on sharing and association among all members of the school family, students, teachers, administrators, parents, clergy, and parishioners, strengthens the students' bonds with the larger Catholic community.

Our Goals

1. To provide an environment in which Christian faith in the Catholic tradition affects personal growth (mental, moral, spiritual, and physical), citizenship and preparation for further education and vocation.
2. To provide an excellent academic education that promotes the development of critical thinking and decision-making skills.
3. To prepare our students for future academic success through rigorous technology-assisted instruction.
4. To foster an inquiring and curious spirit.

Our Motto: Believe, Achieve, Succeed with Christ

The Parent's Role in Education

We at St. Mary's Nativity 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 psychologically. Your choice of St. Mary's Nativity School involves a commitment and exhibits a concern for helping your child to recognize God as the greatest good in his/her life.

A 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 these are nurtured by the example of good Catholic/Christian morality and by an honest personal relationship with God in your family life.

Once you have chosen to enter a partnership with us at St. Mary's Nativity School, we trust you will be loyal to this commitment. During these formative years (Pre-K to 8), your child needs constant support from both parents and faculty 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 to challenge yet nourish the student to reach his/her potential.

It is vital that both parents and teachers 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 a parent, must make an investigation of the complete story as 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.

It is essential that a child take responsibility for the grades he/she has earned and be accountable for homework, long-term assignments, major tests, service projects, and all other assignments. 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.

Together, let us begin this year with a commitment to partnership as we support one another in helping your child to become the best person he/she can become.

Parents As Partners

St. Mary's Nativity School recognizes that parents are the primary educators of their children. It is our desire and expectation that the school and parents work together for the good of the child.

Parental Rights

As partners in the educational process at St. Mary's Nativity School, we respect that parents have the following rights:

- Their child(ren) will receive a Catholic education.
- They will be able to present their concerns and discuss them in a respectful atmosphere.
- They will receive timely responses to written requests, emails, and phone calls.
- They will be allowed to meet with their child(ren)'s teachers at mutually agreed upon times.
- They will be notified of their child(ren)'s academic and behavioral progress or lack thereof.
- Their child(ren) will be treated fairly.

- They will be promptly informed of any changes in rules and regulations.

Parental Responsibilities

As partners in the educational process at St. Mary's Nativity School, we ask parents to meet these expectations:

- To set rules, times, and limits so that your child:
 - ✓ 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 and is groomed well.
 - ✓ Completes assignments on time.
 - ✓ Has lunch money.
- To contact the teacher directly and then administration with questions or concerns
- To actively participate in school activities and support school fundraising activities
- To see that the student pays for any damage to school books or property due to carelessness or neglect on the part of the student
- To notify the school with a written note when the student has been absent or tardy; these notes are kept for one year.
- To notify the school office of any changes of address or important phone numbers
- To meet all financial obligations to the school when these obligations are due
- To inform the school of any special situation regarding the student's well-being, safety, and health
- To complete and return to school any requested information promptly
- To read school notes, newsletters, and to utilize PlusPortals® and Google Classroom and show interest in the student's total education
- To support the religious and educational goals of the school
- To attend Mass and teach the Catholic faith by word and example
- To support and cooperate with the discipline policy of the school
- To treat teachers with respect and courtesy
- To post no negative comments about students, teachers, or the administration on social media, but rather to bring questions and/or concerns directly to teachers and administration

PROFILE OF A ST. MARY'S NATIVITY SCHOOL GRADUATE

1. Has knowledge of and demonstrates a strong commitment to his/her Catholic faith
2. Shows he/she is a disciple of Christ by following His examples of service, honesty, kindness, and generosity
3. Shows respect and concern for self, others, and for all of God's creation
4. Has been academically challenged to reach his/her potential and confidently awaits the challenges of tomorrow in an ever-changing world
5. Is a role model who leads by example, demands justice, and is courageous enough to stand up for his/her beliefs

ACCREDITATION

St. Mary's Nativity School is accredited by the State of Louisiana and accredited by Lumen through the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux.

SCHOOL COUNCILS AND COMMITTEES

Consultative Board

The St. Mary's Nativity School Consultative Board consults and facilitates the policy-making process by formulating, adapting, and recommending policies. The council serves in an advisory capacity to the administration and is without authority to overturn decisions made by the school administration. Membership of the council consists of the pastor of St. Mary's Nativity Church parish, the principal of St. Mary's Nativity School, parents of current and former students, alumni of St. Mary's Nativity School, and parish community members. The administration is answerable to both the local church parish and the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux regarding matters of facility ownership, operation, and finance.

Parent-Teacher Committee

St. Mary's Nativity School's Parent-Teacher Committee (PTC) works to support and enhance the educational ministry of the school. Building community, fund-raising, and parent education are the goals of this organization. Membership consists of all parents and faculty members of St. Mary's Nativity School. PTC officers consist of president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. The primary purpose of the PTC is to encourage and support a cooperative and supportive relationship between home and school. The PTC plans, organizes, and implements integral financial contributions to the school's funds through its annual fundraising events. PTC funds assist in bridging the gap between tuition and the actual cost of a student's education.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING

Employees of St. Mary's Nativity School, St. Mary's Nativity Church parish and all volunteers who work with or have contact with the children at school at any time, whether volunteering at school activities, chaperoning field trips, or at any other time, must be trained through the Diocesan Safe Environment Program. Anyone working with the students in any way must be certified through the program. The school office may be contacted for instructions in completing this process.

GENERAL SCHOOL POLICIES AND INFORMATION

A. Admissions

1. Nondiscriminatory Policy

St. Mary's Nativity School admits students of any race, color, 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 based on race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship programs, or athletic and other school-administered programs.

St. Mary's Nativity 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.”

2. Admissions Policies

Admission of all students will be determined at the time of registration based on the admissions standards. All new students seeking admission to St. Mary’s Nativity School are evaluated based on current standardized test scores and report cards.

These will be reviewed to determine whether the program at St. Mary’s Nativity School will meet the educational needs of the student. An interview with the student and parents may be part of the admission process. Testing in some academic areas may be held for new applicants in Grades 3-8.

As openings become available, the following priorities will be used to accept students to St. Mary’s Nativity School:

1. Members of St. Mary’s Nativity Church Parish
2. Members of other Catholic church parishes without a Catholic school
3. Members of other Catholic church parishes with Catholic schools
4. Non-Catholic students whose parents accept the mission and vision of St. Mary’s Nativity School. **Non-Catholic students are expected to attend and participate in all religious observances, as well as daily Religion classes.**

- Children entering Pre-K3 must be three (3) years of age by September 30th of the current school year.
- Children entering Pre-K4 must be four (4) years of age by September 30th of the current school year.
- Children entering Kindergarten must be five (5) years of age by September 30th of the current school year.

3. Required Documents

- Verification of active parish affiliation/stewardship through use of weekly envelopes or automatic deposit
- Social Security Card
- Health Records
- Immunization Records: All students entering St. Mary’s Nativity School must have current immunizations. The only exemption to the policy is for a student with an illness or medical condition that would compromise his/her life if immunized. Documentation of a compromising condition, such as but not limited to leukemia, must be presented prior to the first day of the school year. Immunization records are required to be kept current.

- Birth Certificate (original)
- Baptismal Certificate (Catholic applicants only)
- Report Cards and transcripts for all grades prior to application at St. Mary's
- Standardized Test Results
- Record of IEP/Service Plan if applicable
- If parents are divorced or legally separated, it is the responsibility of the legal guardian to place on file in the office a certified copy of the court order granting legal custody.

4. Accommodations for students with additional academic needs

St. Mary's Nativity School is limited in its human capital resources and will make **reasonable** accommodations for learning differences when possible. St. Mary's Nativity School cannot accommodate students who have **extraordinary** learning differences. If after admission, the educational and/or behavioral needs of a student exceed what would be considered **reasonable**, the student may need to be separated from St. Mary's Nativity School. This decision will be made in order for the student's educational and/or behavioral needs to be fully met in another educational setting. If the decision to separate the student from St. Mary's Nativity School is made by the school, the student's tuition due would be prorated.

5. Withdrawal Policy

Registration, book, and computer fees are nonrefundable. Students who withdraw from enrollment during the first eight weeks of the school year may receive partial tuition refunds, payable within thirty days at the following rate:

- Withdrawal within 1-2 weeks of school opening.....75% refund
- Withdrawal within 3-5 weeks of school opening.....50% refund
- Withdrawal within 6-8 weeks of school opening.....20% refund
- Withdrawal after 8 weeks of school opening.....0% refund

- a. The education of your child is a partnership between you and the school. If, in the opinion of the administration, that partnership is irretrievably broken, the school reserves the right to require the parent(s) to withdraw the child(ren) with a written notice or meeting.
- b. All students will be given a probationary period of not less than one semester in which to prove themselves both socially and academically. If, during this trial period, a student or family is unable or unwilling to abide by the conditions of this handbook, the parents may be asked to withdraw their child/children from St. Mary's Nativity School. The recommendation and decision of the school is

final.

6. Court Custody

Parents, guardians, and/or other persons having custody of students (collectively, “parents” for purposes of this paragraph) who issue any notice of deposition or subpoena to any school employee, including but not limited to administrators, teachers, staff, or counselors, to testify in court or at a deposition in regard to any matter, including but not limited to custody or other similar disputes, will be charged for any and all costs and expenses relating to the employee’s appearance to testify. The school will determine any costs or expenses and their amount in its sole discretion, which will include but not be limited to the cost of any substitute teacher and/or counselor, travel costs including parking costs, and the school’s and/or employee’s attorney’s fees for attendance at such deposition or court appearance.

B. Academics

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

The principal has the discretion to permit classroom instruction to be streamed live online, recorded, or both, in order to provide remote learning for the benefit of students.

1. Curriculum

- a. The Diocesan curriculum guidelines, consistent with the State of Louisiana guidelines, are followed for the teaching of all secular subject areas.
- b. In addition to traditional academic instruction, St. Mary’s students receive regular instruction in physical education, music appreciation and performance, library, art, and computer literacy.
- c. In addition to the appropriate grade level curriculum, qualified eighth graders may be offered courses eligible for high school credit.

2. Religious Instruction

- a. St. Mary’s Nativity School exists to provide a Catholic education for its students. Religion is taught daily. Religious instruction is a comprehensive program that is achieved through daily prayer, classroom instruction, school liturgies and prayer services, Sunday Family Masses, and special events held at Christmas time, Lent, and Catholic Schools Week. As the primary educators and models of Catholic family values, parents are strongly encouraged to attend weekend

Mass with their children. All students of St. Mary's Nativity School, regardless of religious affiliation or lack of religious affiliation, will participate in religious instruction and religious observances.

3. Sacramental Program

- a. The sacramental life of the children of the Catholic tradition is an important component of the religious program at St. Mary's Nativity School. Students in grades Kindergarten through eighth grade attend weekly school Mass. Additional class Masses may be offered weekly to Middle School students. Preparations for two sacraments, Reconciliation and Eucharist, in Grade 2 form the core of instruction. In accordance with the diocesan guidelines, candidates for First Eucharist will receive the sacrament of Reconciliation prior to First Eucharist.
- b. Parents are required to be active partners in the preparation of their children for these sacraments.
- c. The sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist are only conferred on students baptized in the Roman Catholic tradition.

4. Academic Probation

- a. A student whose academic performance indicates serious deficiencies may be placed on academic probation. Academic probation is for students who **can** learn but are not achieving up to their capabilities.
- b. Students on academic probation will 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 cumulative average is an F will not be allowed to participate in any sport or academic competition until the grade has improved to a passing grade of D (70% or higher).

5. Promotion Policy/Retention/Transfer Policy

- a. Advancement to the next grade in St. Mary's Nativity 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.
- b. Promotion to the next grade depends on successful completion of all subject areas. The student's final grade is based on the numerical average of each 9-week numerical percentage grade. The 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

for the next grade.

Promotion/Retention –

- a. Grades 1-8- In order to pass a subject for the year, a student must have earned at least a D average after averaging the grades of each of the four nine-weeks periods. Even with a D average in a subject, any student in 1st through 8th grade who fails the fourth nine-weeks period *may* fail that subject for the year, regardless of prior 9-week grades.
- b. Students in **Kindergarten through 3rd** grade may be considered for retention if they fail to demonstrate grade-level proficiency in reading by the end of the academic year. Indicators may include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Receiving a “N” or “F” in Reading as a final grade.
 - ii. Inability to perform fundamental reading tasks independently and with comprehension.
 - iii. Teacher observations and documented evidence of insufficient reading skills despite interventions.
- c. Final determination of retention is under the discretion of the classroom teacher and school administration, in consultation with the parents/guardians.
- d. Students recommended for retention will be offered the opportunity to attend a summer reading intervention program designed to address individual reading deficits or seek outside intervention programs that document growth. Successful completion of a summer program and demonstration of sufficient reading growth may lead to **conditional promotion** to the next grade level. Progress will be closely monitored during the first quarter of the new school year. If the student does not maintain adequate performance during this period, the school reserves the right to re-evaluate placement in the appropriate grade level to best support student success.

C. Attendance

1. Absences

- a. St. Mary's Nativity School follows applicable state laws regarding mandatory school attendance as mandated in Bulletin 741. All absences are designated as either excused or unexcused.

- b. **When a student is absent from school, a parent must call the office by 10:00 a.m. each day of the absence.** If the office does not receive a call, a parent will be contacted. This policy is for the protection of the St. Mary's Nativity School students and is aligned with the state statutes of Louisiana.
- c. **Students should be fever-free without the assistance of medication for 24 hours before returning to school. Parents of students who are obviously ill (persistent runny nose not due to allergy, vomiting, persistent coughing, etc.) will be called to check their child out from school.** Students who are sent home during the school day with a fever or other symptoms of illness will not be allowed to return to school the next day, as this would not allow for the 24-hour protection of the entire school community.
- d. St. Mary's Nativity School has a strict no-nit policy. Any student suspected of having head lice will be sent home.
- e. A written statement giving reasons for the absence or tardiness **must** be brought to the student's teacher upon the student's return. These notes/letters will be retained in the office for one year. Should absence for any reason other than illness seem imperative, parents are requested to consult with the principal and present a written reason for the absence.
- f. Students who are absent due to illness have one day for each day of absence to make up the missed assignments or quizzes. For example, a student who was absent three days would be given three school days to complete the missed work.

2. Unexcused Absences

- a. **There should be no expectation of receiving assignments prior to an unexcused absence.**
- b. The school calendar provides for extended weekends throughout the school year. Parents are encouraged to schedule trips or family outings during these times to eliminate the need to interrupt a child's learning process. Missed assignments are the student's responsibility. If allowed by the teacher, homework may be submitted digitally.
- c. **The teacher will not be expected to reteach a lesson or missed concepts.**
- d. **Students who are absent during the regular school day may not participate in after-school sports or clubs on that day.**

3. Excessive Absences

- a. According to the Compulsory Attendance Laws of the State of Louisiana, in order to be eligible to receive grades, an elementary student should be in attendance a minimum of 167 days a school year. The only exception to this

regulation is extended personal illness or emotional illness verified by a physician.

- b. **Fifteen (15) days or the equivalent of 15 days, including tardies,** can be cause for a student to be retained in the current grade for another year.

4. Absence During the School Day

- a. **If at all possible, parents should avoid medical appointments during the school day.**
- b. Students who miss three and a half hours of the school day will receive a half-day credit. Students must be present for more than three and a half hours of the school day to receive a full day's credit.

5. Tardy Arrivals

- a. St. Mary's Nativity School begins its school day at 7:45 a.m. promptly. Instructional time begins immediately following the morning bell. Students arriving after the take-in bell must be accompanied to the office and signed in by an adult.
- b. Failure to arrive on time will result in the following disciplinary actions per nine weeks:
 - 1. The 5th infraction will result in after-school detention.
 - 2. The 6th infraction will result in in-school suspension.
 - 3. The 8th infraction will result in out-of-school suspension.

6. Returning After Daily Dismissal

- a. Students are not permitted to return to school or enter a classroom after the 2:45 p.m. dismissal.
- b. Students who do return after the 2:45 p.m. dismissal face detention. This policy is designed to protect your child while also helping them become more organized and responsible.

7. Bus Transportation

- a. Our bus schedule is determined by the Lafourche Parish Transportation Office. Bus drivers have the right to refuse extra students who are not on their regularly scheduled route.
- b. Students of St. Mary's Nativity School will not be allowed to leave the campus or church grounds by means of rented or professional driving services such as limousines or party buses.

8. Morning Drop Off and Afternoon Pick Up Car Lines

- a. Parents are asked to cooperate with teachers and essential volunteers who will be on duty at car line. Parents are asked to pay close attention during the carline process. **By law, cell phones may not be used at this time.** Please follow the traffic directions given by the teachers on duty.
 - i. **Drop Off:** Any student not arriving at school via a Lafourche Parish school bus is required to arrive in the car line by 7:40 a.m. Lafourche Parish buses take precedence over personal vehicles. Please pull to the right and allow buses to proceed to the front of the line.
 - ii. **Pick Up:** All cars must have a student's name and grade clearly displayed in the front windshield of the car. Initial signs will be provided by the school. Parents are asked to remain in their cars and to follow the duty teacher's instructions to proceed to the pickup area. When dismissing, students are not allowed to walk to a parked car without a teacher or administrator escort.

D. Birthday Observances

1. Students in Grades Pre-K through Grade 8 may come to school dressed out of uniform on their birthday or half-birthday (if their birthday falls during the summer months).
2. Invitations for personal parties may only be distributed at school if an invitation is extended to ALL students, all girls, or all boys in the student's class.
3. Special treats (donuts, cupcakes, etc.) may only be brought to school on the student's birthday or school day before or after a weekend birthday with the teacher's permission.

E. Cafeteria

1. St. Mary's Nativity School offers a hot breakfast and lunch, which is provided by the Archdiocese of New Orleans each day. Students are encouraged to eat these meals daily.
2. For the 2026-2027 school year, students are not required to bring a medical verification to bring lunches from home. When lunch is brought from home, it must be in a sealed container free of packaging labels. These meals should reflect the student's dietary needs. **Packaged fast food meals, soda, energy drinks, and**

candy are prohibited. Only milk, water, or juice is allowed.

3. A menu is posted monthly.
 - a. **Your school's specific site is:**
<https://schools.mealviewer.com/school/StMarysNativityElementary>
 - b. For those who prefer mobile access, the MealViewer app is available here:
 - **iOS:** <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/mealviewer-to-go/id956629807>
 - **Android:** <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.doubleuptech.mealviewer>
4. A luncheon meal is served daily. Students in grades fifth through eighth may have choices for lunch throughout the week.
5. Cafeteria management is under the auspices of the School Food and Nutrition Services of New Orleans, Inc. Therefore, if there should be a cafeteria-related problem, you should contact the cafeteria manager.
6. Volunteers or visiting parents are welcome to join a student or a class for lunch. We ask only that you let the cafeteria know first thing in the morning if you plan to eat with us. Adult lunches may be prepaid by sending money with your child in the morning or by paying in the cafeteria when you receive your meal. Withdrawal from the student's account may be allowed.
7. Students who are on reduced or free lunches for the preceding year must reestablish that status for the upcoming school year. Families must reapply each year. If eligibility changes, the difference in the change must be paid by a designated date.

F. Calendar

1. The school makes an effort to plan its calendar to correspond to the Lafourche Parish School calendar with regard to holidays, grading periods, and opening and closing dates.
2. A calendar of coming events is posted on PlusPortals and on our website.
3. There are those rare days when the public schools may choose to close for reasons other than emergencies. It is possible that we may close when they are open. In either case, parents must provide transportation for their child(ren) when Lafourche Parish buses are not in operation. In both instances, we will attempt to notify our parents in advance if we have to deviate from the published calendar.

G. Communication

1. Communication that promotes the growth of the individual and/or the community is a top priority at St. Mary's Nativity School. Maintaining open lines of communication and searching for ways to improve them within the school and between home, school, and church are a lifelong goal for our school community. Examples of how we try to foster wholesome exchange can be found below:
 - a. A **newsletter**, written by the principal, serves to keep families informed of important happenings at school. This newsletter is posted on PlusPortals and our school website, and is updated as needed. *Parents are highly encouraged to be faithful in reading the newsletter and checking it for important data and announcements before calling the school.*
 - b. A **notification system** allows the school to notify parents through email and text messages. It will be used for emergencies and as needed for reminders of school events throughout the year.
 - c. **Parent-teacher contacts** are a necessary part of school life.
 - i. Parents are asked to contact the teacher when requesting a conference so that the teacher can decide on a convenient time to meet. Parents may not come to school and expect to have an impromptu conference.
 - ii. Issues should be addressed with teachers before they are brought to the attention of the administration.
 - iii. Other than in emergency situations, replies to phone messages or emails should be received within two school days.
 - iv. The use of the class "GroupMe" or Class Dojo is at the teacher's discretion and is not to be considered as a primary source of communication.
 - d. The **official St. Mary's Nativity School Facebook** page will be used to inform friends of events that have occurred at school and, as needed, for reminders of school events throughout the year.
 - e. The **Web Page** address for St. Mary's Nativity School is <http://www.stmarysnativityschool.org>. The following information might be found on the web page: the mission statement, the current staff of the school, the current Consultative School Board members, alumni news, the most recent newsletters, and the monthly calendar.
 - f. **ClassDojo Communication**-
 - i. ClassDojo is the official platform used by St. Mary's Nativity School to communicate student behavior and recognize positive choices for students. Parents are encouraged to review their child's daily behavior with them before contacting the teacher regarding a behavior entry or point deduction.

- ii. To preserve instructional time, teachers are not expected to respond to ClassDojo messages during the school day. Parents should allow a reasonable response time during non-instructional hours. Urgent matters, including transportation changes or student safety concerns, should be directed to the school office.
 - iii. ClassDojo is intended for respectful, school-related communication. Misuse of the messaging feature, including repeated or inappropriate communication, may result in messaging privileges being limited or revoked at the discretion of the administration.
- 2. **Money** sent to school for payment of any fee or bill should be placed in a sealed envelope. Each fee should be enclosed in a separate envelope. The envelope should be marked with the following information:
 - i. That for which the money is being sent
 - ii. Child's full name
 - iii. Grade and section
- 3. **Change of transportation** forms can be found on the school website or by request from the front office.

H. Conduct

Conduct refers to the way a child manages their behavior. Primarily, this concerns their learning. Student interest and attitude are key factors. Also inherent in our definition of conduct is a respect and concern for the rights of others.

1. Chewing Gum

- a. Students should not chew gum at school at any time. Gum-chewing will result in disciplinary action.

2. Prohibited Substances

- a. Smoking in any form is not allowed on campus. This includes the use of e-cigarettes, cigars, cigarettes, pipes, tobacco of any type, marijuana, or vapors.
- b. Students who possess drugs and/or alcohol at school or at any school function face suspension and/or expulsion.
- c. Students who possess any object that could reasonably be considered a weapon at school or at any school function face suspension or expulsion.

3. Off-Campus Conduct

- a. The administration of St. Mary's Nativity School reserves the right to discipline its students not only for disruptions during the academic day but also for off-campus behavior that is not in line with the behavioral expectations of its students during the school day. This off-campus behavior includes, but is not limited to, cyberbullying.

4. Bullying, Hazing, or Cyber-Bullying

- a. St. Mary's Nativity School attempts to provide a safe environment for all individuals. Verbal or written threats made against the physical or emotional well-being of any person are taken very seriously. Students making such threats, whether in person, in writing, or on social media may face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion. Threatening behavior is never to be considered as jest or joking.
- b. Students are not allowed to use phones or other devices to take photos or make videos of other students in class or anywhere on the school campus during school hours. Students involved in possession or transmission of any photos/videos, including inappropriate photos on their cell phones or other electronic devices, face suspension and/or expulsion. In accordance with the law, Lafourche Parish Sheriff's Office will be notified of inappropriate photos or videos.

5. Fidget Devices

- a. Fidget devices, toys, and similar items are not permitted at school unless their use has been recommended by a licensed medical professional and approved by school administration. Parent must provide appropriate documentation for consideration. Even when approved, the use of a fidget device may be limited or discontinued if it becomes a distraction to the student or others, interferes with instruction, or is used inappropriately.

6. See also “Discipline”

I. Discipline

1. Discipline

- a. In accordance with the stated philosophy of the school, which emphasizes deep 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 cooperate with the spirit and policies of the school, 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.

- b. The principal or pastor reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of an action if any doubt arises.
- c. Items such as, but not limited to, e-cigarettes, questionable books and pictures, knives, guns, matches, cigarettes, toys, hand sanitizers, trading cards, laser lights, CDs, cameras, or anything that would detract from a learning situation are not allowed at school at any time.
- d. The school administration, in accordance with state laws, will determine the appropriate disciplinary measures to be taken concerning the presence of these items in the school. **Items taken away from students will be returned to the parent(s)/guardian(s) on the last day of the school year.**

2. Virtue-Based Restorative Discipline

- a. St. Mary's Nativity School uses a virtue-based disciplinary policy when possible when undesirable behavior initially occurs. This form of discipline frequently involves reflection periods and restoration for the harm. Parents must sign-off on reflection papers and returned to school. When these attempts have failed, homeroom teachers have classroom discipline policies which affects the students' conduct grade per 9-week period.

3. Infractions

- a. Any member of the St. Mary's Nativity School faculty and staff can record a disciplinary infraction against a student. When the disciplinary infraction is of a serious nature that requires corrective action, the staff member will record the student's disciplinary infraction on an office referral and will forward the form to the administrative office for review. The issuance of a referral form will result in disciplinary actions as determined by the administration. Completed disciplinary infraction forms will be maintained in the student's records. Students who receive disciplinary referrals will have lowered conduct grades for the week of the infraction.

4. Cheating

- a. Cheating of any type will not be tolerated. Students who choose to cheat face a

failing grade of zero, detention, suspension, and/or expulsion. A student athlete or student involved in extracurricular activities who is involved in cheating will also be unable to participate in sports/extra-curricular competition.

5. Damage to School Property

- a. The parent of a child who carelessly destroys or damages any furniture, equipment, buildings, or anyone's personal property will be obligated to pay the full amount of repairs and labor or replacement. Writing in textbooks is not permitted. The student will pay a fine or replacement for damaged or lost texts or library books before any final reports, transcripts, or grades are presented. A separate technology use and liability contract is sent home at the beginning of the school year.

6. Search and Seizure

- a. The school reserves the right to search personal property brought onto school grounds or at school functions if reasonable suspicion exists that prohibited material is present. This includes cell phones and other electronic devices. Searches will be conducted in the presence of another adult when feasible.

7. Detention

- a. Detention may be issued for a breach of classroom and/or school rules. Parents are provided with a Referral Form with written notification of the detention. The day, date, and time of the detention are at the discretion of the principal or teacher, who monitors the detention. **Detention takes precedence over appointments, practices, lessons, tutoring, ball games, etc.**

8. Suspension

- a. Students who are given an in-school suspension will be required to report to school each day and work in a separate classroom under teacher supervision. Students who receive an out-of-school suspension will not be allowed on campus or to participate in any extracurricular activities during the time of their suspension. Students must complete and turn in all missed classwork and take tests from the days of suspension on the day following the suspension.

9. Expulsion

- a. Expulsion is an extremely serious matter. Students who pose a threat to

themselves or to others may be expelled from St. Mary's Nativity School. A written notice to parents or a meeting with administration will be conducted. Students who have been expelled will not be allowed to return to the school for any reason without prior permission from the principal.

- b. Students whose parents have violated the Parents as Partners agreement in this handbook may also be expelled from St. Mary's Nativity School.

10. See also "Conduct."

J. Electronic Devices

1. Electronic devices will not be allowed on the school campus without the express permission of the child's teacher and the administration.
2. **Cell phones may not be in a student's possession while at school.** On occasion, a student may have to bring a cell phone to school. (For example,) students participating in after-school activities or entering a house where no one is home may need phones. **The phone must be brought to the school office upon the student's arrival at school and will be given to the student at the end of the day. Parents must submit a Cell Phone Permission and Agreement Form to the school office.**
3. **At no time during the day can a cell phone be used or in a student's possession. This includes after dismissal while waiting for transportation.**
4. **Confiscated items taken away from students will be held until picked up by a parent or guardian.**
5. Student phones are not allowed on field trips.

K. Evaluation

1. Grading Scales

Grading Scale		High School Credit Courses (8th grade only)	
A	94 – 100	A	90 – 100
B	86 – 93	B	80 – 89
C	78 – 85	C	70 – 79
D	70 – 77	D	60 – 69
F	Below 70	F	Below 60
			*credit may be withheld for students scoring below a 70 final avg.

2. Report Cards/Progress Reports

- a. **Report Cards** are important tools for communication. Report Cards will be issued four times during the academic school year, or every nine weeks.
- b. **Progress Reports** are posted on PlusPortals for students in grades first through eight.
- c. The date for these reports to be posted will be noted on the calendar.
- d. The progress report is an assessment of the child's *progress*.
- e. No student will be given a Progress Report or Report Card if tuition, library fines, or Before- or After-School Care program fees are in arrears.

3. Test Make-Up Policy

To ensure fairness and academic success for all students, St. Mary's has established the following procedures for students who are absent on scheduled test or quiz days in grades 1-8.

Make-Up Option:

To minimize disruption to instructional time and provide flexibility, students may make up missed assessments during the following designated period:

-Early Morning Make-Ups - Tuesdays and Thursdays - Students may arrive 1 hour before the bell (starting at 6:45 a.m. and no later than 7:15 a.m.)

-If attending "Early Morning Make-Ups" is not possible, students will be expected to miss P.E, music, art, or library to make up their test.

Scheduling Process for Early Morning Make-Ups:

- a. Parents/guardians must notify the school as soon as possible regarding their child's absence and confirm which make-up option they will utilize.
- b. Teachers will coordinate and confirm the test date and time with families.
- c. If a student is unable to attend on the designated days due to serious circumstances, alternative arrangements may be made in consultation with the principal.

Transportation and Supervision:

- a. Parents/guardians are responsible for arranging timely transportation to and from school for make-up sessions.
- b. Supervision and proctoring will be provided by the school during the designated make-up periods.

Students who are absent on the date of a pre-scheduled project, essay, etc. are still expected to turn in the assignment on the **original due date**. They may be submitted digitally if allowed by the teacher.

When a student is absent due to illness or quarantine, the teacher will post the assignment online, and if the student is able, he/she can submit the assignment digitally.

L. Extended Care

1. Before School and After Care

- a. St. Mary's Nativity School offers both Before School and After Care programs for an additional monthly fee. Except in emergency circumstances, students must be registered in the Before and/or After Care program prior to attending either. Please call the school office during business hours for additional information.
- b. Students not picked up by the end of afternoon carpool will be sent immediately to the After Care program, and parents will be required to register and be charged a fee.
- c. **Aftercare Behavior Expectations:** Students enrolled in the Aftercare Program are expected to follow all school rules and demonstrate respectful, responsible, and safe behavior at all times. School behavior expectations remain in effect during aftercare. Failure to comply with these expectations may result in disciplinary action, including temporary or permanent removal from the Aftercare Program at the discretion of the administration. Parents will be responsible for making alternative childcare arrangements if a student is removed from the program.

2. Field Trips

- a. From time to time, students may participate in activities brought to St. Mary's by outside educational sources.
- b. Parental attendance at field trips is subject to space limitations of the field trip venue and the teacher's discretion. Only parents or guardians may serve as chaperones when requested by the teacher.

- c. All volunteers must be safe-environment trained. A certificate must be on file with the school office.
- d. Every child must have turned in, by the teacher's stated deadline, a permission slip and fees to be able to accompany their class on such field trips. Children who do not meet this deadline will not be allowed on the trip and should report to school in uniform. Work for students who are unable to attend the trip will be provided by the child's teachers and will be completed in the office.
- e. No child will be allowed to leave the class group to return home with a parent or by some means other than that which the teacher has provided for the total group without permission from the principal beforehand.
- f. Younger siblings cannot accompany a parent chaperone.
- g. Field trips are designed to enhance, enrich, and reinforce classroom instruction. Attendance at a field trip is a privilege, not a right. Students whose in-school behavior has been unsatisfactory may be prohibited from attending a field trip. Parents will be informed in advance of a field trip as to the educational purpose, method of transportation, expense, and other pertinent information related to the field trip.

M. Health and Medication

1. Medical Policies

- a. St. Mary's Nativity School does not employ a school nurse. Therefore, only life-saving, emergency medications such as inhalers and Epi-Pens® will be administered. Such medicines must be brought to the school office by the parent and must include the following:
 - A current prescription label from the pharmacy must include the child's name, doctor's name, date filled, medication name, and dosage instructions.
 - All emergency medications brought into the school office must be in a sealed package from the manufacturer.
 - The package must contain the medical information insert from the manufacturer.
 - The child's name must be marked clearly for quick emergency use.

- **Parents and prescribing physicians are required to complete necessary forms.**
- b. No medication of any form, prescription or nonprescription, will be allowed in a student's possession at any time. Cough drops, lip balms, and essential oils (including jewelry containing essential oils) are prohibited on our school campus.
- c. Non-emergency medication **cannot** be administered on campus at any time. Parents must plan on administering such medication at home before and after school.

2. Food Allergies

- a. St. Mary's Nativity School recognizes that an allergy is an important condition affecting many school children. Although we strive to provide a safe environment for all our students through careful following of regulations and medical recommendations, the school in no way guarantees that it is allergy-free.

3. Life-Threatening Food Allergies

- a. Life-threatening food allergies are addressed with an Emergency Action Plan for any student whose parent/guardian and physician have informed the school in writing of such an allergy. St. Mary's Nativity School makes no claim to being a peanut-free facility.
- b. Students with allergies who participate in school-sponsored field trips may face challenges to their physical health. St. Mary's Nativity 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.
- c. All teachers and substitutes will be educated about the risk of food allergies. Teachers must be familiar with the Emergency Action Plan of students in their classes and respond to emergencies as per the emergency protocol documented in the Emergency Action Plan.
- d. In the event of a suspected allergic reaction where there is no known allergic history, the school's Emergency Response Plan will be activated. The emergency medical services will be called immediately as deemed necessary. 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.

N. Homework

1. Formal home-study is assigned to help students become self-reliant and self-directed. Assignments are designed to reinforce daily lessons, to supplement and enrich class work, and to prepare for certain lessons through various experiences. Homework may sometimes be submitted digitally.
2. In order to support each student's success and uphold academic responsibility, the following consequences will be implemented for repeated failure to complete homework assignments within a nine-week grading period:
 1. The 5th infraction will result in after-school detention.
 2. The 6th infraction will result in in-school suspension.
 3. The 8th infraction will result in out-of-school suspension.

FAILURE TO COMPLETE HOMEWORK may also result in a deduction from the subject matter grade for which the homework was due. The amount of deduction will depend on the point value of the particular missed homework.

A photocopy or completed in a manner other than the method assigned by the teacher will not be accepted.

O. Records

1. Student Records and the Buckley Amendment

- a. St. Mary's Nativity 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 US Mail or by email between schools. No records will be given to parents to transport to the new school.
- b. Students requesting records/transcripts/recommendations must make a **five** school-day request to the school Office. All forms should be submitted to the St. Mary's Nativity School Office for distribution.

- c. Completed forms will be sent via the U.S. Mail. Special handling will require that all postal fees be paid by the parents.
- d. St. Mary's Nativity School also recognizes the Buckley Amendment (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act) regarding 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 office of the principal.
- e. 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. The school reserves the right to charge a shipping and processing fee for extra records sent to more than one home address.
- f. 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.). It is a great benefit to the child to have both parents involved in his/her education.
- g. **St. Mary's Nativity School reserves the right to withhold academic records of students whose financial commitment is in arrears.**

P. Resource Program

1. Students who have a current accommodation plan at St. Mary's, new students with IEPs or accommodation plans from other schools, and students who are evaluated or screened during the school year may be eligible for services through the Resource Room.
2. The Resource Program at St. Mary's attempts to meet the individual needs of students who have a language processing disorder and/or an attention deficit disorder, which makes it difficult to process expressive or written language despite adequate intelligence, educational exposure, and cultural opportunity.
3. Depending on the student's needs, teachers offer accommodations and modifications within the regular classroom.
4. Professional evaluations are needed for assistance. **Recommendations set forth by the student's professional evaluation shall be met to the best of the ability of St.**

Mary's Nativity School. In some cases, the school does not have all the available means to meet some needs of students.

5. An additional fee will be charged to parents of children who regularly receive resource services.
6. Students who have been referred for screening by Child Search notification or teacher referral may be sent to the Resource Room for intervention on a temporary basis.
7. The educational assistance teacher provides assistance to qualifying students. Some accommodations and modifications may include copied notes, note organization, study guides, test-taking techniques, and test reading in a less distracting small group setting.

Q. Safety and Emergency Procedures

1. Weather Emergencies

- a. If it should be necessary to close the school because of weather conditions, a message will be sent to the home phone, cell phone, and e-mail account listed on a student's file via the Admin Notify emergency notification system. It is vital that all parental and emergency contacts of a student remain current and updated as needed.

2. Crisis Plan

- a. St. Mary's Nativity School has implemented a "crisis plan" in case of a lockdown emergency. Our Emergency Notification System will be activated as soon as safely possible to keep all parents informed during the event. **During a lockdown, no student will be admitted or released from campus.** All teachers and staff are aware of the procedure to follow to keep your children safe.
- b. In the event of an emergency, circumstances permitting, the building will be evacuated and students will be moved to a designated secure location. If an off-campus evacuation is necessary, parents will be notified and advised as the situation is resolved. Students will not be released until the administration deems the circumstances safe.

6. Firearms – Act 833

- a. Act 833 of the 1991 regular session of the Louisiana Legislature makes the

carrying of a firearm by a student or non-student on school property a crime. The crime is defined as the intentional possession of any firearm by a student or non-student on school campus during regular school hours or on a parish-owned school bus. Whoever is convicted of the crime of carrying a firearm by a student or non-student on school property is subject to a maximum penalty of imprisonment at hard labor for not more than five days. The law exempts from its provision a federal, state, or local law enforcement officer or a school official or employee acting during the normal course of employment, or a student acting under the direction of a school official or employee. The law also requires that the principal notify the parents of any student who is arrested for carrying a weapon on campus.

7. Emergency Drills

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

1. Rise in silence when the alarm sounds;
2. Close windows and doors;
3. Walk to the assigned place briskly, in single file at all times, and in silence;
4. Stand facing away from the building;
5. Return to building when signal is given.

Tornado drills are held periodically. The procedures are:

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

Lockdown drills are held periodically. The procedures are:

1. Classroom doors are locked and all windows are covered.
2. Classroom lights are extinguished.
3. Absolute silence is maintained.
4. No students or adults are allowed to leave the classrooms for any reason until the all clear signal is given.

Parents will be notified as soon as possible when an actual emergency has occurred. Emergency procedures may be modified if updated guidance is provided by the diocesan or civil authorities.

R. School Office Hours and Policies

1. SCHOOL HOURS

- a. Students not in classrooms at 7:45 a.m. are considered tardy. Students who arrive by carline must be dropped off by 7:40 a.m.
- b. At St. Mary's Nativity School, we work in partnership with parents to enable each child to develop as an independent learner. Parents must allow their child(ren) to enter the school building on their own each morning.
- c. It is the responsibility of the parent to contact the school when a child is absent or needs other transportation arrangements to be made. **With the exception of unexpected emergency changes to a child's normal pickup, the school office must be notified of transportation changes by a note to the child's homeroom teacher during morning attendance. Changes in afternoon transportation will only be made in emergency situations.**
- d. Teachers are on duty at 7:15 a.m. to supervise arrivals and at 2:45 p.m. to supervise departures.
- e. Prayer and afternoon announcements begin at 2:35 p.m. each day. Dismissal immediately follows.
- f. Please check the school calendar and PlusPortals® for early dismissal dates.

2. School Office Policies

- a. The school office is open on all school days from **7:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**
- b. All parents are to fill out and return a Student Information Card, which lists persons who are authorized to sign students out of school. An ID will be required to be shown by any individual who requests to check a student out of school. Visitors to school must report to the school office to sign in and receive a Visitor badge.
- c. **Visitors are asked, when possible, to make arrangements with the school prior to coming to campus.** No one other than faculty and staff members are allowed to go to or enter a classroom without a Visitor badge.
- d. Students are not permitted to use the office phone or a teacher's cell phone at any time.

3. Child Abuse Laws

- a. St. Mary's Nativity School abides by the Child Abuse laws of the State of Louisiana. Administration, faculty, and staff members of St. Mary's Nativity School are mandated reporters. This law mandates that all cases of suspected

abuse and/or neglect be reported to Child Protective Services.

S. School Property

1. DAMAGE TO SCHOOL PROPERTY

- a. The parent of a child who carelessly destroys or damages any furniture, equipment, buildings, or anyone's personal property will be obligated to pay the full amount of repairs and labor or replacement. Writing in textbooks is not permitted. The student will pay a fine or replacement for damaged or lost texts or library books before any final reports, transcripts, or grades are presented. A separate technology use and liability contract is sent home at the beginning of the school year.

2. Items Brought to School

- a. St. Mary's Nativity School is not responsible for loss or damage to any items brought to school by a student, including all electronic devices.

T. Service Projects

1. SERVICE PROJECTS

- a. The purpose of the stewardship program for students in Pre-K 3 through 8th grade 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 have the opportunity to participate in pre-planned service projects benefiting various community organizations throughout the school year. Additionally, some grades may be required to seek additional service opportunities per nine-week period.

U. Technology

1. Social Media

- a. Engagement in online social media, such as, but not limited to Facebook®.

Instagram®, Snapchat®, etc., or any student or parent created groups may result in disciplinary actions if the content of the student or parent's post includes defamatory comments regarding the school, the faculty, the administration, other students, other parents, or the parish. Unless **written** permission is granted, a student may not record either teachers or administrators.

- b. No parent or student should open a Facebook®, Instagram®, Snapchat®, GroupMe etc. account under the name of the school or in reference to the school, faculty, or administration. The **only official** St. Mary's Nativity School Facebook® page or Instagram are the ones created and monitored by the St. Mary's Nativity School administration. Group informational apps such as GroupMe® or Remind® are allowed only if established by the classroom teacher who will remain the administrator of the account. A parent who chooses to create such an account may subject his/her child(ren) to separation from the school.

2. Student AI Policy

- a. At the elementary and middle school levels, our focus remains on building a strong foundation in fundamental skills through direct instruction, hands-on learning, and the guidance of our dedicated teachers. We believe that these formative years are crucial for developing critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and the essential skills of reading, writing, and independent thought without the assistance of AI. Therefore, the use of AI tools for academic work is **not permitted** at this time. Elementary leaders may elect to instruct 6th and 8th graders regarding proper AI usage, but AI will not be utilized by students in routine lessons. Our teachers will guide students in learning and growing through students' efforts and collaboration with their classmates.
- b. Misuse of AI in academic work is considered a violation of academic integrity and will be addressed by the school administration and faculty. School administration and faculty will decide on the consequences of AI misuse.
- c. Each student will sign this policy annually, and a copy will be kept on file for the school year.
- d. **By signing the School Handbook, the student acknowledges and adheres to the AI policies set forth herein.**

3. Social Media Postings of Student Photographs

- a. St. Mary's Nativity School works to protect the confidentiality rights of all students. The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1973 (FERPA) and the Child Protection Act of 2012 (CPA) were designed to protect personally

identifiable information of minors. St. Mary's Nativity School adheres to these laws in its attempt to protect the privacy rights of all students. As a result, the parents of students enrolled at St. Mary's Nativity School are forbidden from posting photographs taken at school-sponsored events that include the images of **students other than their own** on their personal Facebook®, Instagram®, Snapchat®, TikTok®, etc. page. Such postings are a violation of the St. Mary's Nativity School's adherence to FERPA and the Child Protection Act. The parents who post such photos will be restricted from volunteer privileges.

V. Uniform Policy

1. UNIFORM POLICY

St. Mary's Nativity School students must wear the school-approved uniforms. All uniform items must be labeled with the student's name.

Pre-K 3 & Pre-K 4 Uniforms

Boys:

- light blue knit or oxford long or short sleeve uniform shirt with the St. Mary's Nativity School official logo
- navy blue uniform short or long pants without a belt or button closure
- solid white or navy crew socks
- solid black or navy blue athletic shoes with Velcro® fastener

Girls:

- Navy and white checkered dress and bloomers (navy soft shorts acceptable in place of bloomers)
- solid black or navy blue athletic shoes with Velcro® fasteners or non-slip Mary Jane's
- solid white or navy crew socks – no lace
- solid white or navy tights – no leggings

Kindergarten through 4th Grade Uniforms

Boys:

- light blue knit or oxford long or short sleeve uniform shirt with the St. Mary's Nativity School official logo
- navy blue uniform short or long pants with belt loops
- plain black or navy belt, solid white or navy crew socks

- **solid** black or navy athletic shoes
- Kindergarten shoes must have Velcro® or elastic-lace

Girls:

- light blue Peter Pan type collar or oxford long or short sleeve uniform shirt with the St. Mary's Nativity School official school logo
- plaid uniform jumper with the St. Mary's Nativity School official logo (**4th grade girls may wear skirts**)
- plaid shorts
- navy shorts or navy long pants
- plain black or navy belt
- **solid** black or navy athletic shoes – no Mary Janes
- solid white or navy crew socks – no lace
- solid white or navy tights – no leggings
- Socks must be worn with tights.
- Kindergarten shoes must have Velcro® or elastic-lace

5th through 8th Grade Uniforms

Boys:

- light blue knit or oxford long or short sleeve uniform shirt with the St. Mary's Nativity School official logo
- navy blue uniform short or long pants with belt loops
- plain black or navy belt, solid white or navy crew socks
- **solid** black or navy athletic shoes with laces or elastic-lace

Girls:

- blue oxford long or short sleeve uniform shirt with the St. Mary's Nativity School official logo
- school plaid skirts
- plaid or navy shorts with a belt
- navy pants with a belt
- solid white or navy crew socks – no lace
- solid white or navy tights – no leggings
- socks must be worn with tights
- **solid** black or navy blue athletic shoes with laces or elastic-lace

Please note that all uniform skirts, jumpers, and shorts are to be no shorter than two inches above the crease of the back of the knee. Shorts worn under the skirt or jumper are to be no shorter than four inches above the crease at the back of the knee and navy color.

2. Cold Weather Outerwear

- a. ***Jake's Uniforms*** is the sole provider of St. Mary's Nativity School outerwear.
- b. **ALL other outerwear items must be purchased through *Jake's Uniforms*.**
- c. Used outerwear can be purchased through the school's used uniform shop when available.
- d. **In extremely cold temperatures, students may wear heavier coats over their sweatshirts when announced by administration.**
- e. Students may wear **solid white** long sleeve shirt under school uniform shirt in cold temperatures.
- f. Students in all grades may wear only the outerwear described below:

- Navy blue pullover sweatshirt with the St. Mary's Nativity School official logo



- Navy blue windbreaker with the St. Mary's Nativity School **official logo**
- Navy blue lined windbreaker jacket with the St. Mary's Nativity School **official logo**
- Navy blue cardigan with the St. Mary's Nativity School **official logo**
- Navy blue fleece zip up jacket with the St. Mary's Nativity School **official logo**

Accessories such as hats, gloves, scarves, etc. can be purchased elsewhere. However, all items must be the uniform colors of navy, maroon, gray, light blue, or white.

3. Additional Comments:

1. Students must wear dress uniform on mass days. Due to summer heat, boys may wear shorts until September 1.

2. Students may wear solid white, short sleeved under-shirts under the uniform shirt.
3. Solid navy athletic or uniform plaid shorts **must** be worn under jumpers and skirts.
4. Undergarments must not be visible through the uniform.
5. No ankle socks or socks with logos or decorations are allowed.
6. Students are not allowed to write on body parts at any time.
7. All school uniforms must be maintained throughout the school year. This **includes** condition and length.

5. Spirit Shirts may be worn on **Mondays** only. The current year's Spirit Shirt is the only allowed. <https://threestitches.net/stmns/shop/home>

6. BIRTHDAY OBSERVANCES

- a. Students in Grades Pre-K through Grade 8 may come to school dressed out-of-uniform on their birthday or half-birthday (if their birthday falls during the summer months).

7. SPECIAL DRESS DOWN DAYS

- a. When students are allowed to dress out of uniform the following guidelines must be adhered to:
 - no jeans with holes
 - no jeggings or leggings, unless skirt or dress worn on top
 - no sleeveless shirts
 - no hats
 - no boots, open-toe, sandals, or crocs
 - **Shorts should be no shorter than four inches above the crease on the back of the knee OR above the fingertips.**
 - Athletic shoes must be worn on scheduled PE days.
 - Administration reserves the right to amend this policy at any time.
 - **Good Rule: If you think you shouldn't wear it, you shouldn't.**

8. JEWELRY AND GROOMING

- **Hair** must always be worn off the face. No fad or disruptive hairstyles/ hair ornaments are allowed.
- Chemically processed hair color of any kind is prohibited. Ribbons, bows, and headbands must be in the school colors of navy, maroon,

white, gray, school plaid, and/or light blue.

- **Boys' hair must be above the eyebrows, not longer than mid-ear, and off the collar.** Male students must be clean-shaven and well-groomed. Beards, mustaches, goatees, and other visible facial hair are not permitted.
- **Jewelry**
 - A watch and one religious bracelet may be worn.
 - Apple Watches, FitBits, or any other watches or jewelry that connect to the internet are not allowed.
 - One religious medal or necklace may be worn.
 - No chokers are allowed.
 - One set of non-dangling or huggie style hoop earrings are allowed for girls.
- **Nails**
 - Only clear nail polish may be worn.
 - No artificial nails of any kind are allowed.
- **Personal Hygiene**
 - Students are expected to maintain good personal hygiene. However, the use of cologne, perfume, body spray, or other heavily scented products at school is discouraged due to the potential impact on students with allergies, asthma, or fragrance sensitivities. Administration will determine if a fragrance is excessive or disruptive to the learning environment.

9. Makeup

- a. Girls in grades 6th through 8th are permitted to wear flesh colored foundation, light blush, finishing powder, and clear lip balm only.
- b. Fake eyelashes are not allowed

10. School bags

- a. School bags must be free from messages or designs that conflict with our school's mission and values.
- b. Only ONE non-distracting key chain allowed.
- c. Bags are of reasonable size to allow proper storage of binders, books, and materials.
- d. Rolling school bags are permitted in grades **third through eighth**

grade as an alternative to traditional backpacks, and follow the following guidelines:

- i. Must be of reasonable size and able to be stored properly.
 - ii. Students must operate with care to avoid causing injury
 - iii. Students who do not use their rolling bag safely or respectfully may be required to discontinue its use. Continued misuse may result in disciplinary action, as determined by the administration.
- e. Traditional school bags
- iv. It should be worn on the back with two shoulder straps.

All uniform regulations and guidelines are subject to the discretion of the principal.

The school's official uniform is an integral part of St. Mary's Nativity School's image and should be treated as such. Any infraction of the uniform policy will result in disciplinary action.

W. Volunteers

1. St. Mary's Nativity School is blessed with a great deal of parental involvement in the whole educational process. Volunteers help in virtually every aspect of school life. Parental involvement is vital to the success of our program. It is a genuine need at our school. We hope that parents view their time with us as an important aspect of their stewardship to the church.
 - a. Safe Environment training is required by the diocese before volunteers may come in contact with and/or supervise students.
 - b. Our parent-volunteers are asked to report first to the office to sign-in and to wear a visitor's badge while on campus.
 - c. Volunteers are asked to follow the same ethics and dress code to which teachers adhere.

The administration of St. Mary's Nativity School reserves the right to revise this handbook at any time. Notification of changes to the handbook will be sent to parents through the regular Parent Bulletin.