



St. Mary's Schools
2025-2026 Staff
Handbook

High School: 300 N. 4th St., O'Neill, NE 68763 (402)336-4455
Elementary School: 326 E. Benton St., O'Neill, NE 68763 (402)336-2664



Items of Particular Importance

Mission of St. Mary's School

St. Mary's forms students in the image of Jesus Christ by fostering the formation of the whole person; body, mind, and soul. Our mission will be realized by creating a school environment that is academically challenging, athletically competitive, appreciative of the arts, and passionately Catholic.

Employment Policies

HIRING PROCEDURES:

The principal(s) will conduct the hiring process for certified teachers and non-certified staff, sometimes with the help and input of other faculty members and the pastor. Qualified applicants for teaching positions must hold or be able to obtain a valid current Nebraska teaching certificate and annually participate in the Faith Formation program conducted by St. Patrick's Parish staff. Certified and non-certified staff must receive the Archdiocesan Safe Environment Training and be approved by the Archdiocese of Omaha, which includes a criminal background check, prior to having contact with children in the schools. Both the pastor and principal will sign the contracts of all certified teachers.

CONTRACTS:

Faculty members are employed by St. Patrick's Church under the auspices of the Archdiocese of Omaha by written contracts.

1. Contract periods are for one year only.
2. Faculty members are required to submit such personal and professional data as is generally required by all teachers.
3. In the case of a dismissal during the school year, a teacher is entitled to due process.
4. At the beginning of the second semester of the school year, the administration will offer letters of intent to faculty and staff for the upcoming school year.
5. On or after February 15 the administration will offer employment contracts for the upcoming school year. All contracts must be signed and returned to the administration by March 15. The contracts are then signed by the pastor and principal and copies are dispersed to the teachers. If a contract is not returned by the March 15 deadline, the administration will offer the teaching position to other qualified applicants.
6. Stipends for athletics, activities, and other sponsorships are listed on an addendum sheet to the contract which also must be signed and returned by the March 15 deadline.
7. The offer of a contract is an exercise of the employer's right to hire at will. At his or her discretion, the principal or pastor may elect not to offer a contract. In such cases there is no obligation on the part of the administration to show cause for non-renewal.

BENEFITS:

Salary and benefits for certified employees of St. Mary's School will be, to the extent possible, comparable to those accorded for similar positions in the local area. Our goal is to maintain our salary at 95% of the public school's previous year base salary, as recommended by the Archdiocese. Benefits will include health insurance, as set by the Archdiocese, retirement, and appropriate vacation and/or leave days. Non-certified staff will be paid a wage equal to or in excess of Federal minimum wage regulations.

- **Health Insurance:** St. Patrick's Church currently contributes towards the Archdiocesan insurance premium as part of the employee compensation package.
- **Sick/Personal Leave:** All full time employees have eight (8) days of paid sick leave and two (2) days of paid personal leave per school year. (Sick/Personal leave will also be broken into hours if shorter leave times are required.) Sick leave may accumulate to a maximum of twenty (20) days. Upon termination of employment, sick leave will not be compensated and is deemed forfeited.

When you are sick, please call Judy (HS) or Patty (GS) as soon as you know you are not able to come to school. The more notice you can give, the better, in terms of finding a suitable substitute for you.

One day of sick leave may be used for attending a funeral of a non-immediate family member. In addition, St. Patrick Church/St. Mary's School offers two days of **paid** time off for bereavement leave after the death of an immediate family member.

Immediate Family Member: (for VLTP and Sick Leave for Family Care and Bereavement) Spouse, Parent, Son or Daughter.

Spouse means a husband or wife.

Parent means a biological, adoptive, step or foster father or mother, or any other individual who stood in loco parentis to the employee when the employee was a child. This term does not include "parents-in-law."

Son or daughter means a biological, adopted, or foster child, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child of a person standing in loco parentis.

Personal leave must be requested at least two (2) weeks in advance and is subject to finding a suitable replacement and administrative approval. **Any personal leave request for days after April 1 must be submitted prior to March 1.** Personal leave should be kept to the allotted two (2) days allowed. **Excessive personal leave can create hardship for other employees and can be detrimental to student progress. Please use prudent judgment when requesting personal leave.**

If an employee has exhausted his/her allotted days of leave, the employee will have 1/185th of his/her salary deducted for his/her next paycheck for each additional day missed.

Once allotted **sick** days are exhausted, the employee may request donation leave from other employees. In this case, the employee requesting donations must put in a formal request with Cheleigh Sholes, the business manager.

Some of the provisions of interest to donors are as follows:

1. Donating is strictly voluntary.
 2. Full time employees can donate.
 3. Your name will not be disclosed.
 4. Once your donation has been transferred, you may not revoke it.
 5. The donation must be 1 day or more, in whole day increments.
 6. You must retain 6 days of leave for yourself.
 7. The department payroll coordinator will make the transfer: do not make any modifications to your timesheet.
- **Family Leave:** St. Patrick's provides for family and medical leave in accord with federal and state law. Refer to the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and provisions in

Benefit Contracts for certified teaching staff at St. Mary's School.

- **Civic Duty:** St. Mary's School will grant a leave of absence with pay for jury duty, election board duty, and witness testimony duty. Employees are required to notify the principal immediately upon gaining knowledge of a pending civic duty. Employees may be required to provide evidence of civic duty service. Any monies received as a result of approved civic duty service must be returned to St. Mary's School because regular employment compensation is being provided. Employees are expected to report to work during normal working hours whenever they are not required to serve on a civic duty assignment.

St. Mary's School may grant a leave of absence as approved by the principal(s) in consultation with the pastor. Leaves for 30 days or less shall not affect fringe benefit coverage. Any leave of absence greater than 30 days shall be without fringe benefit coverage, unless the fringe benefit contract provides otherwise or at the discretion of the pastor/president. In no event shall personal leave exceed one calendar year. Requests for leaves of absence shall be made in writing to the principal.

Additional notes on TEACHER ABSENCES:

1. Lesson plans and assignments must be meaningful and substantial enough to occupy the students for the entire period. An assignment such as "read your AR book" or "study the chapter" is not acceptable. Also make sure class rosters, textbooks, and other needed information is readily available for the substitute.
2. **When you are sick, please call Judy (HS) or Patty (GS) as soon as you know you are not able to come to school. The more notice you can give, the better, in terms of finding a suitable substitute for you.**
3. Generally, teachers are expected to remain on campus for the entire school day. Planning periods should be used for grading papers, planning lessons, calling parents, etc. If you must leave campus during the day please inform the secretary or the administrator. The obvious exception to this would be during a lunch break.
4. No teacher may cancel a class, dismiss a class early, or leave a class in session unattended. If for any reason the teacher is unexpectedly unable to meet a class, he/she shall notify the secretary or the building administrator as soon as possible. If an emergency arises and the teacher must leave a class in session, he/she should ask the teacher next door to look in on the class until a replacement can be found.
5. We will not hire substitutes in all cases. Occasionally, teachers will be called upon to cover classes for other teachers who are absent.
6. **Although you are not required to**, if you wish to find your own substitute for a day/days you will be absent, please let Judy or Patty know that you will take care of finding a sub when you submit your leave request. This way we are not 'double booking' for one teacher and we are able to make sure that the substitute gets paid.
7. Jennie or Paula need to approve your leave, but Patty and Judy are the ones who find the substitutes, and it's your responsibility to let them know you will be gone by filling out and turning in the Teacher Request for Leave. It cannot be stressed enough how important it is to fill out a Request for Leave. Without the request, we have no record of an absence, and it's possible that a substitute will not be scheduled. Even if you are not going to be gone for the whole day, you must fill out a request form following the time guidelines listed above (2 weeks notice for personal days) and have it approved by administration.
8. When the secretaries need to take personal or sick leave, the other secretary will document the absence. Please fill out the Request for Leave form.

9. Unless you are the coach, teacher, or sponsor of an activity or class, if you want to attend off campus events/contests or field trips with students, you must use personal leave to do that. An obvious exception to this would be if the teacher, sponsor, or coach is ill or unable to attend and you are asked to step in as the faculty sponsor.

PERSONNEL FILE:

Professional files are kept for each staff member. Staff members may view the contents of their file upon request. Personnel files are the property of the school and are not to be removed with a change in administration. Contents of the personnel folders are as follows:

1. employment application (when available)
2. copy of contract
3. official copy of transcript
4. copy of current teaching certificate
5. copy of any teacher evaluations (these are digital and available upon request)
6. up-to-date faculty data sheet
7. reports of incidents or violations of policies
8. safe environment verification (these are available online and upon request)
9. any copies of professional development records that are made available to us

EXPECTATIONS OF EMPLOYEES:

It is the responsibility of all faculty and staff members to understand and to accept the educational and religious mission of the school.

Because St. Mary's is a Catholic school, teachers and coaches are expected to reflect in their professional life the philosophy of a Catholic school. This requires that:

1. Teachers and coaches observe the personal and professional norms of the Archdiocese of Omaha, and the policy and philosophy of St. Patrick's Church and St. Mary's School.
2. Teachers and coaches should strive to be living examples of the Christian charity and politeness that they profess. Teachers should never underestimate the influence that they exert on young people.
3. Teachers and coaches will respect the confidentiality proper to faculty and administrative meetings and meetings with students and parents.
4. Teachers and coaches will manifest a loyalty to their fellow faculty, staff, administrators, and the pastor in what they say and do.
5. Teachers will involve themselves in the total educational process of the school, including academic, spiritual, and co-curricular activities.
6. Teachers will attend **all** spiritual activities and programs required of the student body and those meetings and activities designated by the principal. This includes weekly Mass for both the elementary and high school staff, Wednesday afternoon prayer services when scheduled for the high school teachers, and prayer services periodically scheduled for elementary students. Teachers are required to sit with their class/homeroom.
7. Each teacher and coach will correlate his or her objectives and goals both in the classroom and in co-curricular activities with those of the faculty as a whole so that each teacher is supporting the efforts of the administration and teaching staff.

PRINCIPAL EVALUATIONS:

Formal evaluation of the principal is the responsibility of the pastor and is conducted in accordance with Catholic Schools Office guidelines.

TEACHER EVALUATIONS:

The administration views teacher observations as part of professional growth and development. Informal observations will be made of each teacher by the administration throughout the school year. These informal visits help to keep the administration abreast of what is happening inside the classroom and allows the administration to assist the teacher with teaching methodology, classroom management, etc. when necessary. Formal observations will be made at least once each year. These visits may be followed up by a meeting to discuss the observation with the teacher. Teachers are required to follow through with any and all requests made as a result of a classroom observation. Copies of all formal evaluation documents will be made available to the teacher and will be kept on file by the administration.

If there are issues with a teacher's performance, the administrator shall put concerns and areas of needed growth and clear expectations of what is being asked of the employee in writing. There will be a clear understanding and an opportunity for the employee to correct or show improvement.

TEACHER/STAFF CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

In the event of any non-compliance by any employee with the policies of St. Mary's School and St. Patrick's Parish, it shall be the duty of the pastor/president and/or principal to inform any employee not in compliance. Sanctions which may be taken against an employee for non-compliance with the policies of St. Mary's School and St. Patrick's Parish may be one or more of the following.

1. An oral reprimand
2. A written reprimand
3. Suspension with pay
4. Suspension without pay
5. Termination of employment
6. Non-renewal of employment
7. Referral to appropriate authorities for criminal prosecution
8. Mandatory enrollment in in-patient care or other forms of rehabilitation or counseling as a term and condition to any continuing employment of the school/parish.

GRIEVANCES/DUE PROCESS:

If school personnel have a grievance, it is expected to be presented and documented through the appropriate channels. The proper chain of command is 1) Principal, 2) Pastor, 3) Advisory Board, 4) Archdiocese of Omaha Catholic Schools Office.

A conference should be scheduled with the principal(s) to discuss any concerns an employee may have. If the issue remains unresolved the employee may choose to initiate formal grievance procedures:

- ☐ The employee will document his/her concerns in writing and forward it to the principal.
- ☐ The principal will then have 10 days to investigate the grievance and meet with the employee to present a formal response.
- ☐ If the employee is unsatisfied with the principal's resolution he/she may elect to take the matter to the pastor.
- ☐ The pastor will address the grievance in the same manner as above and may discuss it with the advisory board.
- ☐ The principal and pastor will render a final decision.
- ☐ If the employee is still not satisfied he/she may choose to appeal the decision to the Archdiocese of Omaha Catholic Schools Office.

PERSONNEL ARRESTS

1. An employee who is arrested must notify the pastor/principal within 24 hours.
2. The pastor will determine a public relations plan and contact Archdiocesan officials.
3. The principal will gather details of the arrest from the official report.
4. After reviewing the facts the pastor will approve a course of action concerning the employee that may include any or all of the following:
 - Place on administrative leave
 - Recommend for evaluation
 - Recommend for treatment
 - Place on probation
 - Recommend termination
5. The pastor will inform the employee of the plan of action
6. A written record of the details gathered and action taken will be placed in the employee's digital and/or physical personnel file.

ABUSE/MISCONDUCT OF MINORS & VULNERABLE ADULTS

Alleged sexual misconduct is subject to the procedures found in the Child Protection Policy of the Archdiocese of Omaha

Reports of sexual misconduct must be investigated promptly. Sexual misconduct will result in probation or termination. An employee accused of sexual misconduct will be placed on leave with pay while the investigation is being conducted.

Definitions of Sexual Abuse/Misconduct

- Sexual contact with a minor or vulnerable adult. *This is defined as sexual abuse as well as child abuse.*
- Sexual contact between school personnel who are counseling a person and the person being counseled. *This is defined as sexual exploitation.*
- Unwanted sexual conduct or language with another employee or student. This includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. *This is defined as sexual harassment.*

Legal Federal Definition of Sexual Harassment

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic achievement.
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or academic decisions affecting such individual's employment or academic standing.
- Such conduct has the purpose of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment.

Per the Archdiocese Safe Environment policies, all concerns about abuse (sexual, physical, emotional) must be reported to the local authorities. The Office of Victim Outreach and Prevention must be notified if the accused is a volunteer or employee of the Church.

REPORTS & INVESTIGATIONS OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Any individual who has complaints of sexual misconduct should report it to the principal. If an individual feels uncomfortable with bringing the matter to the principal, or if the principal is thought to be involved in the misconduct, he/she should report the matter to the pastor or the Superintendent of Schools for the Archdiocese of Omaha. Charges of sexual misconduct will be promptly and thoroughly investigated and a written report will be made concerning the results of the investigation.

If it is determined that sexual misconduct has occurred, appropriate relief for the individual bringing the complaint and appropriate disciplinary action against the person(s) engaging in such action, including possible termination, will follow.

The school will not tolerate retaliation against any employee or student who makes a good faith complaint of sexual misconduct or, in good faith, provides information in connection with any such complaint.

The school will assist persons falsely accused of sexual misconduct in making known to appropriate parties the false complaint. The school will take disciplinary action, including possible termination, if sufficient evidence substantiates the guilt of a person who falsely alleges sexual misconduct.

The Archdiocese of Omaha Safe Environment Office and St. Mary's School requires that all persons having contact with minors in our school be Safe Environment trained and certified. This applies to volunteer classroom aides, volunteer coaches, and field trip supervisors (even if another SE certified individual is present at all times). If you are asking someone to help in your classroom or help with a sport, activity, or field trip, please let your administrator know who they are, and communicate to the individual that they may not have contact with the students until they are Safe Environment certified. This is absolutely necessary to protect our school, our students, and our staff.

Safe Environment Trainings for 2024-2025 are scheduled for August 13, 2024, November 13, 2024, and February 12, 2025.

Professionalism

ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE:

Teachers are expected to be at school by 7:40 AM and be available to students from 7:45 AM until the take-in bell at 7:55 AM. Teachers and other full-time staff are expected to remain on campus until 4:00. In keeping with the philosophies of Catholic education, teachers must make themselves available to students. Therefore, if you must leave early or arrive late, please let your building principal know.

CELL PHONES/TELEPHONES:

Teachers who carry cell phones or wear Smartwatches are to have them set to silent while teaching, substituting, or on duty. Cell phones should only be used by teachers in classroom and duty settings in an emergency situation.

Landline telephones in classrooms and gyms are for the use of faculty and staff. Students may use the office phones with the approval of the office secretary, ***but are not to answer or use classroom or gym telephones except in an emergency.***

COMMUNICATIONS:

Faculty and staff members are assigned a mailbox in the faculty workroom. Bulletins, memos, notices, messages, and mail will be placed there. In addition, faculty and staff are assigned a voice mail for telephone messages, a school gmail account (@smcards.org) for email, and a Sycamore account with "Pass-a-Note". The administration will communicate mainly through the school's email account and Flocknote. Please check these sources daily for notices, messages, and announcements.

Please respond to messages from parents either by phone, email, or Pass-a-Note in a timely manner. Keep any and all written and electronic correspondence with parents and students for the entire school year and share with administration when necessary.

Regular and timely communications with parents is very important and it is one of the things we promise parents they can count on at St. Mary's. Teachers are asked to keep parents informed as often as possible when a student is having difficulty or is beginning to show signs of struggling either academically, behaviorally, or socially. Teachers should also keep the counselor and school administration informed of any student concerns. Any notes home should be shared with administration—either cc'd on an email/Pass-a-Note, or a hard copy put in the administrator's mailbox. This includes general updates or specific notes about outings or field trips. Your administrators cannot stand behind you if they are not aware of what is going on.

Sycamore: Proper use of Sycamore will go a long way toward making parents your ally in the education of their child(ren). Teachers should update information on Sycamore frequently including grades, assignments, and other information. Teachers in grades 3-12 are required to update student grades weekly beginning with the fourth week of each quarter (or semester in the HS).

News Releases: Any news release to the public and media pertaining to the school must be approved by the administration.

Flocknote: Communication with students **MUST** be sent through Flocknote, **not through personal text messages**. Parents should be included in communications you send to students. If you are the sponsor of a group or team, see Jennifer Wallwey (or any staff member at the Parish Center) to help you get set up to send Flocknotes to your student group.

CONFERENCES WITH PARENTS:

Parent-Teacher conferences are held for different reasons and can be initiated by either party. Since conferences are usually called as a result of a perceived problem or need, they must be planned very carefully to achieve desirable results, improved achievement, or to correct behavior problems.

The administrator is to be made aware of any conferences scheduled with parents and, at the request of the teacher or parent, will be present at conferences if she is available. If the administrator is unavailable for a conference, and the teacher or parent has specifically requested her presence, the counselor or another experienced faculty member could be present or the conference could be rescheduled.

COOPERATION:

Please cooperate with the office and with all organizations of the school by answering their requests as efficiently as possible. This applies to forms, cards, bills, and other tasks of this nature.

DEADLINES:

Professional courtesy requires that each employee adhere to deadlines set by the administration and other faculty and staff members. Failure to meet deadlines often delays others from completing necessary work on time.

ETHICS

Professional ethics, as well as Christian charity should encourage all of us to be careful of comments made concerning students, school policies, or colleagues. Often people who are critical and who gossip about school events do not know all of the facts concerning those situations. Open communication cannot be established if we talk behind each other's backs.

Students are not to have access to certain off-limits areas of the school. This includes both teachers' lounges, workrooms, and storage closets. Teachers' classrooms and administrative offices are off-limits when a staff member is not present. In the elementary, students may not 'cut' through the teachers' lounge when moving from one quad to another, except in the event of an evacuation or other emergency when directed to do so by a staff member. **When teachers are accompanying students from one quad to another, please walk with them in the gym, not through the teachers' lounge.** When we allow access, even when accompanied by a staff member, it sends a message to the students that the teachers' lounge is an acceptable shortcut for them.

High school students are not allowed to use the copier in the library to make copies. They are authorized to print only from the computers. Copies need to be made by a staff member.

A student's confidence should always be respected. If a student confides his/her problems to any teacher, these problems are not to be discussed with others, unless charity or prudence demands that they be disclosed to specific individuals. A student's faults and deficiencies are to be considered on a professional level and are not material for discussion in the faculty lounge or in public places.

Students have a right to their reputation. Teachers are to avoid speaking negatively about students except in a confidential and professional setting.

In serious cases, such as abuse, contemplated suicide, and cases where someone's health or safety is at stake, confidences must be broken by reporting to a counselor or administrator (as mandated by state law).

The highest standard of professional conduct is expected of every faculty member. Because of the position we occupy, much is expected of us. We operate as a team and unless all of us work together, we defeat the purpose of our objectives. It is of utmost importance that as a code of ethics, we require:

1. A teacher or staff member will never discuss a student's performance with any person not authorized to receive this information;
2. A teacher or staff member will never permit a student to publicly criticize another teacher;
3. A teacher or staff member will always demonstrate a high degree of loyalty to the school, to their fellow faculty members, and to the staff and students.

LANGUAGE:

1. To use nicknames in class often lessens the professional distance between the teacher and the students and can result in further problems.
2. Refrain from the use of "hell", "damn", and any profanity in the classroom or in any

school activity where you are working with the students. We can not tolerate the use of such language.

3. Be very conscious of your use of the English language. Standard usage is always expected in the classroom. Require students to use correct language in every class in both speaking and writing. Do not tolerate poor spelling or careless English because you teach a subject other than English.

MEETINGS/IN-SERVICES/SCHOOL FUNCTIONS:

Faculty Meetings/In-services: All teachers are required to attend all faculty meetings, faculty in-services, and other meetings called by the administration. Teachers, as professionals, are expected to be on time. While it is tempting to schedule a personal day on an in-service day so a substitute does not have to be arranged, this will not be approved unless there are extenuating circumstances. We have an obligation to attend all Faith Formation classes in order to adhere to the Archdiocese's policy on the hours required for faculty catechesis.

School Functions: All faculty members are required to attend **Parent/Teacher Conferences, school Liturgies** and **other spiritual functions** (unless teaching duties prohibit you from attending). High school teachers are also required to attend the Activities Banquet and Graduation, if at all possible. However, we understand that sometimes we have other family obligations at that time of year. St. Patrick's Annual Church Auction is a contracted day for all staff. If you are not able to attend/work a shift during the auction, you must use a personal day, or, in the case of sickness, a sick day.

All coaches, moderators, and chaperones are required to attend all scheduled events in their sport or activity. All other faculty members are encouraged to attend these events and show support for our students. If you are in attendance at a school function at St. Mary's or another location you are expected to assist in supervising our students as needed.

If you are unable to attend a meeting/in-service/school function, you must request permission from the administrator two weeks prior to the event (except in the case of illness) to be excused from attendance. Since meetings, in-services, and certain school functions are included in the 185 days of your contract, if you are not able to attend, you must use a personal day, or, in the case of sickness, a sick day.

OVERNIGHT TRIPS:

Whether for athletics or other extra-curricular activities, overnight trips with students must follow the Archdiocesan guidelines for supervision of minors. These guidelines specifically address such areas as transportation, sleeping accommodations, hotel rooms, and chaperones. Permission forms and waivers must be completed in advance and submitted to the principal. All chaperones and drivers must be current in their Safe Environment certification.

PROFESSIONAL DRESS:

The objectives of our policy on faculty dress are to have the faculty and staff represent the school as professional persons in their appearance and to lead our students by example. The more professionally dressed we are, the more respect we command from our students, colleagues, and parents. The faculty needs to exceed the dress code established for our students.

MALE FACULTY

1. Men are to wear long pants (casual or dress).
2. Male faculty should be neatly groomed. Earrings, nose rings, tongue rings, brow rings, etc. are not allowed at school.
3. Tattoos should not be visible at school or school functions.

FEMALE FACULTY

1. Pants and skirts should fit appropriately. No **extreme** low-rise or tight fitting garments are allowed.
2. Dress capri or crop pants may be worn.
3. Slacks and pants must be dressy or dressy casual in style. Blue jeans, sweat pants, warm-ups, joggers, and leggings are not acceptable in most instances.
4. Dresses, tops, and blouses should not reveal cleavage and should not be tight fitting. Revealing attire is not acceptable in a school setting.
5. Mid-ribs and lower backs should not be exposed at any time (while writing on board, while bending down, etc.)
6. Skirts should be knee length or longer. Skirts that are shorter than knee length are generally not appropriate. Denim skirts are acceptable and must fit the previously mentioned guidelines.
7. Earrings are allowed, provided they are not excessive or distracting. Nose rings, tongue rings, brow rings, etc. are not allowed at school.
8. Tattoos should not be visible at school or school functions.

PE teachers may wear clothes appropriate for gym class including shorts, t-shirts, and warm-ups; however if they have other scheduled classes in the building they should wear collared shirts with pants during those classes.

During Cardinal Pride Days and other special dress days approved by the administration, the faculty and staff may follow the same dress guidelines approved for the students.

PURCHASES:

A completed purchase order with all necessary information is required with the principal's signature prior to ordering any materials or equipment. The secretary or principal will assist with ordering materials. All textbooks and class materials are ordered through the office to maintain an accurate inventory.

When purchases are received it is the staff member's responsibility to check the order for accuracy and damage. Report any problems with the order to the secretary.

WISH LIST:

Jennifer Wallwey, the Development Director of the parish, keeps the Wish List current and updated for St. Patrick's Church bulletin. If teachers are in need of something outside of the general budgeted items, those requests may be able to be put on the parish Wish List. Keep in mind that sometimes things that one teacher needs might be already available in another classroom or the other school building, so it's a good idea to run your requests by your building principal. Wish List requests must be made using the following form:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1w8ubLj2SMFj28VgM62LwNTKXhKB42nDeYYy4FyGMWs/edit>

Using the form helps us to keep track of which teachers are requesting items, what items are being requested, and the total cost of the items. It also helps us to have an itemized list of what has been purchased so we can periodically publish this in the bulletin.

FUNDRAISING

At times, different classes or clubs may wish to fundraise for a variety of things. Any fundraising event needs to be cleared with Jennifer Wallwey, the Development Director of the parish, before plans are made. Since many of our annual events are large fundraisers for the parish and school, we want to ensure that parents and parishioners are not bombarded with requests for donations.

Academics

CURRICULUM:

All faculty members are required to follow the curriculum standards for their subject area developed and approved by the Catholic Schools Office of the Archdiocese of Omaha. These standards can be accessed at <https://lovemyschool.com/curriculum/>

Archdiocesan Assessments must be completed by the end of the school year and results turned in to your building principal so they can be reported to the Catholic Schools Office. These can be accessed at <https://lovemyschool.com/curriculum/assessments/>. The password is **csoassessments24**.

All faculty members are encouraged to continually evaluate the curriculum. Recommendations for improvements to course offerings should be made to the principal by the end of the first semester. Requests for a change in curriculum need to be made by the end of the first quarter (or mid-October) in order for the administrator to explore the possibility of using Textbook Loan funds to pay for materials.

GUEST LECTURERS:

Teachers are encouraged to make use of guest lecturers for their classes. Obviously, teachers should be very prudent in their choice of speakers. For the protection of the teacher and of the school, all speakers must be approved by the principal prior to their being invited to speak.

LESSON PLANNING:

1. Teachers need to maintain written or digital lesson plans.
2. Plans should include a variety of student activities and reflect the curriculum standards established by the Archdiocese of Omaha.
3. Teachers are not to give students a study period or end class early and allow students to sit and talk freely. To give students the last five minutes of class to study is impractical since they realize it is not sufficient time to accomplish anything, and will sit and talk.

LIBRARY:

1. Check in advance before sending students to the library or before bringing a class. HS teachers need to remain with their classes in the library and are responsible for discipline.
2. Inform the librarian in advance concerning research projects to determine what materials may be available.
3. The librarians will sometimes be available to proctor make-up tests or read tests aloud to students. Please check ahead of time before sending students to the library to complete a make-up test or have a test read aloud.

Principals' Offices:

Please inform the secretary immediately if a student is being sent to the principal's office. Provide as much information about the situation as you know. Do not allow the student to return to your classroom until you verify that he/she has seen the principal.

SEMESTER EXAMS:

1. In grades 7-12, all core courses, except for Theology, have a comprehensive semester final exam as part of the course requirement. The exam must be given at the time assigned on the test schedule. Any exception to this for an individual or a class must be approved by the principal.
2. Exam periods are 50 minutes. Exams should be so constructed that students will spend the majority of that time on exams.
3. All students take final exams, even those with an A for the semester.
 - Graduating seniors with an A for both semesters will be allowed to opt out of a final exam for that class.
 - Students who have an A for the semester will be required to take the exam, but it will not count against their grade if they score an 80% or higher. If they score below an 80%, the exam grade will be part of their semester grade.
 - For 7th and 8th grade, semester exams will count for 10% of their semester grade, and the semester work will count for 90%; for 9th and 10th grade, semester exams will count for 15% of their semester grade, and the semester work will count for 85%; for 11th and 12th grades, semester exams will count for 20% of their semester grade, and the semester work will count for 80%.
4. The exam schedule will be posted about a week before semester exams.
5. Teachers of non-core courses or Theology have the option of administering a semester test if they choose. If they choose not to administer a semester test, they may be asked to proctor an exam for a teacher who has several.
6. Students are to remain in the room for the entire period, except for good cause, to provide an appropriate testing environment for all students.
7. Events, meetings, and/or activities should be avoided during exam days.

Management

ACCIDENTS:

Staff members are to report all accidents to the office immediately after the accident occurs or as soon as it is discovered. Judy and Patty have official accident report forms that will need to be filled out.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

In the high school, announcements are made daily during the high school homeroom period and are posted on Sycamore. Faculty and staff wishing to have announcements included should submit the announcement to the office secretary by 7:45 AM. Moderators and coaches are responsible for getting the announcements to the office before and after their various events. Announcements handed in by students without a teacher's signature will not be accepted. Teachers are to make sure that students are attentive during announcements. Afternoon announcements will be made when necessary with the approval of the administration. In the elementary, any announcements will be made before morning prayer.

ASSEMBLIES:

All faculty members are required to attend any assemblies held during the school day. Faculty members should escort their classes to the assembly area and sit in their assigned area. Faculty members are expected to assist in supervising all students.

BUILDING SECURITY/KEYS:

1. Issuance of building keys to non-staff members must be approved by administration.
2. If you open the school or the gym for any students, you are responsible for supervising those students until they leave the building or gym.
3. **Teachers are not to lend their keys to any students at any time.** If a student must get into some part of the building, open it and lock up after him/her.
4. All classroom doors and other doors you use should be secured when not in use.
5. Teachers in the building after hours have the responsibility to see that all entrances to the building are securely locked (doors are not propped open) before you leave.
6. If you are the last staff member to leave the building, you are responsible for making sure that all lights are turned off, and all students are out of the building. **NEVER leave students unattended in the school.**
7. If you need the doors programmed to be open at a particular time, please let Tony Allen know. Tony is responsible for setting the doors.

BULLETIN BOARDS:

Areas to display school information and student work are located throughout the hallways. Please try to refrain from attaching papers, posters, etc. on doors, door frames, hallway walls, display cases, windows, lockers, and any other area not designated for announcements.

CALENDAR/SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

The secretaries and AD will maintain calendars for school events on the Google calendar. All activities and events involving school facilities, school students, and school time must be submitted to the AD or principal to be placed on the school calendar. This will allow us to avoid potential conflict and to ensure that state and local regulations are followed. Requests for schedule changes must be brought to the attention of the AD or principal(s) as soon as it is evident a change is needed.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT:

In order to ensure an atmosphere which promotes learning and understanding, it is necessary that certain levels of conduct and discipline be maintained. To achieve this end, guidelines are to be followed to enable the teacher and the student to be more comfortable with one another. These include, but are not limited to:

1. Each faculty member is responsible for making a list of classroom rules and procedures.
2. It is the responsibility of each teacher that all students know and observe all school regulations. From the very first day students must be made aware of the fact that discipline is part of the learning process.
3. In order to maintain the greatest respect of his/her students, under normal circumstances, each teacher is expected to handle the discipline problems that arise within the classroom. The teacher should exhaust all ordinary means of correction before sending a student to the office.
4. Issues of incomplete assignments or poor test scores should be handled by the classroom teacher after school or during a mutually agreed time during the school day. Parents should be alerted to students who are not completing assignments or who are generally performing poorly in class.
5. Try to keep the class engaged in meaningful activities and locate potentially disruptive students immediately thus avoiding an entire group disruption. Busy, interested students seldom cause trouble.

EMERGENCY DRILLS/SAFETY PROCEDURES:

Fire drills are held monthly to assure the safety of all. Some of these drills may be unannounced. Teachers must be familiar with the evacuation routes posted in each classroom in which they teach. At the first sound of the alarm, students are to move quickly **and silently** out of the room and to the designated area. Teachers should be the last to leave the classroom and are to accompany their students to the designated area. Once there, teachers are expected to call roll, reporting immediately to the office the absence of any student who had been in the classroom. Remain in the designated area until given the all clear signal. (In case of power failure, a hand bell will be used to signal an evacuation.)

For other types of emergency drills, please see the Safety, Security, and Crisis Response Manual. Emergency posters with procedures are posted in each classroom and the school offices.

In any type of emergency evacuation of the school, teachers must remain with their students until the danger has passed and report any problems immediately.

MAINTENANCE:

Teachers are to hold students accountable for keeping the classrooms, hallways, Parish Hall, and other areas of the school clean and organized. Do not allow food or drink, other than water, in the classroom areas except on special occasions (birthday or reward/incentive). Please turn in to the office all items left unattended or stored inappropriately.

Classroom teachers are responsible for general cleanliness and upkeep of his/her classroom. PE teachers and coaches are responsible for the cleanliness and upkeep of the locker rooms. General cleaning and emptying of trash should be done regularly. Students may assist in these tasks.

Maintenance needs are to be given to Ben Sholes, our maintenance manager. You can stop him when you see him, send him a text, or send him an email.

PRAYER:

1. Each day at the beginning of the day, students will stand for daily prayer and the pledge.
2. Each day prior to dismissal students will stand for the closing daily prayer.
3. Each class should also begin with a prayer led by the instructor or students.

ROLL CALL:

1. Each teacher in the high school must take roll every period. Teachers in both buildings must take roll after breaks.
2. If a student is missing and his/her name is not on the absentee list for that day, call or send a note to the office after waiting a reasonable time to make sure the student is simply not tardy.
3. If a student whose name is on the absentee list is present, check with Judy Crumly or Patty Bauer to verify that the student is in school.
4. If a student is tardy for Homeroom, please let Judy or Patty know that they need to be counted tardy for the day.
5. Keep each class until the bell rings.
6. Teams to be dismissed early are listed on the daily absentee report and faculty bulletins.
7. Excuse students from class only in cases where it is really necessary. Students should not be missing instructional time.

LUNCH:

In the elementary, teachers accompany their students on a rotating basis (currently, every other day) to the lunchroom and supervise them until they return to the elementary school and are dismissed for recess. Carol Fuhrer oversees the elementary office during lunch.

In the high school, one teacher per week and Mr. Allen are on lunch duty. Please report to the lunchroom at the bell with the students. One teacher each week will also be assigned to oversee the high school office during lunch. Judy Crumly will make sure that these schedules are given to you at the start of the school year.

Please remember that the secretaries are present in the lunchroom to get an accurate count of students eating lunch and getting 'seconds'. It is the responsibility of the teachers on duty to supervise and discipline students.

Students are not allowed to get 'seconds' until they have eaten a reasonable amount of food on their tray. Please **check students' trays** before allowing them to get 'seconds'.

Students should not be dismissed from the lunchroom until all trash has been picked up from their table and the general area around it. Teachers supervising the students need to check the table and surrounding area before students may be dismissed.

SCHOOL EQUIPMENT:

1. Staff members are responsible for the contents of their classrooms and equipment that is checked out or borrowed from other areas including textbooks, computers, projectors, cameras, the gym sound system, library materials, etc.
2. Staff members are to keep careful records to determine which students are accountable for lost, stolen, or damaged equipment.
3. Classrooms and other areas of the building should be secured to minimize the potential for lost, stolen, or damaged equipment.
4. Equipment owned by St. Mary's School and/or St. Patrick's Church shall not be loaned or rented without the approval of the pastor or principal.

SCHOOL VEHICLES:

1. Teachers/moderators/coaches may submit a request to use a school vehicle to Tony Allen, who will schedule vehicles on a priority basis. Tony maintains the vehicle calendar/schedule.
2. Teachers/moderators/coaches are responsible for the behavior of students in school vehicles and are expected to accompany students in school vehicles/buses.
3. Teachers/moderators/coaches are responsible for cleaning the vehicle after each use.
4. Because of the element of safety, teachers/moderators/coaches will defer to the needs and concerns of the bus driver while on the bus.

SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS:

1. Supervision of students is expected at all times when school is in session and at school events in which the school is responsible for students.
2. Classroom and duty teachers are primary supervisors, but **all staff** are expected to assist in supervision of all students while at school or school sponsored events.
3. A teacher is responsible for supervising the area around his/her classroom before and after school and between classes.
4. All routines, guidelines, and procedures established by a teacher must be aligned with the current Student Handbook and this document.

5. If you must be excused for personal or school matters please inform the administration or neighboring staff member and ask them to observe your students while you are away.

SYLLABUS:

All high school teachers are expected to provide a class syllabus to students, parents, and the principal at the beginning of the school year outlining the course, grading procedures, classroom management procedures, and other necessary information. This may be made available digitally on Google Classroom.

Grade school teachers are expected to provide grading procedures, classroom management procedures, and any other necessary information to families and the principal at the beginning of the school year.

TECHNOLOGY/INTERNET USE:

All technology issues or requests for maintenance of hardware or software should be coordinated through the ithelp.smcards.org forms. In RARE cases the administration may be able to assist you. If the issue is unable to be solved locally, refer the case to our IT person for resolution. Use this link: ITHelp.SMCARDS.ORG Because there may be more than one request for service, requests will be prioritized based on significance to the normal operation of the school.

All teachers and staff members have access to computers and to the Internet. By signing your contract you are agreeing to using the internet appropriately for educational purposes only. The violation of this policy is serious, and could result in termination of employment.

EXTRA ASSIGNMENTS:

- All teachers, both grade school and high school, are required to supervise students working in the concession stand and, after the contest, supervise clean-up of the football field/gym at various times during the sports seasons. A list of dates will be provided at the beginning of the school year. **When teachers are not able to be present for their assigned game, a trade needs to be made with another staff member. Please do not ask parents to substitute for this extra duty. A staff member who has authority with the students needs to be in charge.**
- All teachers, both grade school and high school, are required to take money at games at various times during the sports seasons. A list of dates will be provided at the beginning of the school year.
- High School teachers are required to chaperone one of the three dances each year (Homecoming, Snowball, or Prom). When chaperoning a dance, teachers are to supervise students during the dance, and remain present to help with clean-up. A list of assignments will be provided at the beginning of the school year. If you trade dates with another teacher, please let Judy know.
- High School teachers are assigned to sponsor a homeroom each year. Each homeroom will complete required service projects during the year. More detailed information about service projects will be provided at the beginning of each school year.

- Each faculty member is assigned to a specific committee each year.
 - Catholic Identity
 - School Climate
 - Cardinal Buddies
 - Safety/Security/Crisis Team
 - External Visit Team

These committees have unique responsibilities aimed to **continuously improve** St. Mary's School. The specific responsibilities of each committee will be outlined for faculty members each year. With the possible exception of the Safety/Security/Crisis Team, most committee assignments will be for a period of three years. Time will be set aside during professional development days to accommodate committee meetings at the beginning of the year and periodically throughout the school year. However, occasionally after school time may need to be used for planning with committee members.

Disclaimer

The handbook is not intended to be all encompassing so as to cover every situation and circumstance that may arise during any school day, or school year. Staff members are also expected to consult the Student Handbook for additional regulations, guidelines, and procedures. The handbooks do not create a "contract." The administration reserves the right to make decisions and make rule revisions at any time to implement the educational program and to assure the well being of all students. The administration will be responsible for interpreting the rules contained in the handbook. Should a situation or circumstance arise that is not specifically covered in this handbook, the administration reserves the right to institute any course of action that is consistent with current school policies, state and federal statutes and regulations, and St. Mary's Catholic educational mission.

4021 Policy on Professional/Safe Environment Boundaries Between School Employees and Students

NOTICE: This policy is required by Nebraska law pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-879. **This policy must be signed or otherwise acknowledged annually by each school employee.**

Definitions:

“Grooming” means building trust with a student and individuals close to the student in an effort to gain access to and time alone with the student, with the ultimate goal of engaging in sexual contact or sexual penetration with the student, regardless of when in the student's life the sexual contact or sexual penetration would take place;

“School employee” means a person nineteen years of age or older who is employed by a public, private, denominational, or parochial school approved or accredited by the State Department of Education. School employee also includes any person who is contracted with, or otherwise paid by the school or parish and who has access to or interaction with students, including all student teachers or interns.

Discipline for Violations:

A violation of this policy or any violation of professional/safe environment boundaries is misconduct and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

A violation of this policy by a school employee with an educator's permit or certificate may result in a referral to the State Department of Education. Consequences include suspension or revocation of the employee's permit or certification.

A violation of this policy may result in revocation of a school employee's safe environment certificate.

A violation of this policy involving sexual or other abuse will result in referral to the Department of Health and Human Services or local law enforcement.

Prohibited Activities:

All school employees are prohibited from violating professional boundaries with any student.

All school employees are prohibited from engaging in grooming behavior with any student.

All school employees are prohibited from engaging in any relationship that involves sexual behavior, sexual contact, or sexual penetration with a student while the student is enrolled at the school and for one year after the student graduates or otherwise ceases enrollment.

The following is a non-exclusive list of actions that will be regarded as a violation of the professional/safe environment boundaries that all school employees are expected to maintain with all students. **In addition, repeatedly engaging in any of these activities or a combination of these activities with the ultimate goal of engaging in sexual behavior, sexual contact, or sexual penetration with the student, regardless of when in the student's life the**

sexual behavior, sexual contact, or sexual penetration would take place, are examples of grooming as defined in this policy and are unacceptable:

1. Using e-mail, text messaging, social media, or other electronic means to communicate with students on any matters or subjects that do not pertain to school or school-related activities. School or school related activities include, without limitation, student homework, in class activities, virtual instruction, school sponsored sports or clubs, or any other school-sponsored activity.
2. Engaging in any kind of behavior or communication that could be reasonably construed as a sexual advance or a response in any positive manner to a student's sexual advance.
3. Being alone with a student anywhere with a closed door without a transparency plan in effect.
4. Showing a student any inappropriate or sexually suggestive material.
5. Telling jokes to a student with sexual themes or making sexually suggestive comments.
6. Invading a student's physical privacy when the school employee's duties do not require her/him to be in that location. For example, being present in a locker room when the school employee has no duty to be there.
7. "Friending" students with a personal social media account.
8. Initiating unwanted physical contact with a student.
9. Treating one student differently from other students either by providing privileges or failing to enforce school policy or impose other disciplinary action.
10. Discussing an educator's private personal matters with a student and inquiring about a student's private personal matters when there is no basis for concern about the student's health and safety.
11. Providing rides to a student in an employee's personal vehicle unless another safe-environment certified adult is present.
12. Meeting alone with a student outside of school for any reason.
13. Giving or receiving gifts to or from one student. A gift to a class or the same gift to a group of students is not prohibited.
14. Consuming alcohol in the presence of any student when the student's parent or guardian is not present.
15. Providing alcohol or illegal drugs or unauthorized drugs or medication to a student under any circumstances.
16. Any other behavior which could exploit the unique position of trust and authority between a student and employee.

Exceptions to the above prohibited activities include:

1. Communications or actions with the school employee's own children or relatives.
2. An emergency situation that affects the student's immediate health or safety.
3. An unplanned chance encounter at a public place.

Permissible methods to communicate with students outside of school:

1. Use of the school-approved email system or educational software to ensure transparency.

2. Text messages that include at least one other school staff member or one of the student's parents or guardians.
3. Use of social media through a school-approved social media account as a coach or supervisor of a school-sponsored sport, club or activity, provided the communication is not one-to-one communication.

Permissible ways to engage with students when the employee has concerns about the student's well-being:

1. Contact the guidance counselor or school principal and ensure the student's parent or guardian is aware of your concerns.
2. Contact the student's parents or guardian if the concern does not relate to the parent or guardian.
3. If you believe the student has suffered child abuse or neglect, contact the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-652-1999) or local law enforcement.

Reporting Grooming or Professional/Safe Environment Boundary Violations:

If any school employee has reason to believe another school employee has violated this policy, the school employee shall notify the Principal of the school and the Archdiocesan Director of Victim Outreach and Prevention as soon as possible, but within 24 hours. If the Principal of the school is unavailable or is the school employee believed to have violated this policy, the school employee aware of the conduct shall report it to the Superintendent of Catholic Schools and the Archdiocesan Director of Victim Outreach and Prevention.

If any school employee has reason to suspect that another school employee is grooming a student or has repeatedly engaged in the above prohibited activities, the school employee shall report the conduct to the Principal and the Archdiocesan Director of Victim Outreach and Prevention.

After making the report to the Principal, the school employee and Principal shall co-report the grooming or repeated engagement in prohibited activities to the following:

1. The Nebraska Department of Education;
2. The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services; and
3. Local law enforcement.

Records Retention:

The school employee shall document the reporting to each of the above entities by recording the date and time the report was made and the person to whom the report was given. The school employee shall provide a copy of her/his documentation of the above reports to the Principal of the School and the Archdiocesan Director of Victim Outreach and Prevention. The Principal

shall keep such reports electronically or in hard copy so that they are readily available to any investigative authority.

Relationship to Omaha Archdiocesan Safe Environment Policies:

This policy does not alter or replace the Omaha Archdiocesan Safe Environment Policies which remain in effect and are applicable to school employees.

NOTICE: Nothing in this policy should be construed to replace or alter a school employee's legal obligation to report suspected child abuse or neglect pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 28-711.

Reprisal or retaliation for good faith reports made by students or school employees is strictly prohibited.

Policy Approved: June 24, 2021

POLICY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I received the above **Policy on Professional Boundaries Between School Employees and Students**, and understand its contents.

School Employee (Print)

License Number (if applicable)

Signature

Date

Please sign the form below and submit it to your building secretary.

Failure to sign and return the form does not relieve the employee from the responsibility of complying with the rules and policies referenced in the Staff Handbook.

I hereby acknowledge that I have been provided with a copy of the 2025-2026 St. Mary's Staff Handbook and have read and understand the handbook and the related policies.

I understand that the policies, procedures, expectations, and guidelines laid out in this handbook are requirements for employment by St. Mary's Catholic School.

(Employee)

(Date)

